



KWAZULU-NATAL LEGISLATURE

DRAFT MINUTES OF PUBLIC WORKS PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE VIRTUAL BRIEFING ON COVID-19 HELD ON THURSDAY, 07 MAY 2020 AT 11H00

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS : Hon. Frazer, MC (Chairperson)
Hon. Duma, SA
Hon. Mazibuko, MJ
Hon. Meyer, LM
Hon. Mpayipheli, N
Hon. Mshengu, SW
Hon. Mthethwa, TP
Hon. Nxumalo, JS
Hon. Thakur-Rajbansi, S
Hon. Zuma, BM

APOLOGIES : Hon. Cele, ZLI

DEPARTMENTAL EXECUTIVE AND OFFICIALS

MEC: Hon. NP Nkonyeni
HOD: Dr GG Sharpley
CFO: Mr J Redfern
PLO: Mr M. Nondabula
Acting DDG: Infrastructure – Ms A Khan
Chief Director: Infrastructure – Mr S. Majola

DEPARTMENTAL STAKEHOLDERS

Hadebe, L (NEHAWU)

Madi, D (GVK Siyazama - Contractor & Consultants)

Mthimkhulu, V (Dept. of Labour)

Ndlovu, S (PSA)

KZN LEGISLATURE OFFICIALS: Phakathi, T (Recording Coordinator)

Brown, L

Hlongwa, W

Mtolo, P

Nkosi, SN

Nsele, S

Nxumalo, S

Pillay, P

Ramnandan, R

1. OPENING AND WELCOME

The Chairperson officially opened the meeting by welcoming members of the portfolio committee and the Departmental Executive and acknowledged all Stakeholders. She alluded to the purpose of the meeting as it was for the committee to obtain responses of Covid-19 pandemic from the Department as per Focused Oversight Guidelines. She further thanked the Department for submitting the Committee reports in advance.

2. APOLOGIES

The meeting recognized and recorded an apology by Honourable ZLI Cele.

3. CONSTITUTION OF THE MEETING

The meeting was properly constituted at the start.

4. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Honourable SW Mshengu moved for the adoption of the agenda, Honourable BM Zuma seconded.

5. REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson requested the MEC to make her remarks.

6. REMARKS BY THE MEC

The MEC acknowledged all the Stakeholders who were at the meeting. She alluded that the Provincial Command Council was visited by his Excellency, the President of the Republic of South Africa on Tuesday 05 May 2020.

According to the National Command Council all Districts across the Province should have identified Quarantine and isolation sites in order to assist the Department of Health however, President Ramaphosa's observations included his displeasure about the number of beds that the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Provincial Command Council is allocating to the hospitals either for quarantine or isolation purposes.

The MEC reported that the Social Cluster meeting is yet to discuss the matter and subsequently by the Provincial Command Council. The MEC suggested that the HOD should present the report on behalf of the Department.

Discussion

Members of the Committee wanted to know about the time frame and adequate resources in identifying quarantine and isolation sites in all Districts within the Province as per President Ramaphosa's concern. They also wanted clarity on Waste Management during the process and how many beds were prepared initially in relation to the expectations of the National Command Council. The Committee also asked whether Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) will be required in schools.

Responses

In her response, the MEC alluded that whilst identification of sites is an ongoing exercise however, there are sites that have been identified, they are being assessed in order to comply with protocols. The Provincial Command Council will be presented with a report at a meeting tomorrow, 08 May 2020, it is anticipated that the timeframe factor would transpire during discussion. The MEC mentioned that the Minister of Public Works is also not pleased with the pace of performance for KZN.

The MEC confirmed that the Department of Public Works is coordinating programmes for EPWP however, Municipalities and some Governments Departments do run their own EPWP programmes. She acknowledged that the Department has not been strong in giving guidance to other Departments in ensuring that they are following proper guidelines and recruitment protocol. She committed that the Department have since started to do proper coordination.

