

ALFRED NZO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY



ALFRED NZO
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

INDIGENT ASSISTANCE POLICY

2023/2024 – Financial Year

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ACRONYMS

CDW	: <i>Community Development Worker</i>
CFO	: <i>Chief Financial Officer</i>
COGTA	: <i>Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs</i>
DM	: <i>District Municipality</i>
DWAS	: <i>Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation</i>
FBS	: <i>Free Basis Services</i>
FBSan.	: <i>Free Basic Sanitation</i>
FBW	: <i>Free Basic Water</i>
H/H	: <i>Households</i>
ID	: <i>Identity Document or a bar-coded RSA ID card</i>
IDP	: <i>Integrated Development Plan</i>
KL	: <i>Kilolitres</i>
LED	: <i>Local Economic Development</i>
LM	: <i>Local Municipality</i>
MFMA	: <i>Municipal Finance Management Act</i>
MIG	: <i>Municipal Infrastructure Grant</i>
MM	: <i>Municipal Manager</i>
PFMA	: <i>Public Finance Management Act</i>
RSA	: <i>Republic of South Africa</i>
SALGA	: <i>South African Local Government Association</i>
SASSA	: <i>South African Social Security Agency</i>

WSA : Water Services Authority

A. MISSION AND VISION OF ALFRED NZO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

❖ **MISSION:**

A District whose communities are self-sustaining and enjoy a good quality life, equitable access to basic services and socio- economic opportunities.

❖ **VISION:**

To be a responsive and capable institution that effectively delivers basic services and innovative development programmes with a strong orientation to rural development programmes with a strong orientation to rural development in partnership with its communities and other social partners.

1. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

“indigents” the Term Indigent means any household or category of households, including child headed household where all persons residing on the premises (including tenants and backyard dwellers) in total are earning a combined gross income equivalent to or less than two times the government pension grant as prescribed by the National Department of Social Development or in line with the Indigent Framework issued by COGTA. Grants received from disability, foster and child support as well as stipend received from EPWP, CWP, will be excluded from household income for determination of qualification subsidy and are not included when calculating such household income.

Farm: is an area of land or, of agriculture, lake, river or sea including various structures devoted primarily to the practice of producing and managing food.

Farm dweller: means a person who resides on the farm

Household: means a registered owner or tenant of the property with or without children who reside on the same premises.

Privately owned land: means a land owned by a person or a group kept for exclusive use.

Property: means:

1. Immovable property registered in the name of a person. Including in the case of sectional titles scheme, a sectional title unit registered in the name of a person
2. A right registered against immovable property in the name of a person, excluding a mortgage bond registered against the property
3. A land tenure right in the name of a granted to a person in terms of a legislation or
4. Public service infrastructure

“child headed household” means household where both parents deceased and where legal of the property are children of the deceased and all are under the legal age to contract for service and are considered as minors in law by the state.

“Water services” means both water and sanitation provisioning.

“Occupier” in relation to a property, means a person or company residing in or using a property as its owner or tenant, or (illegally) as a squatter.

“Traditional leaders” is a form of leadership in which the authority of the organization or regime is largely tied to tradition or custom.

“Indigent register” means the database, which has to be captured on a monthly basis, designed to contain all the inputted data contained within completed indigent application forms contains the following key information:

- Indigent customer details
- Socio-economic details
- Skills details
- Ward councillor
- Community development worker
- Ward committee member
- Municipal official
- Indigent management system
- Indigent application form
- Rural household
- Urban household
- Free basic services
- Steering committee

In addition the register is able to provide reports relating to, but not limited to the following:

- Indigent application exceptions
- Skills reporting required for LED/ exit strategy
- Social economic reporting

“Indigent management system” means an IT system used by Alfred Nzo District Municipality to register indigent households in the indigent register

1. BACKGROUND

Poverty alleviation and the rendering of basic services to households who cannot afford to pay for essential services are rated highly on the priority lists of the South African government. South African municipalities are in the terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa entitled to "S Grant in the Equitable Share Grant", which ensures that poor residents of towns and cities have access to basic municipal services such as water, sanitation and electricity (Department of Local Government.

