



CITY UPDATE

"HARARE RESIDENTS HAVE SPOKEN ON CITY BUDGET"

4 October 2011

a. Introduction: Grassroots participation remains a fundamental ingredient in the work of the Harare Residents' Trust (HRT) a residents' movement that has proved beyond question that it exists to serve the interest of the public. The HRT has indeed come in to fill the void between service providers and the residents of Harare for better service provision. The HRT organized a budget consultation meeting to come up with a clear and feasible position on the 2012 City budget. The 23 pre-budget consultative meetings organised by the City of Harare hindered real citizens' participation, repeating the same mistake they have made in the past three years. The meeting was chaired by the Founder and Coordinator of the HRT, Mr Precious Shumba. Present at the meeting were representatives from the established HRT suburban structures who included members of the Residents' Council members (RC) a critical body in the structure of the HRT. Discussions at the meeting focused on concerns raised at pre-budget consultation meetings held during the consultation period. Brief background information on the city budget was given by the HRT Membership Officer, Simbarashe Majamanda. Key deliberations, suggestions, recommendations and proposals are detailed in this update.

B. Brief Background on the City budget: After giving a brief history of the HRT focusing on the thrust of the residents' movement, Majamanda emphasised that council has not been transparent in budget formulation and implementation. There has been no access to audited reports from 2008 to present which is picturesque of the fact that council has ceased to represent the public interest. Council has failed to give verbal or even written financial reports to residents who are the chief funder of council through rates payment. He said that budget meetings were poorly organised and there was very low attendance. Council officials concentrated on mentioning their assumed successes such as resurfacing Borrowdale Road and acquiring 20 refuse trucks and replacement of water pipes in the CBD just to mention a few. The meetings were reduced to pure service delivery meetings rather than budget consultative meetings. Residents at the meeting identified and agreed that their priorities in the City budget be as follows:

C. Residents' Priority List in the 2012 City Budget

1. Constant Water Supplies: Residents agreed that the following should be done by council to ensure adequate and regular water supplies for the communities:

- Maintenance of water infrastructure
- Roles of communities in borehole maintenance
- Borehole drilling and maintenance.
- Construction of water reservoirs.
- Maintaining and upgrading of water infrastructure.
- Resuscitating of Cleveland Dam as a way to ease water pressure from the current supply.
- Repairing of burst pipes.
- Equal water distribution
- Accurate water billing system.
- Residents encouraged council should follow the ZESA footsteps in installing pre paid meter readings.
- Concern raised;
- Erratic water supplies.
- Frequent water bursts.

2. Waste Management and Sewer Reticulation: Residents agreed that the following should be done by council to ensure that the communities are free of waste and that world health Organisation (WHO) standards are upheld in the communities:

- Refuse collection at all times.

- Good waste disposal
 - Consistency in refuse collection.
 - Strict adherence to refuse collection schedules.
 - Acquiring more refuse trucks to service communities.
 - Clearing of dump sites caused by poor refuse collection.
 - Provisions of plastic refuse bins
 - Removal of sewerage charges for residents using septic tanks.
 - Timely response to sewer bursts.
 - Poor refuse collection rounds.
- 3. Billing System:** Residents agreed that the billing system of the City of Harare should be addressed:
- Computerisation of the City Treasury for accurate capturing of rates payment.
 - Decentralisation of billing system to council's District Offices.
 - Residents should be able to acquire information at their District Office without going to Rowan Martin Building to seek clarity on their bills.
 - Lack of transparency and accountability in council billing.
 - Huge unaffordable bills, which have to be scrapped.
 - Bills should be accurate and not estimated.
- 4. Health Services, Market Stalls And Public Toilets:** Residents agreed that the following should be done by council to ensure that the health standards of communities are improved:
- Costing of health services should be reasonable and commensurate with the earnings of the beneficiaries to avoid compromising the right to health.
 - Accessibility of health services and performance of health personnel.
 - Repair and maintenance of public toilets,
 - Access to public toilets is problematic as most of the times the City charges people for entry.
 - Construction of public toilets where they do not exist
 - There is need to establish market stalls for vendors in the communities at places identified by the residents, where there are public toilets and practice good hygiene.
 - Transparency in the allocation of market spaces.
 - District Officers should be seen to be taking the lead in the allocation of market stalls not non-council employees.
- 5. Road Network and Drainage Systems:** Residents agreed that the following should be done by Council to ensure that the drainage system in the communities is improved:
- Clearing of drainage systems ahead of the rainy season.
 - Recruitment of casual labourers for drainage clearing.
 - Transparent pothole patching.
 - Establishing drainage system in suburbs.
- 6. Education System and Recreational Facilities:** Residents agreed that the following should be done by council to ensure that the education system and recreational facilities of communities is improved:
- Council should reserve space for new schools and health centres in new residential areas.
 - Establishing and maintenance of recreational facilities.
 - There is need to also have retail outlets in new urban settlements.

