RAYMOND MHLABA MUNICIPALITY
UMANYANO KUPHUHLISO

Tel: 046 645 7400/7451 | Fax: 046 645 2562
8 Somerset Street | Fort Beaufort, 5720 | P.O.Box 36, Fort Beaufort, 5700

MAYOR'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Mayor: Cllr Sinethemba Mjakuca | Inaugural Council Meeting | Municipal Council Chambers | 25 November 2026

Hon Speaker, Cllr Nomhle Sango

Chief Whip of Council, Thobeka Mjo

Cllrs of our municipality

Iinkosi Zelizwe lakowethu

Iinkokheli eziphuma kuMbutho WeSizwe (ANC)

Iinkokheli ezisuka kwimibutho yezo politico ezikhoyo

Municipal Manager and her Management Team

Esteemed Guests

Most importantly, abantu bento, abahlali balapha eRaymond Mhlaba

On behalf of the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality, mandithathe elithuba ndibulise kuyo wonke umntu okunye nathi ngale mini intle kangaka.

Le mini yanamhlanje marks a historic milestone in the democratic journey kulo Masipala wethu.

As we convene this Inaugural Sitting of the newly elected Council, kubalulekile ukuba ndiwenze amazwi oombulelo kubantu bakuthi ngokuthi bathathe inxaxheba kunyulo lorhulumente wasemakhaya (local government elections) ebesinalo ngomhla we 4 ka November 2026.

Sikhuthazekile kwaye sichulumancile yi level of confidence, loyalty, and trust abantu bakuthi demonstrated through their active participation during the 2026 Local Government Elections.

By exercising their democratic right to vote, our communities have placed their trust and aspirations in this Council, entrusting us with the responsibility of building a better future for all a mandate we take with the utmost passion and appetite.

Kubalulekile ukuba siyenze yona iemphasis kwinto yokuba le mini yanamhlanje yona is a powerful reminder that our democracy continues to mature and deepen.

Kwakhona masiyenze ireflection yokuba the peaceful conduct of the elections and the establishment of this Council stand as clear evidence that the democratic institutions of our country remain strong and stable.

Hon Speaker

We reflect on the local government elections because we derive our existence from them, ukuba bezingakhange zibekho ezi elections, ngesingekho sonke apha; hence, we take pride in appreciating the commitments and dedication of the IEC in presiding over free, fair and credible elections.

It is equally vital that we note that our sitting takes place when the entire world, on an annual basis, observes the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence and Femicide, as well as the World AIDS Day Commemoration, neqala nge 25 November-10 December 2026.

This period is very crucial in the political calendar of our government; hence, kubalulekile ukuba siyibethelele into yokuba urhulumente wethu continues to advance awareness and advocacy initiatives through an inclusive, multi-sectoral approach that unites government, civil society, communities, and stakeholders in addressing GBVF, HIV/AIDS, and social vulnerabilities.

We join hands to acknowledge the start of the 16 Days of Activism Against GBVF, sitsho ngamxhelo mnye, sithi NO TO GBVF.

Hon Speaker

As we embark on this new term of office, we must acknowledge the foundation laid by the two successive ANC-led administrations that preceded us under the leadership of former Mayors, Councilor Bandile Ketelo and Councilor Nomhle Sango.

Their stewardship guided the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality through a critical period of growth and consolidation, transforming it from a newly established municipal entity into a stable and resilient institution. Despite numerous challenges, they laid a firm foundation for service delivery, institutional development, and good governance.

Through their leadership and the collective commitment of Council, significant strides were made in strengthening administrative capacity, enhancing institutional stability, and advancing a developmental local government that serves the people of Raymond Mhlaba.

Today, we build on that legacy as we continue advancing the municipality and improving the lives of our communities.

It therefore goes without saying that we inherit a firm foundation upon which to build. One of the most important lessons from previous administrations is that effective governance can only thrive where there is stability, unity of purpose, and a shared commitment to serving our people.

Kungenxa yolo bumbano nentsebenziswano, the municipality was able to strengthen its administration and create a more stable platform for service delivery. Therefore, as the new Council, we commit ourselves to preserving and further strengthening this stability, recognizing that the progress we seek can only be achieved when we work together in the best interests of our communities.

Ayisisithelanga into yokuba sustainable development and effective service delivery can only be achieved through a united, functional, and people-centered municipality. Where there is division, progress is delayed; where there is unity, communities benefit.

Kwakhona, njengorhulumente okhokelwa yi-African National Congress, we have always embraced an inclusive approach to governance. From the dawn of democracy in 1994, the ANC demonstrated its commitment to cooperation and nation-building by establishing the Government of National Unity, recognizing the importance of partnership among political formations in strengthening the foundations of government.

It is in this same spirit that we commit ourselves to working with all parties represented in this Council, all sectors of society, and all our communities to build uMasipala omanyeneyo, osebenzayo, nojongene neemfuno zabantu bawo - a municipality that is united, effective, and responsive to the aspirations of the people of Raymond Mhlaba.

Masiyibeke icace into yokuba siyalazi uxanduva esiluthweleyo sileli Bhunga; hence, we are fully aware that the success of this Council will not be measured by the resolutions we adopt or the statements we make.

Rather, impumelelo yethu iya kubonakala kubomi babantu bethu through the tangible improvements we bring to their daily lives, the quality of services we deliver, the opportunities we create, and the extent to which we restore dignity, hope and development to our communities.