- *Procedures for identifying indigent households*
- *Procedures for verifying the information received*
- *A definition of indigence*
- *The qualifying conditions for participation in the scheme*
- *A process for applying for the subsidy*
- *Administering the subsidy*
- *Monitoring the efficiency of implementation*
- *Detecting and dealing with free-riders/fraudulence*
- *Community education with regard to indigent policy*
- *Minimum levels of services provision and*
- *The services that qualify for subsidization.*

Alfred Nzo District Municipality is the smallest district with an estimated population of 804500 and the total number households is 196812 (Stats SA, 2011). The unemployment is high at 82% which therefore suggests that most households will depend heavily on the government services. Due to unemployment and poverty in this area, the ANDM adopts this indigency management policy to ensure that these households have access to basic municipal services.

*The main aim of the policy is to provide a guideline for the free basic service provisioning to indigent households, for both urban and rural households including privately owned land (**farms**)*

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

2.1 The fundamental purpose of Indigent Policy is to guide the process of improving access to Free Basic Services by deserving indigent beneficiaries so that their lives can be improved. Establish a manner in which, these residents can be identified and registered in the municipality's indigent register.

2.2 To create a guideline for the district municipality to ensure that poor households are able to access basic municipal services relating to potable water and sanitation in a sustainable manner within the financial and administrative capacity of the municipality.

3.3 To assist municipality to reduce the level of debtors by crediting the indigent accounts;

- 3.4 For the establishment of a framework for the identification and management of indigent households including a socio-economic analysis where necessary and an exit strategy.
- 3.5 To provide procedures and guidelines for the subsidization of basic charges and the provision of free basic services to indigent households.

3. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The policy principles include the following;

- 3.1 Ensuring that the communities have access to free basic services in a sustainable manner
- 3.2 Providing procedures and guidelines for the subsidizing of basic charges and provisions of the free basic services to indigent households.
- 3.3 Setting of tariffs in terms of the Council tariff policy, which will balance the economic viability of continued services delivery and determining appropriate service levels.
- 3.4 Establishing a framework for the identification and management of indigent household including a socio-economic analysis where necessary and an exit strategy.
- 3.5 Linking the policy with the municipality's IDP, local economic development (LED) initiatives and poverty alleviation programs
- 3.6 Promoting an integrated approach in provision of free basic services delivery; and
- 3.7 Engaging the community in the development and implementation of this policy (Batho Pele principles).

4. POLICY OBJECTIVES

In support of the above principles the objectives of the policy will be to ensure the following:

- 4.1 The provision of basic services to the community in a sustainable manner, within the financial means of the Municipality; and
- 4.2 To provide procedures and guidelines for the subsidization of service charges to its indigent household , using a portion or the whole of the Equitable share for this purpose.
- 4.3 The municipality also recognizes that many of the residents can simply not afford to pay the required services charges and the municipality will endeavor to ensure affordability through:
 - 4.3.1 Setting tariffs which will balance the economic viability of continued services delivery; and
 - 4.3.2 Determine appropriate service levels.
- 4.4 The Council will be guided by the following principles in implementing this policy.
 - 4.4.1 Due regard shall be had to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act ,2000, and other relevant legislation;

4.4.2 Relief provided under this policy must, to the extent that is practicable, be practical, fair, equitable and justifiable, in order to avoid alienating any group or groups;

4.4.3 Bureaucratic administration of the policy must be efficient;

4.6 To enhance the institutional and financial capacity of the municipality to implement the policy.

4.7 To ensure that there is a vividly clear coherence on the provisioning of FBS within the district.

5. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The provision of the Free Basic Services to indigent households is not a privilege but a fundamental human right which is protected by a number of legislations. This places a mandate on Government to ensure that all citizens are afforded these rights. These legislations include but not limited to:

- Constitution of RSA (Act 108 of 1996)
- Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (Act 13 of 2005)
- Municipal Finance Management Act (Act 1 of 2003)
- Municipal Property Rates Act (Act 6 of 2004)
- Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1997 as amended)
- Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000)
- Public Finance Management Act (Act 1 of 1999)
- Water Services Act (Act 108 of 1997)
- The Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000);

6. PARTNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ANDM

6.1 The ANDM has to sign a Memorandum of understanding together with the following local municipalities (Umzimvubu, Matatiele, Mbizana and Tabankulu).

