

EMAILS SHOW DE LILLE'S PARTY NOT DOING TOO



NOT GOOD Good party leader Patricia de Lille
PHOTO: CONRAD BORNMAN

SETUMO STONE

setumo.stone@citypress.co.za

Good party leader and Minister of Public Works Patricia de Lille is on a mission to clean up her ailing party's national leadership committee, just a little more than seven months after she announced the interim leadership team of 36 people in January.

The party was swimming in debt after its first election campaign in May - a factor expected to be starkly revealed in its pending financial report to members - forcing the top brass to focus sharply on fundraising.

This is according to email correspondence between the party's national leadership, which City Press has seen. In the emails, interim chairperson Bongani Mdakane complains about the levels of "secrecy around party affairs, which results in frustrating the whole purpose towards building the party to greater strength".

The Good party got 70 000 plus votes in its inaugural election, gaining two seats nationally and one provincially, which became a springboard for De Lille to take up her current post in President Cyril Ramaphosa's Cabinet.

It appears Mdakane had called a meeting for Monday this week, but the proposal was shot down by De Lille on the grounds that "there should be a clean-up of the members who are on the national leadership committee".

In a reply to Mdakane, Good secretary-general Brett Herron said the party's earlier "strategy meeting" had agreed that the national leadership committee "needed to be relooked".

Herron said the reason for that was "some people are not active, other than attending committee meetings".

"The last national leadership committee meeting was not able to reach a quorum," he said.

Herron added that the party wanted to have more young representatives and more women in its ranks.

"It is important that we establish branches. This will give us structure to elect the national leadership. It will also help with internal communication since we would have legitimately elected structures to communicate with."

Last week City Press reported that interim national treasurer Masego Kwenamore resigned from the party, coming just three months after former national chairperson Nthabiseng Lephoko also walked out.

Kwenamore said she left because even though she was expected to handle the party's finances she had "no clue how these were run".

"I don't know anything about the party income and expenditure from different provinces. I am kept in the dark when I request information," she said, adding that she felt like her appointment was "window-dressing".

In response, Herron said the party was unable "to offer more people employment in our offices and we will not entertain deployment into government departments", suggesting that the disgruntlement may have been owing to lack of enough deployment posts.

Kwenamore later told City Press that she was "offended by Herron's remarks".

Mdakane said in his email that leaders who left the party prematurely were frustrated because of the lack of transparency in the running of the party.

He said "the resignation of [Kwenamore] was the last straw that broke the camel's back to force me to speak on the mess we are in."

"As part of the senior leadership holding the position of being an interim chairperson nationally, I believe that I need to state that I am disappointed on how the running of this organisation is happening."

He said the meeting that he had called for Monday was meant to discuss a way forward to understand the direction the party intended to take.

"I also highlighted in the agenda that we needed to table and discuss party finances and deployment of party members to Parliament, the contributions they make towards the movement and to know who are those members deployed."

However, said Mdakane, De Lille stated bluntly that there would be no meeting taking place.

"I need us to discuss transparency within the party and also to outline roles played by all involved," he said.

Herron said in his email that Kwenamore had not raised her issues within the party before resigning, which was in contrast with what she told City Press.

"She did not raise any concerns that I am aware of. She participated in the strategy meeting. She agreed to lead the candidate training action item and to serve on one of the five work groups."

Herron said there was never any indication that Kwenamore was unhappy, "then suddenly she resigns and out of the blue she claims window-dressing".

Mdakane said in his email that it was embarrassing that Kwenamore, as the finance head, was entirely in the dark over how the party spent its money, adding that it made it impossible to hold leaders accountable.

"I am very much aware that the people are struggling to push for the mandate of the party activities because they don't have resources and are also being kept in the dark about the direction the party is taking."

He condemned the fact that there was no transparency in the appointment of the new support team deployed to Parliament and in the Western Cape legislature.

He was one of the people who had applied for the post, but was never called for an interview and he doubted that such interviews even took place.

"Please note that this is not gossip, but a factual point which I feel I should raise. I must also say that I am not here to be employed by anyone and I am not on anyone's mercy to get employment or deployment, but I need transparency to be there so that we can have the same vision towards raising the party to greater heights."

Herron said he expected to meet with De Lille soon, where he would "discuss the arrangement of a national leadership committee meeting".

In response to City Press questions, Herron said: "I don't have any comment on issues you have raised on your email. Go back to whoever you claim leaked the [communication] you are claiming to have and ask them to give you a comment. I don't know what you are talking about."

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