Asiphazami xa sisithi urhulumente okhokelwa yi-African National Congress awenzi zithembiso, wenza izibophelelo. This understanding has always been at the heart of our approach to governance: that public office is a duty to serve, a responsibility to deliver, and a commitment to improve the material conditions of our people.

Guided by the mandate entrusted to us by our people, and driven by an unwavering commitment to improving their quality of life, we are determined to translate those commitments into measurable outcomes and meaningful change in every community we serve.

Njengorhulumente omtsha, singena kweli xesha lolawulo sinombono ocacileyo, injongo efanayo, nentando eqiqileyo yokwenza umsebenzi wokuba kuphuhle uluntu ingakumbi impula zikalu jaca

We enter this term with a firm resolve to govern effectively, deliver on our mandate, and advance the developmental aspirations of the people of Raymond Mhlaba.

At this point, kubalulekile ukuba siyibethelele into yokuba singurhulumente ozimiseleyo ukugcina izithembiso zakhe ebantwini bakhe

Sithi ke ngoko, as government, we recommit ourselves to strengthening partnerships and working together with all our stakeholders, particularly:

- Our communities, Abantu bakuthi, who remain our primary stakeholders and the very reason we exist as government.
- Iinkosi zelizwe lakowethu, whose traditional leadership structures remain important partners in community mobilization, development and social cohesion.
- Amasebe kaRhulumente, through strengthened intergovernmental relations and coordinated service delivery.

- Imibutho Yasekuhlaleni, as partners in advancing social development and addressing the challenges facing our communities.
- The Private Sector, whose investment and participation are critical to economic growth and development.
- The Business Community, particularly in advancing local economic development, supporting SMMEs and creating employment opportunities.
- Organized Labor, as strategic partners in promoting decent work, economic transformation and constructive engagement.

Bantu bakuthi, masiyikhumbule into yokuba, as a government led by the African National Congress, our commitment to putting people at the center of development is deeply rooted in the principles of the Freedom Charter.

The Freedom Charter makes a profound declaration:

"The People Shall Govern." – "Abantu Baya Kulawula."

Le nkululeko ayithethi nje ngokuba abantu mababavote ngexesha lonyulo kuphela , koko ithetha ukuba abantu mababe nelizwi kwizigqibo ezichaphazela ubomi babo mihla le.

It is against this historical commitment that we continue to strengthen public participation and empower our communities to influence and shape municipal development priorities.

Abantu mabangabi ngababukeli nje kuphuhliso lwabo, koko mababe ngabathathi-nxaxheba abaphambili kulo.

Our communities must not merely be consulted as a matter of compliance, but meaningfully involved in identifying their needs, determining their priorities, and shaping the development trajectory of their municipalities.

Ndicinga ukuba kubalulekile sikhumbuzane ukuba thina, as elected representatives, our constitution places a noble responsibility on us: we are obliged to be servants of the people.

Yiyo loonto njenge Nkokheli zeli Bhunga, it's mandatory ukuba we must consistently uphold the principles of ethical governance,

Olunye uxanduva esinalo is to safeguard public trust and preserve the values embodied in the legacy of uTata uRaymond Mhlaba (Oom Ray), whose life was characterized by selfless service, discipline, integrity and an unwavering commitment to justice.

Masilukhulele uxanduva sikhuthazane ekulikhokeleni eli Bhunga ngesidima kunye nesithozela. It is our interest and wish that our conduct must reflect the highest standards of integrity and responsibility expected of public representatives.

Siyakholelwa kwinto yokuba sonke apha kweli Bhunga, we are the leaders our communities deserve; hence, we hope for a united, disciplined, and accountable leadership that puts people first, advances development, and improves service delivery.

Furthermore, if our leadership is centered on collectivism and equally demonstrates a unity of purpose in dealing with and confronting challenges, it becomes easier to source and develop solutions.

We are under no illusion about the challenges confronting our municipality. Among the key priorities that require urgent attention are:

- Municipal financial sustainability and the management of Eskom debt
- Broadening and strengthening the municipal revenue base
- Upgrading aging municipal infrastructure.
- Rehabilitation and maintenance of roads and internal streets.
- Promoting local economic development and job creation.

Ekupheleni kosuku, thina siyazazi ukuba olu xanduva silunikeyo ngabantu bakuthi lokuba sikhokele loMasipala wethu. We are equal to the task.

It makes sense kuthi ukuba sibe clear on the challenges esinazo, including possible solutions; hence, siyazi ukuba ezi challenges zethu require bold leadership, sound planning, institutional discipline, and strong partnerships across all spheres of government.

As part of our commitment to finding long-lasting solutions ukuzama ukuphucula impilo zabantu bakuthi, we will continue to actively engage with provincial and national government departments, state-owned entities, and development partners to mobilize resources and implement sustainable solutions.

Kuni booceba abafikayo, ivision yethu singu Masipala ithi “ a service excellence driven municipality, and as we commence this new term of office, let us unite behind a shared vision of a municipality that is stable, inclusive, developmental and people-centered.

Let us work together to build stronger communities, a growing local economy and a capable municipality that delivers on its constitutional mandate

The people of Raymond Mhlaba have placed their trust in us

Let us honor that trust through dedicated service, ethical leadership and measurable progress.

Together, let us usher in a new decade of development, improved service delivery and shared prosperity for all.

Working Together, We can do more

UMANYANO KUPHUHLISO