6.2 First and foremost, the ANDM is committed to assist the above mentioned local municipalities in terms of publications.

6.3 In addition, to that the ANDM will commit itself to assist the above delineated local municipalities with the computerised verification of indigent applications through indigent management system.

6.4 Furthermore, the ANDM has to assist the local municipalities with the distribution and collection of application forms where there is no capacity.

6.5 The ANDM has to assist the local municipalities during the establishment of free basic ward based verification committees.

6.6 Alfred Nzo District Municipality only keeps copies of the Indigent Application forms for the urban areas (town/townships) and the rest are kept by the respective Local Municipalities. ANDM keeps copies of the verified lists from the different Local Municipalities.

6.7 It is the responsibility of ANDM to ensure that Indigent farm dwellers within Alfred Nzo District have access to Free Basic Services.

6.8 Lastly, the ANDM will co-ordinate the Free Basic District Forum (FBSDF) and other relevant committees.

7. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

The local municipalities are expected to perform the following duties:

7.1 To establish ward based verification committees

7.2 To distribute, collect, and capture indigent application forms

7.3 To induct/workshop the ward councillors, community development workers, ward clerks, ward committee members traditional leaders, and community members about indigent policy and completion of indigent application forms

7.4 It is an obligation of Local municipalities to keep the hardcopies of indigent application forms, but the ANDM keep the soft copies of indigent application for urban/township areas, only.

8. QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

An account holder (customer) may apply in the prescribed manner, to be as an indigent, provided that the following conditions are adhered to:

8.1 The gross household income must not exceed the two state pension grants per month

8.2 The applicant must be in the position of a valid SA identity document

8.3 The applicant must be a resident of the ANDM municipality

8.4 The applicant owning more than one erf/fixd property can only apply for indigent status for the property she/he is residing on (for one property).

8.5 The applicant to be regarded as indigent, must be re-verified annually

8.6 The applicant must be a resident on the property in order to qualify for the indigent subsidy

8.7 The applicant must personally complete and sign the indigent support application form provided by the municipality

- A tenant can apply for the benefits in respect of the charges he/she is billed for while the landlord remains liable for all ownership related charges such as rates.
- The account of a deceased estate may be subsidized if the surviving spouse or dependants of the deceased, who occupy the property, applies for assistance.

The ANDM will provide assistance to persons who cannot read or write, at such times and places as are specified in the notices published to indicate that the registration programme is to take place. Registration will take place on dates and at times and places determined by the Council, but shall generally be undertaken

during January and/ or February each year. The successful applicant will receive a monthly indigent subsidy as determined by Council from time to time, if the total monthly charges are more than the subsidy the balance must be paid by the customer.

9. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 9.1 The Accounting Officer shall delegate the assessment of the indigent applications to the Chief Financial Officer or his/ her delegate.
- 9.2 The Chief Financial Officer or his/ her delegate shall ensure that relevant application forms are made available by the district municipality at all offices for the public or communities.
- 9.3 The application form must be completed and accompanied by prescribed documents which include among others the following:
- a) Breadwinner's proof of income; photo of the SASSA bank card can be attached of and affidavit can also be attached.
 - b) Proof of income for all other members of the household above the age of 18 years (excluding tenants where applicable);
 - c) Proof of property ownership i.e Title deed or letter of executorship, where its not available proof of residence to be attached .
 - d) Identity documents of qualifying members appropriately certified;
 - e) Ward Councillor's or Traditional Leader's report;
 - f) Endorsement by a Commissioner of Oath as categorized by the Minister of Justice;
 - g) Proof of registration as unemployed (for residents other than pensioners with no source of income); and
 - h) Latest municipal account / statement where applicable.
 - l) Applicants will be requested to sign and submit a sworn affidavit, that all information supplied to municipality is true and correct.

