

**WELCOME REMARKS BY CLLR P.B. MABENGU,
MAYOR OF UMZIMVUBU LOCAL MUNICIPALITY TO THE
WORKSHOP ON MUNICIPAL PROPERTY RATES HELD
AT MT FRERE TOWN HALL ON 19 NOVEMBER 2008.**

Programmes Director
Councillors
Ratepayers
Service Providers
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to make the few welcome remarks to this important meeting of our municipality.

It is important in the sense that today we are holding a second leg of this workshop whose main focus is on ratepayers.

The first leg which was predominantly attended by Councillors and officials was held in Margate a few months ago.

Our idea is that we must all gain an insight and a clear understanding of the content and context of the Municipal Property Rates Act N0. 6 of 2004.

It is important that we all understand the implications and imperatives of the Act so that we are all clear about the responsibilities and obligations of the municipality and those of the local community, particularly the ratepayers.

In terms of section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic, Act 108 of 1996 the municipality is required to provide services to communities in a sustainable manner and to

promote social and economic development as well as a safe and healthy environment.

For this to happen the municipality needs money. As you will agree with one of the key functions of a municipality is to ensure revenue generation. In terms of the law we obliged to collect revenue through various means and ways, one of which includes the levying of property tax in accordance with the provisions of the Property Rates Act N0. 6 of 2004 and the Municipal Finance Management Act N0. 56 of 2003.

So, the question of payment of property rates is administered by the law and as such is a legal obligation on the part of property owners and enforced when and if necessary.

The municipality has also its own obligations. It is this reason that we have all converged here so that we can share information on this important matter.

Critical to the issues to be dealt with today are matters of valuation of properties which include issues of valuation, valuation rolls, valuation appeal boards and updating of valuation rolls.

All these matters and many others that I have not mentioned are matters that finally lead to the determination of the property tax payable by each property owner.

I am pleased to report that subsequent to the negotiations between the ratepayers and the municipality we have ultimately arrived at an agreement that seeks to unblock the bottlenecks of the former TLC on matters related to the municipal bills.

Our agreement on one hand is simply that ratepayers will pay their bills with effect from end November 2007 up to now and onwards while on the other the municipality will find means and ways of wiping out the bill for the period proceeding the end November 2007.

It is therefore our pleasure to report that this has already begun to bear fruits.

Ratepayers have stated paying their outstanding bills and in this spirit we want to encourage all ratepayers to visit our Finance Department so as to ascertain the current status of their respective accounts in terms of our agreement of November 2007 cut – off date.

It is for this reason that I have sent the Communications Manager and the Acting Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to the local community radio station to convey our message in this regard to the local community.

Once more, I must indicate Programme Director that we have set aside the week of the 24th – 28th November 2008 for a process whereby the Deeds Office and the First National Bank will be under one roof together with ourselves, as the municipality.

High on the agenda will be the question of data cleansing and processing of applications for indigent support.

Accordingly, we are requesting property owners to come along with Title Deeds, Copies of Identity Documents and Building Plans.

We are also requesting that applications for indigent support must provide themselves with ID copies, proof of ownership or Title Deeds and proof of income (i.e. payslips)

Programme Director, this will all take place at municipal offices in Mount Frere from 08h00 to 16h00 from the 24th to 28th November 2008.

In accordance with our resolve to change the lives of the people for the better, we remain committed to ensuring that today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will be better than today.

This we will do by providing services and development to the local community in a sustainable manner.

It is for this reason that the question that the question of property rates can not be overemphasized.

Towards concluding Programme Director, I must indicate that we have had a successful week end of open voter registration on 8 & 9 November 2008.

We implore South Africans who could not make it on those 2 days to go to the IEC offices in the municipal buildings to register as voters so that next year you are able to vote for an organization of your choice because failing which there is no way you can vote.

It is our firm belief that today this workshop will lay a solid foundation on which to build the future of this municipality. As the servants of the, we are at your disposal to deliver on our mandate and we dare not fail.

You are welcome

I THANK YOU!!