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Services won't come without payments

Written by Nkosana Lekotjolo

Don't expect water to run when you turn on your tap to drink or bath. Also don't expect the lights to come on when you press the switch.

This is because without revenue collection, municipalities will simply fail to deliver basic services.

Johannesburg residents and millions of others residing in metros and municipalities across the country, face the possibility of having their basic services not delivered to their homes.

Municipalities are tasked with providing basic services to communities like water, electricity, refuse removal, fixing of roads and recreational facilities amongst others. These services are made possible by consistent payments from businesses, government departments and households.

Unfortunately, according to the National Treasury, majority of all 257 municipalities are in deep financial distress and might be in the brink of a crisis.

While many other communities still wait for services to be delivered to them, yet there are services that are consistently being delivered to millions of households by municipalities. Regrettably, many of the businesses and households are not paying for the services they receive.

Some have even gone to an extent of illegally connecting themselves to the municipal electricity grid and water infrastructure.

Strangely, many customers either refuse to see or are blinded to see the relationship between the costs of bringing services to their doorsteps and paying for services.

If we continue this trajectory, many more municipalities face bankruptcy. Without payment consistency to municipalities on time by businesses and customers, there simply won't be monies left to provide those services.

For municipalities to provide services to the customers that they serve – for this they need a wide range of resources, including financial resources. Finances impact heavily on a municipality's ability to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

The Constitution under Section 229 and Municipal Systems Act empower municipalities to collect all the money that is due from the services they provide to customers.

Customers have no excuse but to pay for the municipal services they receive, because the law compels the municipalities to collect money.

There won't be continuous services if municipalities don't collect money owed.

Those who can pay must pay. However, businesses and customers who are struggling to pay for services should approach their municipalities.

Businesses, government departments and customers have a duty to pay for the services they consume.

The City of Johannesburg has various programmes to assist those struggling to pay their municipal bills.

Businesses and customers who are battling to keep up with their municipal bills can approach the City at any customer service centre to work-out the payment plan based on their affordability, by signing an Acknowledgement of Debt.

Equally so, indigent households can be referred to the Expanded Social Package (ESP) programme and pensioners can also get rebates on their properties.

Collectively, we have a duty to stop the total collapse of municipal services by paying our accounts consistently, in full and on time.

For more information visit our website at www.joburg.org.za or contact our call centre at **0860 562-874**

Payment options available:

- At customer service centers (Cash and cards accepted)
- Bank EFT and Walk-in (Standard Bank) only walk in deposit/ATM)
- eJoburg (Client need to register through COJ Website)
- EASYPAY i.e. Pick n Pay, ShopRite/ Checkers, Woolworths
- Post Office
- DEBIT ORDER (Customers need to apply)



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