

# The Weekly

## ONE ON ONE WITH LINDI MODIBELI

March 15, 2013



Lindi Modibeli is determined to make sure that the Fezile Dabi District Municipality achieves a clean audit by 2013

Lindi Modibeli, the municipal manager of the Fezile Dabi District Municipality, has transformed the municipality which has been faced with many service delivery challenges into a responsive and service delivery oriented entity since, taking over in November 2012. Molibeli, a mother of four, was born in Heilbron in the Free State but grew up in Tumahole, Parys, after her parents moved to the northern Free State town.

She matriculated at the Moroka High School in Thaba Nchu and obtained her BA degree in Local Government at the North West University. Molibeli has worked at Metsimaholo Local Municipality as a housing and properties manager and served as director and chief director in the department of cooperative governance, traditional affairs and human settlements.

**It has been more than a hundred days since your appointment as the Fezile Dabi District Municipal Manager. What successes have you achieved since taking over?**

One of the key things I have managed to do together with my management team was to put in place proper structures, systems and policies. We have also filled critical management posts such as those of the chief financial officer and directors. My duty is to provide strategic management and support the management team.

My immediate focus is to make sure that the management team works in a collaborative manner and is focused on service deliver and I think I am achieving that objective. I told them we can achieve more as team than as individuals.

The first thing that we did was to focus on the report that we received from the auditor-general and address all the audit queries he had raised. Remember it is government priority to ensure that municipalities receive qualified audits by 2014. We went to administrative strategic sessions to deal with the issue head-on.

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## **What are the challenges facing as the municipality and how do you intend to address them?**

Our biggest challenge is to communicate effectively with our communities and optimally support our local municipalities. We have programs that we are running in local municipalities but unfortunately we do not always inform our communities about what we are doing to address their service delivery concerns. For me that is a challenge because I am convinced that the ordinary citizens in this district still do not know what is the role of the district municipality. That is because our role is not clearly felt within the communities we are serving.

## **What are you doing to educate communities about the difference between district and local municipality?**

We are trying to do that through platforms such as consultation meeting during the drafting of Integrated Development Plans for us and local municipalities as well as public participation meetings where we showcase our services. For an example, we had a storm water project which we handed over to Ngwathe Local Municipality whereas the district we were an implementing agent. So the community got to know that Fezile Dabi is contributing to addressing their service delivery needs.



## **How are you going to ensure that local municipalities in the district deliver on their major infrastructure projects?**

In terms of the legislation, we are responsible for a bulk infrastructure and that is one area where we are making sure there is delivery.

## **Tell us briefly about your IDP**

In terms of the figures, we have budgeted R16.5-million for infrastructure projects. We also implement certain projects in municipalities on behalf of the provincial government. They include, for an example, the construction of the Fezile Dabi Stadium, Relebohile Clinic on behalf of Public works and Metsimaholo Regional Hospital

## **You have four local municipalities in your district municipality how do you divide you services to each of them and which municipality in most in need of funds?**

Every town has its own needs and we are trying to address them and the nice thing is that we do is that we ask all of the municipalities to provide us with their priority challenges so we can play our part in helping them. Each municipality has unique needs and we try to address them accordingly.

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## **What is your role as far as local municipalities are concerned?**

Our role is to support the local municipalities. We pride ourselves as the district municipality that we have a team of expert we deploy at municipalities to assist with technical and management issues.

In Moqhaka Local Municipality we have deployed a financial expert who stayed there for three months to assist the municipality with financial statements.

In Mafube Local Municipality, we have also deployed a financial expert who is assisting with financial management. The first step for municipalities to be financially viable is to achieve clean audit reports. We have also assisted our municipalities with human resources policies.

## **What are doing to achieve clean audit by 2014?**

At the strategic session to deal with the auditor general's report, we agreed that issues raised should be addressed promptly. We have a problem of not providing supporting documents to the AG. For instance we would argue that we sent a report to AG but we cannot proof that such report was received. We have appointed a compliance officer who puts a red flag to all the departments as far as financial management issues are concerned and hope got achieve a clean audit in 2013.

## **You personally took part in last year's five kilometres awareness fun walk, tell us how it was?**

I am very much involved in sports and running five kilometres is really nothing, if maybe you were asking me about comrades marathon (Laughing) that would be a challenge. I am fulltime netball player. I go to gym and exercise a lot. I am very involved in sports.

## **What is your experience in Local governance?**

My first job after university was at Porchefstroom City Council, now Tlokwe Local Municipality, where I was a senior housing officer. I also worked at Metsimaholo Local Municipality where I was the housing and properties manager. I moved to Cogta where I became director and later chief director. I have an honours and masters' degree in local governance.

[Source: [www.theweekly.co.za](http://www.theweekly.co.za)]