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## **ELIAS MOTSOLEDI MAYOR JULIA MATHEBE READY TO GET HER HANDS DIRTY**

GROBLERSDAL –Newly-sworn in mayor of Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality, Clr. Julia Mathebe, has promised an increased focus on electrification, building of roads and rolling out refuse-removal services over the new five year term.

Clr. Mathebe was elected unopposed (on Friday 19/08/2016) as mayor to begin another term as mayor of the municipality, which is one of four local municipalities that make the Sekhukhune District Municipality in the Limpopo Province.

The occasion included the election of Speaker of Council, Chief Whip and Chairperson of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC), also saw the swearing in of 60 councillors from the six political parties represented in council. The one councillor representing Economic Freedom Fighters, to make a total of 61 councillors, was withdrawn by his party, process for his replacement underway.

The parties represented in council are African National Congress (**ANC-41**), Economic Freedom Fighters (**EFF-10**); Democratic Alliance (**DA – 5**); Bolshevik Party of South Africa (**BPSA -3**); Mpumalanga Party (**MP – 1**) and South African Maintenance and Estate Beneficiaries Association (**SAMEBA-1**)

The municipal chambers were packed to the rafters as invited guests, dignitaries and members of the public graced the occasion in large numbers. Guests included traditional leaders, a number of outgoing councillors, and other councillors from neighbouring municipalities within the Sekhukhune District.

The public gallery was filled to capacity with most of the guests were forced to watch the proceedings standing with all the available seats taken. Clr. Mathebe first became mayor of the municipality mid-way through the previous term in July 2014, however she said the new term was the beginning of a “mammoth task” for the ruling party.

“I need to ensure that the collective I am leading is committed to the level that my organisation needs them to be,” she said.

Clr. Mathebe said receiving a renewed mandate from the communities within the Elias Motsoaledi was humbling. “The previous council tried to put systems in place, in the IDP that we’ve adopted has incorporated the most pressing needs of our communities... our challenge remains the limited financial resources.”

She said despite the limited financial resources that the municipality faces, they would be consulting the communities more and in instances where financial difficulties are being experienced everyone within the municipal boundaries would be aware.

Mayor Mathebe said the highlights of the new term will be the construction and maintenance of roads across the villages and townships in the municipality.

“Our main focus will be building roads and that’s where we are going to spend much of money so that our communities get proper roads.”

She said they remained focused on the empowerment of SMMEs and as a result they have reached agreement with developers of shopping malls within the municipality to ensure that space is reserved for smaller local businesses.

“We are very much committed to make sure that our local business people grow so that they assist us in helping to deal with poverty,” she said.

Councillor David Tladi was also elected - unopposed as Speaker of Council last Friday. His first task as the presiding officer was to allow the vote for the appointment of the chairperson of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee to go via secret ballot. This was after the opposition parties were opposed to the vote by show of hands. The secret ballot didn’t however have any impact on the result as Justice Makunyane, who was nominated by the majority party received the most votes.

Clr. Tladi said as a speaker presiding over a multi-party council he needed to ensure that he works well with all the political parties represented.

“I need to be like a fair referee so that all parties can have a good working relationship with me. In councils where the speaker isn’t playing fair, the councils are not able to operate to the best of their abilities,” Tladi said.

Councillor Tebogo Phahlamohlaka returned for another term as the chief whip of council. The EFF, with 10 seats, are the official opposition in council.

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