Mnquma Mourns the Loss of Workers

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MNQUMA MOURNS LOSS OF WORKERS

By: Loyiso Mpalantshane

There is an urgent need for serious intervention to remove the dark cloud that has engulfed the municipality.

This clarion call was made by the Executive Mayor, the Municipal Manager and workers in general following the recent deaths of four workers, that has rocked the institution since the beginning of 2019.

Three Mnquma workers died tragically after they were involved in car crashes, leaving behind a skills void for the institution and their distraught families searching for answers.

Tragically on the Christmas eve of December 2018 well-known Peace Officer, Mr Makhwezi Nkombi died after he lost control of his vehicle and it capcised off the R61 road near Ngcobo. Mr Nkumbi, died at the scene of the accident, while his elderly son Luzuko and two other relatives were rushed to hospital and have survived.

Nearly the entire community of Mnquma, including motorists, hawkers, colleagues, friends and family bade farewell to the late Mr Nkombi during a moving funeral service held at his home in Nxamagela village near Ngcobo.

While still reeling from the shock, Mnquma was dealt another blow after two young workers and soccer lovers Siyabulela Nockpali who was a driver and Sivuyile Gadaboshe a general assistant were also killed in a car crash. Reports say the two workers were on their way to a Kaizer Chiefs and Baroka FC match at Sisa Dukashe Stadium in Mdantsane, outside East London at the time of their deaths.

On February 10, Mnquma also learned of the passing of a long-serving municipal employee, 63-year old Sandile Sinyanya, who died after a short illness. Mr Sinyanya had served the municipality for the past 16 years, working as an experienced Plant Operator at the Infrastructure Directorate.

Speaking during Mr Sinyanya’s memorial service which was attended by scores of family, friends, directors, fellow colleagues and community members at the Butterworth Town Hall on Thursday February 21, the Executive Mayor Councillor Sithembiso Ncetezo echoed the calls made by previous speakers, who decried the deaths which occurred in quick succession.

“I fully support the calls for divine intervention to arrest the spate of deaths on our workers. Despite the fact that death is a natural occurrence, the municipality and the community at large have lost a member of a critical department that is responsible for delivering services to the people of Mnquma,” he said.

“In his death, we have lost a wealth of experience and knowledge. We bid him farewell and may his soul rest in peace,”.
In his welcoming address, Municipal Manager Mr Silumko Mahlasela conveyed the municipality’s condolences to Mr Sinyanya’s widow on behalf of workers. “We are very saddened to loose four workers in such a very short space of time although we all know that none of us can escape death as it is the will of God. However, we need to pray and ask God for mercy,” said Mr Mahlasela.

He said Mnquma shared the pain of the bereaved families. “We are saddened at the loss of a man who was very dear to us. He was one of the workers who followed every instruction without hesitation and performed his duties to the latter,” he said.

Workers who also took to the podium to offer their messages of condolences, including Mr Sinyanya’s union, the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU), spoke glowingly of their departed colleague.

SAMWU shop steward Mr Yaliwe said: “We have lost a strong leader and a fearless fighter for workers’ rights. He gave us a lot of courage as union leaders.

Plant Operator Mr Funani, who started working with Mr Sinyanya during the same year, described him as a man with a good sense of humour who always spoke affectionately about his wife and family.

“He taught me how to operate machines and was also transferring his vast experience to younger workers at the time of his death. However, his train has arrived at its destination. It is time for him to disembark and let his sons continue with the rest of the journey,” said Mr Funani.
Msobomvu Sports field was a hive of colourful activity when scores of Mnquma workers from different directorates exchanged their formal dress code for sports gear to display their skills and prowess in netball, volleyball and soccer.

The team-building exercise was held at the Msobomvu Sportfield on Friday February 22, 2019. Municipal Manager Silumko Mahlasela said the aim of the event was to promote healthy lifestyles and encourage ‘social cohesion’ among workers through the municipality’s Wellness Unit.

“Furthermore, it is to ensure that our workers engage on extra-mural activities outside the day-to-day operations of the municipality with a belief that it refreshes their minds and bodies so that they may be able to carry out their roles and responsibilities diligently. There is a strong need to create good relations amongst workers and the spirit of unity and cohesion.

VIEW THE ACTION IN PICTURES:
Above: Mnquma Community Service and Corporate Services Directorates’ employees battle each other on the soccer field, to which community services won the match by 2-0 goals.

Above: The Ladies on the other hand from all the directorates came together and then split themselves into two very strong teams and displayed excellent skills as they battled out in two friendly netball matches.
Councillors and Traditional Leaders converged at Zovuyo Conference Venue for two-days of intensive training workshops by practitioners from the South African Local Government Association, the Auditor-General and the Provincial Treasury to learn among others, financial shrewdness, the AG’s functions and the roles as political office bearers. Municipal Manager, Mr Silumko Mahlasela explains the purpose of the exercise below:

"What we have picked up given the background of where we come from as the municipality is that it became necessary for us to host similar workshops with various government departments including SALGA, Treasury and the Auditor General.

"The purpose of this training exercise is to enhance service delivery and ensure that everybody understands how the five pillars of the Back to Basics principle work. These are critical issues which include Batho Pele, good governance, financial viability, institutional transformation and service delivery.

From this workshop, our expectation is that everybody will come out with a full appreciation of what a functioning municipality should be and should look like. It is a treasure to have Councillors and Traditional leaders who have a clear understanding of what their roles and responsibilities are because it means that they will actually help us to implement and accelerate development at Ward level," said Mahlasela.
Executive Mayor Councillor Sithembiso Ncetezo and members of the Mquma Eldery Forum, during the December holidays of the institution, took the time to spread festive cheer, when they distributed warm blankets and groceries to senior citizens in all three towns (Gcuwa, Centane and Ngqamakhwe). This gesture showed appreciation and reassurance that our elders had not been forgotten.
OTHER NEWS: MNQUMA STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

By: Loyiso Mpalantshane

Councillors, traditional leaders, management and officials gather in a two-day Strategic Planning Session, on the second day the institution opened for a new term in January. The purpose of the event was to reflect on milestones, achievements and challenges encountered during the mid-year financial year and to chart a clear way forward for the future to accelerate an effective and efficient service delivery agenda.