

REPORT DETAILS BOBANI ISSUES

But, insists ousted deputy mayor, 'my hands are clean'

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A REPORT detailing what ultimately led to former Nelson Mandela Bay deputy mayor Mongameli Bobani being fired from mayor Athol Trollip's mayoral committee has emerged.

It alleges that senior staff complained they were forced to report directly to Bobani and that he put pressure on them to hire 217 more temporary workers at three depots than the municipality had budgeted for to clean the city.

Bobani denied the claims vehemently yesterday, saying his "hands are clean".

He was removed as the political head of the city's public health department in May and ousted as deputy mayor on Thursday.

It is likely that the DA will use the report in court after UDM president Bantu Holomisa vowed at the weekend to take the legal route to force Bobani's reinstatement as deputy mayor.

The May 17 report, compiled by acting executive director of public health Tsietso Mokonyane, was sent to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) by city manager Johann Mettler.

The PwC investigation will cost about R1-million but will include two other probes as well.

The report points out that a litter-picking project between January and August last year cost R4.4-million.

But from September – shortly after Bobani was appointed

to the mayoral committee – to May, the figure shot up to R15-million.

"It is clear the expenditure on litter picking has increased exponentially since September to date," Mokonyane said.

"This increase is due to the drastic increase in numbers of volunteers employed via the instruction of [Bobani]."

The temporary workers were meant to be hired through the metro's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

But Bobani allegedly influenced the number of workers hired at the Struanway depot, Addo Road depot, Cuyler depot, Harrower Road depot and drop-off sites, the report states.

Only 31 temporary workers were meant to be hired at the Addo Road and Cuyler depots and drop-off sites, but 217 more people were given jobs, Mokonyane wrote.

At the Struanway depot, only 20 temporary workers were meant to be hired, but this was increased to 100.

These 100 temporary workers were rotated later to accommodate a further 100 people.

"The fact that [Bobani] imposed an additional 80 volunteers created a huge problem with supervisors, as this excessive [number] of people is extremely difficult to control," Mokonyane said.

"[Then acting waste management director Nkosinathi Dolo] cautioned supervisory staff not to reprimand them as, should supervisory staff do so, they would be dismissed."

At the Cuyler depot, Mokonyane said, eight temporary workers were meant to be used,

but this was increased to 30.

Also, the temporary workers had not been rotated in May as per EPWP regulations.

"The waste management department attempted to terminate their volunteer employment in March, but an instruction was received from the deputy mayor to let the group work until further notice," he said.

At the drop-off sites, the number of workers was increased by three to 18.

Mokonyane said the department had no control over the worker rotation, and supervisors feared victimisation.

Workers' names were submitted on lists supplied by Dolo after being instructed to do so by Bobani.

The EPWP sub-directorate distanced itself from the process when it found that the recruitment guidelines had not been followed.

The report also claims that the business plan to clean the city – which had been approved by the council – was altered and new elements implemented.

"It was an instruction from [Bobani] that the changes were not negotiable," Mokonyane said.

Commenting on the report, Bobani said: "If it [the report] was sanctioned by council, it should be an item in council."

"The only person who is talking about the report and the investigation is Trollip."

"I have never been called by anyone to be interviewed or to answer on these allegations."

"As far as I know, these are all administrative matters and the person who needs to be accountable is the city manager."

"My hands are clean. I have done nothing wrong. The city



**MONGAMELI
BOBANI**

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manager and Mokonyane must take responsibility because he is the one who signs off on things."

Trollip said Mokonyane's report was the last straw and that a forensic investigation by PwC corroborated the report.

"The PwC report goes into depth about the irregularities and these matters are all being dealt with.

"They will continue to be dealt with until we get to the bottom of how this process unfolded."

Mettler said yesterday he was not happy that Mokonyane's report had been made public.

This could have far-ranging effects as people could start destroying evidence, he said.

Holomisa said the planned court

action stemmed from the DA's rejection of the UDM's ultimatum to reinstate Bobani by today or they would pull out of the coalition.

In a letter to several opposition party leaders, including DA and EFF leaders Mmusi Maimane and Julius Malema, Holomisa challenged the DA to circulate a forensic report to all Bay councillors which allegedly contains information implicating Bobani in corruption.

The e-mail, sent at the weekend, states: "The UDM will not fold her arms whilst the DA is undermining other coalition partners and in the process continues to assassinate the character of Bobani."

Bobani was voted out with 60 votes from the DA, PA, ACDP and COPE as opposition parties were

walking out of the council.

While there are opposing views about whether or not the meeting had a quorum then, Mettler repeated yesterday that 60 was a majority of the number of councillors in the chamber at the time.

Holomisa said: "On Monday [today], in our court papers, the DA leadership will be called upon to bring to court their so-called prima facie evidence."

Meanwhile, Bobani has written to Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs MEC Fikile Xasa seeking "urgent intervention".

He said the "speaker of the DA" - council speaker Jonathan Lawack - abused his powers to continue with "the irregular meeting as there was no quorum to pass the motion".