

GOVERNMENT RESHAPES MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

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Aiding weak municipalitiesCogta HOD , Kopung Ralikhontsane

Premier Ace Magashule's government has moved swiftly to strengthen and stabilise the management of various municipalities across the province, in an effort to make them more responsive to service delivery challenges.

Magashule promised few months ago that provincial government was going to take bold decisions to improve the capacity of municipalities to deliver basic services to their residents.

This followed the adverse report of the auditor general regarding the state of finances in many municipalities as well as a spate of service delivery protests where residents complained about lack of access of basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity.

The Weekly can reveal that the face of municipal administration in the province has been undergoing major reshaping during the past few weeks with appointment of experienced and qualified municipal managers redeployed to various district and local municipalities following the expiry of contract periods.

Lindi Molibeli, who is the former chief director municipal infrastructure and development of the Free State department of cooperative governance and traditional affairs (Cogta) has taken over the reins as municipal manager in the Fezile Dabi District Municipality. She is the third woman to be appointed as a municipal manager in the province.

Former Cogta Xhariep district director Chris Mekomela, who acted as an administrator for the Nala Local Municipality, was appointed by the council to take over as the municipal manager. The municipality must still finalise the appointment of a chief financial officer.

Sipho Mtakati has been appointed as the municipal manager of the Masilonyana Local Municipality. Mtakati is the former director of corporate services at Metsimaholo Local Municipality.

It is expected that Mtakati's experience in both the public and private sector will benefit and strengthen the effective administration and management of the struggling municipality. The municipality must also finalise the appointment of a chief financial officer.

The Weekly reported a few weeks ago that former Mafube Local Municipality mayor, Louis Ntombela was appointed as the new municipal manager for the Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality. The appointment of Ntombela, who is the ANC provincial executive committee member and ANC Fezile Dabi regional treasurer, was lauded as a strategic move to bring political and administrative stability at the municipality which was beset by political infighting and management instability

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Another senior Cogta official has been deployed to a struggling municipality. The department's former district director of Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality, Selby Selepe, has been appointed as the municipal manager of the Mantsopa Local Municipality. The post of municipal manager was left vacant after the resignation of Connie Rampai, currently the speaker of the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, following the 2011 local government elections.

Meanwhile, Lejweleputswa Development Agency CEO, Lekgetho Mokgatlhe, has been appointed as the municipal manager of the Nketoana Local Municipality.

Cogta head of department, Kopung Ralikontsane has hailed the appointment of Sugar Ramakarane, former head of department of the department of Agriculture and head of provincial planning in the department of the premier, for being responsible for stabilising the Setsoto Local Municipality.

Ralikontsane also praised Dihlabeng Local Municipality's municipal manager, Thabiso Tsoaeli, for his efficient and effective management of the municipality.

The Xhariep District Municipality has remained stable with the municipal managers of the district being retained, as well as in the Mohokare Local Municipality; the Kopanong Local Municipality and the Letsemeng Local Municipalities.

Former councillor in the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality, Willie Lefora, has been appointed as the municipal manager in the Naledi Local Municipality and is expected to provide strong management leadership in order to create stability in the municipality.

Ralikontsane said the appointments will advance the effective management and leadership of the administration of the local government sector and contribute to improved audit outcomes which the Free State provincial and local government sectors are committed to achieve.

[Source: www.theweekly.co.za]