

R10m or not, Mmabana remainst a hollow shell

MAHIKENG MAIL – MAHIKENG - Despite a recent provincial government initiated R10 million injection to safe the Mmabana cultural centre in Mmabatho here from total collapse, the centre has literally become an empty structure.

Premier Job Mokgoro last year led a high level provincial administration delegation to the Mmabana centre during an inspection in logo to get first hand information about the damages caused by wide spread protests action in Mahikeng early in 2018 which left the centre in total destruction.

Mokgoro reported that his government would put a R10m grant aside as part of its intervention stragetegy to be used for restructuring the centre and its operations.

However, despite a statement from Siphon Nkese, acting CEO of Mmabana, the centre had so far spent up to R598,615.92 towards the refurbishment of Mmabana, the centre remains without a management structure.

Responding to questions from Mahikeng Mail this week, communications manager at the department of culture, arts and traditional affairs (CATA), Shuping Sebolecewe admitted that since the demise of the centre early last April, Mmabana had been “operating” without management including a board of directors, CEO (permanent), CFO including staff members.

All operations at the centre has since been suspended as most of the equipment including music instruments and other valuables were looted during the protest action which also led to the centre been damaged by fire. The centre was at that time not insured against any damages.

“The Premier is fully aware of this. However the process to appoint a new Board of Directors is nearing completion. The position of the CFO has now been advertised and will close on 1 April 2019. There is also an acting CEO who has been appointed”, Sebolecewe said.

The new CEO replaced suspended CEO, Dr Otsile Ntsoane who was iced in January this year following allegations of various irregularities.

Sebolecewe said, “ following the community protests which commenced in the province in April 2018 which resulted in the destruction and looting of property and equipment at Mmabana Head Office and Mahikeng Regional Office, programmes had to be suspended, especially at the Regional Office. Therefore the Provincial Government, with the limited resources available took a decision to make this R10 million Grant available to the entity.

“The Department of Public Works has estimated that the extent of damages and loses are estimated at R57 Million. The allocated R10 Million was to refurbish the Mahikeng Regional Office only.

“The Grant was accompanied by Conditions set out by the Provincial Treasury which were communicated to both CATA and Mmabana.

“Progress Reports on the Refurbishment project are submitted to CATA by Mmabana. As per the report sent by Mr Siphon Nkese – Acting CEO of Mmabana the total amount spent is R 596 615.92

“Mmabana is an important entity aimed at contributing to economic development through Culture, Arts and Artistic Sport. As a result, the Provincial Government has every intention to continue to support and grow Mmabana”, he said.

The CATA spokesperson also dismissed rumours that government intended to sell Mmabana to the open public.

“As you have indicated, what you have heard are “Rumours”. Government policy is never communicated through “rumours”, and therefore and officially, Mmabana is definitely not for sale”, he added