10. TARGETING OF INDIGENT HOUSEHOLDS

The effective targeting households and the implementation of this policy will depend largely on the analysis in the IDP, the LED initiatives and other poverty relief programmes of the municipality. The socio-economic information and performance indicators contained in these documents must form the basis for the targeting of indigent households

Against the background of such socio-economic analysis the municipality must within its financial and institutional capacity decided the municipality which targeting approach or opinion should be applied. Depending on capacity the municipality may apply any or a combination of the following targeting methods:



Targeting approach	Application
1. Service level	Lowest service levels are normally found in an informal settlement, rural areas, and privately owned (farms)
2. Service consumption	Metered services in urban and rural areas
3. Household income	Threshold determined in terms of socio-economic analysis
4. Geographical (Zonal) targeting	Specific areas (rural, urban or farms) where households are regarded as poor irrespective of service level.

11. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS FOR INDIGENT SUPPORT

The following applicants may be considered as an indigent if they meet one of the following requirements:

- 11.1 Indigent households who have income that is less than the prescribed threshold
- 11.2. Households owners who depended on pensions or social grants for their livelihood
- 11.3. Households owners temporally without income
- 11.4. Child Headed Households

12. SERVICES FOR URBAN, RURAL AND FARMS INDIGENT HOUSEHOLDS

12.1 The ANDM is a water services authority institution therefore it responsible for water services to the entire district. The following free basic services will be provided as per area:

- 12.2 Indigent urban areas 6Kl of water and full rebate for sanitation per household.
- 12.3 Indigent rural areas 6Kl for water and one approved VIP toilet per household; and
- 12.4 Indigent farm dwellers will be provided with 6Kl of water and an approved VIP toilet per household **(provided they do not reside on the farm, itself)**

13. ESTABLISHMENT OF FREE BASIC SERVICES STEERING COMMITTEE:

Indigent Steering Committee

- (a) An Indigent Committee comprising of designated officials and councillors, preferably ward councillors, must be established for the purpose of consideration and finalisation of applications received.
- (b) The Indigent Committee must meet on a quarterly basis.

(c) The Indigent Committee must consider each recommended application; assess it in terms of the application and any other knowledge or information which members may have in respect of the applicant.

(d) The Indigent Committee must monitor, in conjunction with ward councillors, ward committees and other persons or organisations it may appoint the implementation of the indigent support programme, subject to the policy directions of the municipality and in consultation with the municipal manager:

There is a high necessity of steering committees that are responsible for the ward based verification of indigent register. The verification committee comprises of the following:

- *Ward councillor (chairperson)*
- *Ward committees*
- *Church leaders (if applicable)*
- *Traditional leaders(if applicable)*
- *Community development workers*
- *FBS coordinator(LM's)*
- *FBS coordinator(DM)*

14. BUDGETING FOR INDIGENT SUBSIDY SUPPORT

- *The Council must annually budget for the total indigent subsidy to be granted to indigent debtors in terms of this Policy. Such amount must, upon approval of the budget of the Council, be reflected against a separate vote in the name of **Free Basic Services**.*
- *The total value of indigent subsidies for all subsidized services must be reflected against such **Free Basic Services** on a monthly basis.*

15. PUBLICATION OF INDIGENT REGISTER:

For the purpose of transparency and accountability as per the constitution of the Republic of South Africa the information about indigent register has to be made available for public scrutiny. For the publication of indigent the ANDM will be using the following types of media and community information centres:

ANDM website

Local newspapers

Local libraries

Notice boards of municipalities (locals and district)

Ward Councillors

Community Development Workers

Ward Committee Members and



16. FBS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The municipality must develop a communication strategy in terms of which communities will be informed and educated in order to have a clear understanding of this policy and its implementation. Regular information dissemination and awareness campaigns must be undertaken to eliminate unrealistic expectations both in terms of qualifying for subsidy as well as service delivery in general and methods of communication may include, but will not be limited to:-

- *Ward committees;*
- *Traditional Imbizo, where applicable;*
- *Community based organisations;*
- *Local radio stations and news papers;*
- *Municipal accounts;*
- *Imbizo's and road shows;*
- *Jamborees*
- *FBS Awareness Campaigns*
- *Loud Hailing*
- *Churches*
- *Schools*

17. NON-COMPLIANCE OF THE HOUSEHOLD REGISTERED AS INDIGENT

17.1 When a property owner or account holder who has registered as an indigent fails to comply with any arrangements or conditions materially relevant to the receipt of indigent relief, such person will forfeit his her status as a registered indigent with immediate effect, and will thereafter be treated as an ordinary residential property owner or accountholder for the financial year concerned.

