



Publication: Citizen, The (Daily) - Main

Title: POLOKWANE SUSPENDS TWO OFFICIALS

Publish date: 17 May 2023

Page: 6

Reach: 24455

AVE:R 31895.18

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Polokwane suspends two officials

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Two senior officials from the Polokwane local municipality in Limpopo have been suspended amid allegations of maladministration, nepotism and millions in irregular expenditure.

The suspensions come after the municipality last year appointed auditing firm Bowmans to conduct forensic investigations.

The investigation report was presented to the council on 17 April and about 19 officials, including directors and managers, were implicated.

Apart from irregularities in bulk water-related projects, *The Citizen* has learnt that the report highlighted:

- A series of verified acts of nepotism in the expanded public works programme (EPWP);

- Verified cases of municipal officials misleading or lying to the public protector;

- Major irregularities in the supply chain management processes;

- Irregular expenditure of R137 million due to the irregular appointment of a service provider, who performed a prebid evaluation process;

- Fraud by a human resources official; and

- Altering documents to hide inadequacies.

"There is no room for corruption and maladministration in this municipality, not under my watch," Polokwane mayor Makoro John Mpe said yesterday.

He said the municipality would act accordingly in the best interests of the people of Polokwane against those bringing the name of the municipality into disrepute.

Mpe said the municipality was working hard to make sure things were always done by the book.

The mayor said all officials should strive to deliver services to the people of Polokwane.

He confirmed that the municipality had suspended the two officials but said their names would not be made public as this was still an internal matter.

"Those fingered to be corrupt will be investigated and made to account.

"It doesn't matter which position you hold, you must just face the consequences," he said.

Yesterday, the Democratic Alliance (DA) said the suspension of the two officials was not enough.

The party said it was now waiting for action by the municipal manager against the remaining officials who were also implicated.

"The DA demands that all officials found guilty of maladministration and corruption must face the full might of the law," said the DA's caucus leader in the municipality, Jacques Joubert yesterday.

"We further call on the municipality to make sure criminal charges are laid by the accounting officer against those whose fingers were found to be in the cookie jar."

