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Budget full of promise

Totalling R202,050 million, the budget for the 2026-'27 financial year of the Frances Baard District Municipality (FBDM) was approved last week.

In his budget speech, the executive mayor of the FBDM, Patrick Marekwa, said the budget was not only a financial plan for the year ahead, but also a moment of accountability and transition.

"The era we are in – marked by coalition governance, fiscal constraints, and heightened public scrutiny – requires a different kind of leadership: one that is decisive, ethical, and people-centred," he stated.

To ensure optimal use of public funds, the municipality has adopted a cost containment policy which is designed to eliminate wasteful expenditure and prioritise spending on service delivery.

Key focus areas of the budget include support to local municipalities with financial management; environmental health; firefighting and disaster management; local economic development and tourism; spatial planning; and infrastructure development – focussing specifically on operation and maintenance and housing.

In the 2026-'27 financial year the focus will also be on operation and maintenance of



Executive mayor of the Frances Baard District Municipality, Patrick Marekwa, during his budget speech.
PHOTO: Supplied

electrical infrastructure; roads and storm water; wastewater infrastructure; water infrastructure; and solid waste management landfill sites infrastructure.

A total of R1,89 million has been allocated to Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives, and R1,83 million has been set aside to support tourism development. These efforts will centre on attracting trade and investment through events such as the LED Expo and the Africa Travel Indaba Expo.

In support of its local municipalities, R22 million has been allocated for the operation and maintenance of infrastructure. These funds will support critical services like electricity and waste

management, road and stormwater systems, as well as water and sanitation infrastructure.

Through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), the municipality will create 18 full-time employment opportunities (FTEs). These positions will be supported by projects such as brick production initiatives in the Magareng and Dikgatlong Local Municipality, as well as the youth entrepreneurship development programme.

The municipality is committed to environmental health and disaster management services and an amount of R5,17 million and R1,45 million have been allocated to these functions respectively for projects focused on supporting service delivery.

Notable grants received for this financial year include: an energy efficiency and demand side management grant of R5 million; a rural road asset management grant of R3,074 million; and a finance management grant of R1,2 million.

"As government it is important that we spend our allocated funds wisely to ensure that we better the living conditions of the people that we serve," the executive mayor concluded, remarking that the next chapter of local government would demand courage, integrity and innovation.