17.2 The onus is on each registered indigent to advise the municipality of such failure to comply. It may happen that even with the introduction of the indigent policy, certain households may fall into arrears in respect of the amounts due to them.

17.3 The property owner or accountholder concerned will have to make immediate arrangements with the municipal manager and Water Service Provider to pay off these arrears owing within a reasonable time determined in terms of the municipality's credit control policy.

18. WITHDRAWAL OF INDIGENT SUBSIDY

18.1 The relief to indigents may be withdrawn at the discretion of the municipal manager and or Water Services Provider if:

- a registered indigent who qualifies for such relief fails to keep to the terms of the policy agreement.
- Any tempering with the installations of the municipality is detected.

18.2 If a registered indigent applicant is found to have provided fraudulent information to the municipality in regard to any material condition for the registration as an indigent beneficiary, such personal shall immediacy be removed from the indigent register, and shall be liable to repay to the municipality with immediate effect all indigent relief received from the date of such fraudulent registration.

18.3 An applicant may not again be considered for indigent relief for the period of 3 (three) years beyond the financial year in which the misdemeanour is detected.

18.4 The council may remove the applicant from the indigent register, if the applicant fails to comply with service level agreement that was signed between the municipality and the applicant.

19. FREE BASIC SERVICES POLICIES

Council will provide free basic services to domestic debtors, on a monthly basis in quantities as determined from time to time.

The commencement date hereof will be communicated to the public in due course

20. APPEAL PROCEDURES

20.1 An appeal must be submitted by the applicant to the Municipal Manager / Chief Financial Officer in writing

20.2 The application must be submitted prior to the final due date of payment for the contested amount and must contain details of the specific item(s) on the account which are the subject of appeal

20.3 Once the appeal is lodged, the debtor's obligation to pay the portion of the total amount due represented by the items appealed against is suspended until the appeal has been finalized.

20.4 In the meantime, the debtor will remain liable for all the other amounts becoming due during the process of the appeal. If the appeal is in respect of a metered consumption, the metering instrument must be tested within 7 days of lodging the appeal to establish in accuracy.

20.5 The debtor should be informed in writing of the results and any adjustments to the amount due by him/her, together with the cost of the test, for which the debtor will be liable if no error was found with the instrument. If the instrument was found to be faulty the municipality will bear the cost of the test.

20.6 If the Councillor confirms that the indigent application was correct then the customer will remain on the indigent register.

21. DEBT CANCELLATION

21.1 Proof of the death of a customer must be provided

21.2 The occupier opening the account must complete the required disconnection form for the deceased

21.3 After completing the required disconnection form for the deceased the occupier must complete the required connection form for service provision and if applicable register as an indigent consumer.

21.4 The new property owner must pay the prescribed applicable consumer deposit and connection fees, if the new property owner is not indigent.

21.5 The process of transferring the property to the new owner must be completed within 3 months.

21.6 When a non-indigent customer becomes indigent while he or she can still be employable the debt of the customer excluding the current year's charges must be parked for a period of 5 years. Interest on arrear charges will not be applicable to indigent customer accounts.

21.7 However, if the customer is an indigent and a pensioner but owns more than one erfs/fixes properties within the jurisdiction of the Alfred Nzo District Municipality, her/his debt must be cancelled for the property she/he resides at, only.

22. EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

22.1 In the event of death of one of the members of the household, and where the flow of water has been limited, full flow will be re-instated from the day of death to the funeral after which the flow shall be limited again.

22.2 In the event of a household member suffers from a sickness requiring excessive usage of water and is under a home -based care programme, such a household will be eligible to apply for additional allocation of water, approval of which is subjected to the Municipality's condition.

