



Bela Bela Local Municipality

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Question and Answer session with Mayor Fred Hlungwane

1. What is your background in local government

It is mainly as a community organiser and a political activist. However this is my first time participating at Municipal Council level. I have always look at local government sphere as a very vibrant and interesting area, largely because of its closeness to communities. So, I look forward to learning more about municipal matters, sharing ideas with colleagues and making a difference in the lives of residents of Bela Bela

2. How do you see your role as the Mayor

I believe the era of ceremonial mayoral figures has long past. People are interested in service delivery not the pomp and ceremony that comes with the office. I am personally interested in the quality of work too. I would be happy to built a 2km of road that last for 20 years than to built a 20km road that only last 2 years.

So, my term will be that of an innovative, energetic and a hands-on Mayor. I am here to serve my people, and under my watch, the entire municipal system will be positioned to deliver on the promises and commitment we made to our community.

3. Are you an ANC Mayor or a Mayor of every citizen in Bela Bela

Although I was elected by the membership and supporters of the African National Congress, they did so that I could serve the people and residents of Bela Bela irrespective of their political affiliation, colour or creed.

My duty is to ensure that the Constitution, Bill of Rights and all laws of the country find daily expression in the lives of all citizens in Bela Bela.

4. What is your vision for Bela Bela

It is to improve the quality of life of an ordinary resident in Bela Bela. There must be a concerted effort to achieve that. Every resident must have a sense of ownership and pride in our municipality.

Our town must be clean at all material times, our infrastructure must be of world standard, our people should be able to led decent lives, find jobs, shelter and comfort. Our learners, parents and business should be involved in all arenas of community life, including the education of everybody.

My vision, therefore is to be able to look back at the joint efforts of all residents, under our leadership and say, we have achieved an impossible dream.

5. What is your number one priority

To ensure that every household in Bela Bela have access to clean drinkable water, uninterrupted supply of electricity and have their dignity affirmed continuously by having, amongst other proper sanitation.

6. What did you do before you became Mayor of Bela Bela

I was a tour guide for four years in one of the local lodges. And I was also a sales coordinator for three years at retail store here in Bela Bela. So, I can say I know what quality service is, but importantly know the needs of our people. I have come to appreciate the importance of treating all clients with respect and dignity. Client satisfaction is a cornerstone of any business including the municipality.

7. Are you a family man (do you have children)

Yes, I am a responsible young man, who appreciate the importance of having a social support unit, such as family. I am engage to my partner, whom I have two beautiful kids, Palesa (3 yr old) and Ben (eight yr old).

8. How old are you

29 years old.

I have been asked that question many times since my election to the Office. And I find it unfortunate, regrettable and unhelpful. For me, it exposes the ignorance and lack of faith by some of our people in the promise of the youth.

What it means is that, you must wait to turn 40, 50 or even 60 years to achieve your goals or be in a position to make an meaningful contribution to our own community.

In reality, I am very old for this position. Joseph Kabila, was elected President of Democratic Congo, at my age (29 yrs old). The new Mayor of Musina Local Municipality is younger than me at 27 years and she is a woman. Today, you have CEO's of multinational companies who are younger than 20 years. And this is not a new phenomenon. For instance, the first black Mayor of Plettenberg Bay Municipality in Western Cape was 22 yrs old when he was elected into office in 1995, just a year after the first all inclusive, democratic elections.

9. What is it that people do not know about you

That I'm a good football player. I still play "good" football, better than some of Bafana Bafana players.

I am also a good listener. You see, you don't receive and drive foreign tourists around or even serve paying clients if you are not good at listening and interpreting people's needs and wants.

10. What is your favourite meal

I am into traditional dish, preferably pap and morogo. That does not mean i do not enjoy western or Asian food.

11. Your best and worse characteristics

I would say my best attribute is that I am a good listener and a smart worker. My personal orientation and philosophy is that the first duty to love, honour and serve your people and community, is to listen and work smart. These are powerful virtues, which i believe, are rooted in the service of mankind. Listening, for instance, unify people, build bridges and strong communities.

12. Best quote

There are two quotes, one by Martin Luther King and the other by Mohammed Ali.

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stand in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy – Martin Luther King

He, who is not courageous enough to take risks, will accomplish nothing in life
- Mohammed Ali.