Concerns raised:

- Shortage of primary and secondary schools.
 - Absence of recreational facilities in some areas.
 - Poor maintenance of recreational facilities.
 - Recreational facilities being turned into dump sites.
- 7. Representation by elected councillors:** Residents agreed that councillors should be true representatives of the communities they serve by holding regular feedback meetings with residents.

- Residents want to be invited to feedback meetings organised in a non-partisan way by their elected councillors.
- Communication of residents' problems by councillors through council processes.
- Residents demand to see dedication to duty by councillors to service provision and community development.

8. Disclosure of City expenditure and Council Accommodation Facilities- Residents agreed that there be transparency and accountability in employee recruitment.

- The council should conduct a human resources audit of its employees whose report should be availed to the public.
- Audited reports of previous year's budget should be published.
- There should be disclosure of the salary scales of senior management. Residents strongly believe that the salaries of top management are gobbling the bulk of the city revenue.
- There should be a visible reduction in expenses on the purchase of council vehicles.

d. **Proposed City rates for 2012**

Rates	Current Figures	Proposed for 2012
Fixed water charges	US\$5-00	• Removed and follow the example of ZESA Holdings • Council should ensure that its water meters are functional
Burial/Cemetery	Adult Zimbabwean- US\$75-00 Child Zimbabwean- US\$40-00	• US\$50-00 for Adult Zimbabwean • US\$20-00 for Children in Harare Justification: Zimbabwe undertook a land reform exercise, where land was re-taken for free from white commercial farmers. If it was for free, the Government has to allocate land for free to bury its citizens. Why pay in death when one got the land for free. The City of Harare should justify its input- we know they charge for the grave diggers,
Community Meetings		• Residents want to pay nothing for holding feedback community meetings, averagely once every month.
Parking Fees		Residents propose that motorist be charged • US\$1-00 for an hour of continuous parking in town. • US\$0, 50 and introduce tokens as means to ease change problems.
Septic Tanks Emptying	US\$92-00- Residents are being asked to buy 20 litres of diesel to have their septic tanks emptied.	• Residents are demanding that the City of Harare explains how much it costs to empty septic tanks in order to determine the actual cost. The City has to indicate its cost drivers.
Refuse Collection	US\$6.50-00 in high density areas and US\$9-00 in low density areas	• US\$3-00 in high density areas and US\$5-00 in low density areas.
Market Stalls		• Residents demand to pay US\$10 for vegetable markets, US\$25-00 for market stalls with shades, and US\$15-00 for flea markets.
Maternity Fees	US\$30-00	Residents gave given council two options. 1. \$30.00 if council provides all maternity materials needed by expecting mothers. 2. \$20.00 if expecting mothers provide their own maternity materials.
Health Fees- Consultation	Adults- US\$5-00 Children- US\$3-00	US\$5-00 US\$2-00

Other costs that have to be looked into include the following;

Swimming Pools

Adults - \$1.00

Children -\$ 1.00

Pool hire full day - \$100.00

Emptying of Septic tanks

Residential areas- \$80.00

Industrial areas- \$100.00

Housing waiting list fees

Registration fees- \$6.00

Waiting list renewal- \$5.00

Harare Markets

Weekend flea markets - \$15.00

Mupedzanhamo stands- \$155.00 and \$125.00

Newspapers vendors - \$35.00

Ambulance fees

\$30.00

HRT Position:

These proposals came about through extensive consultations with residents of Harare. The HRT expects that the City of Harare produces detailed reports of each pre-budget consultative meeting in the interest of transparency and accountability. It will be unfortunate if the City of Harare produces its Capital Budget and Revenue and Expenditure as widely expected next Friday during a Special Full Council Meeting without adequate consultations with key stakeholders. The ball is now in the court of the City of Harare- either to listen and gain the support of the residents and stakeholders who pay their rates to sustain council services or to ignore our calls and face intense resistance on rates' payment. The HRT believes in dialogue with all service providers. But if this path to dialogue fails, the HRT is left with no option but to engage in activities that will ultimately force the council to listen. Residents are fed up with shoddy and mediocrity.

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