23. WHAT DOES THE INDIGENT SUPPORT BENEFIT COVER

23.1 On approval of the application the Municipality shall provide the following

- Access to a minimum safe water supply i.e 6kl of water free of charge monthly basis or as determined by Council
- A 100% rebate of water basic charge
- A 100% rebate on all sanitation charges
- A credit equivalent to the outstanding to the balance on the dwelling at the date of approval

24. USAGE IN EXCESS OF THE BASIC SERVICE LEVELS

24.1 All services used in excess of the basic municipal services level shall be levied at the current scale of tariff and payable on the due date.

24.2 If the excess account is not paid for as and when due, the services shall be restricted to the level and normal Credit Control and Debt Collection shall be implemented.

25. EXIT STRATEGY

25.1 It is also an obligation of the council to provide a clear exit strategy or to assist the indigent applicants to graduate from being indigent to become non-indigents. This can be achieved through cooperation of supply management policy of ANDM and EPWP

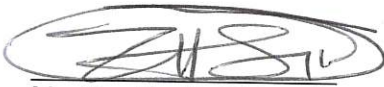
25.2 The indigent register must be considered when ANDM projects are implemented and EPWP personnel's are appointed.

25.3 The integration of LED projects by the municipality and other stakeholders must utilise the indigent register.

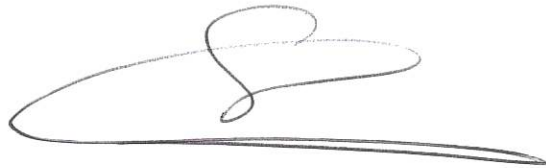
26. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The Council has the discretionary power to amend any clause, stipulation or tariff embodied in this Policy in the interests of all the parties concerned at the annual budgetary review of Council policies in conjunction with the consideration of the annual budget of the Council. This policy shall be implemented once approved by Council.

Date of Council Adoption:...../...../...../



Mr. Zamile.H. Sikhundla
Municipal Manager



Cllr.S. Mehlomakulu
Council Speaker



ALFRED NZO
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

FIRST SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE 12th JULY 2022

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

RESOLUTION EXTRACT

ON

REPORT REGARDING POLICY REVIEW FOR THE PERIOD 2022/23

COUNCIL/SC/01/001/2022/2023

REPORT REGARDING POLICY REVIEW FOR THE PERIOD 2022/23

PURPOSE

To table Policy Conference report for consideration by Council.



ALFRED NZO

DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

To table the report on processes followed for policy review for the period 2022/23 for noting by the Council.

To table policy review recommendations for consideration by Council.

BACKGROUND

The Municipal Manager, in accordance with applicable law and subject to any applicable collective agreements, must develop and adopt appropriate systems and procedures, consistent within any uniform standards prescribed in terms of section 72(1)(c), to ensure fair, efficient, effective and transparent personnel administration.

It is critical that the policies require to be reviewed for adoption by Council as some policies implementation may require budget for implementation purposes. Policies that are in compliance with collective agreements, laws and practices will ensure that there is clear implementation and compliance with Section 67(4) (a), (b) and, (c). Legal compliant policies will reduce unnecessary Labour disputes and litigation.

On the 31 March 2022, the Alfred Nzo DM council adopted the process plan for **institutional Policy Review** and the policy conference was convened as the platform to allow departments to present their policy review inputs or amendments. The policy conference was convened from the 20th to 21st June 2022.

It was RESOLVED,

1. That the report regarding ANDM Policy Review for the period 2022/23 is **APPROVED** by the Council.
2. That the reviewed policies and by-laws from the following Departments are approved by the Council:
 - (i) Corporate Services (CPS)
 - (ii) Community Development Services (CDS)
 - (iii) Infrastructure Development and Municipal Services (IDMS)
 - (iv) Planning and Economic Development (PED)



ALFRED NZO
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY


(v) Office of the Municipal Manager (Including Council Standing Rules and Orders)

This was carried as a Council resolution having been put before the Council for voting by show of hands with results as follows:

VOTES		
FOR	AGAINST	DISSENTING
35	0	0

COUNCIL: SC/01/001/2022/2023

SIGNED



N.R. XOLO (MR)

N.R. XOLO (MR)


ACTING MUNICIPAL MANAGER



CLLR. S. MEHLOMAKULU


CLLR. S. MEHLOMAKULU

HON. SPEAKER



DATE

DATE



DATE

DATE