The MEC proposed to present EPWP presentation to the Committee to give insight to the Committee on issues such as; the recruitment process, expectations on EPWP Practitioners, current Collaboration with the National Department of Public Works pertaining to 25 000 national EPWP Recruits that were announced by the Minister of Public Works. At the previous meeting the MEC raised concern about some decisions

that were taken by the national Ministers without discussing with the provinces yet impact on them. She then updated the Committee that such concerns were escalated to the National Command Council which include amongst others, recruitment of EPWP Practitioners in KZN without Consulting the provincial Department of Public Works. The MEC reported that the issue has since been resolved, the national government apologized and there is cohesion.

The Chairperson, Hon. MC Frazer moved for the adoption of the resolution, Hon. J. Mazibuko seconded.

Committee resolved that: PW01/05/2020

The Department will conduct a comprehensive presentation on EPWP to the Committee.

7. DEPARTMENTAL REPORT

7.1 Departmental responses to Committee Questions on Covid-19 pandemic

The Head of Department (HOD), Dr GG Sharpley acknowledged the presence of the Stakeholders. He responded to all questions that were raised at the previous Committee Briefing for Covid-19. Furthermore, he explained whilst all the costs relating to COVID-19 interventions are funded within the current budget and are a reprioritization of the budget in line with the PFMA however, there is a huge budget cut that is expected due to national intervention, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Mr Redfern is in the process of establishing the possible effect that it could have on the core business of the Department.

The Department of Public Works had initial cost of approximately R29,000.00 for hand sanitisers; a further R115,000.00 was incurred in order to provide stock to all Regional and District offices. It is envisaged that the Department of Agriculture is responsible for the sanitization of all Government buildings since they are producing sanitizers in very large quantities. The HOD confirmed that there are monitoring mechanisms to ensure that funds are effectively, and economically utilised such as; monthly reporting on all Covid-19 pandemic expenditure to Provincial Treasury.

The HOD reported that all current COVID-19 infrastructure projects are funded by the Department of Health, the Covid-19 expenditure on level 5 that was incurred by the Department of Public Works was R145,000.00. The Department has established a COVID-19 return to work compliance committee to ensure that employees, service providers and contractors return safely to work and that their well-being is maintained. In his response to additional funding that could have been received thus far, the HOD maintained that there was no additional funding that the Department of Public Works has received in relation to Covid-19 pandemic however, the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) has allocated funding totalling to R29 million to the Province. He further stated that National Department of Public Works & Infrastructure (DPWI) is contributing to COVID-19 through community mobilization of youth brigades. This is done through the Independent Development Trust (IDT) who manage the NPOs. The programme is implemented in all Districts within the Province, including eThekweni Metro.

Responding to the question in relation to the EPWP training for the youth to support Department of Health, he said that the training has still not been undertaken since the KZN Department of Health was not consulted about the project as a critical stakeholder in the COVID-19 response project. The matter has been escalated to Department of health and they have indicated that the Province has over 16 000 qualified unemployed nurses who could be utilised for this programme. While there were no guidelines formally issued in terms of the Regulations, by the Minister of Public Works regarding Level 4 on Covid-19 pandemic however, the HOD mentioned that the Department is continuously keeping abreast of the legal developments. He managed to respond to all questions as presented by the Committee.

8. DISCUSSION

The Committee welcomed the responses and the presentation by the HOD.

A concern was raised on the measures that the Department have in ensuring that the Suppliers of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) do not charge exorbitant amounts. The HOD responded that the Provincial Command Council resolved that there should be

one point of entry for PPE's and the Department of Health was tasked with such responsibility to avoid exploitation.

9. Resolution

Committee resolved that: PW01/05/2020

The Department will conduct a comprehensive presentation on EPWP to the Committee.

10. Closure

The Chairperson expressed her deepest disappointment that Hon. SA Duma and Hon. JS Nxumalo could not participate in the meeting; due to ICT limitations on live streaming that prohibit participants to join the meeting once it has started. The Chairperson acknowledged the report from the Department of Labour and requested members to contact the Committee Coordinator for their copies. The Chairperson expressed her gratitude to the MEC, the HOD and the Executives of the Department for their contribution. She further thanked all members of the Committee for their availability and effort to participate meaningfully at all meetings and appreciated the presence of Stakeholders and Legislature Support Staff. There being no further discussion, the Chairperson declared the meeting adjourned at 12H16.

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CHAIRPERSON:

HON. MC FRAZER

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DATE