

# Press Release: ASPIRE Board of Directors

The disturbing events of the **23 May 2016** wherein **3 of Aspire Executives (Mr Thabo Shenxane, Mrs Sandra Weppelman and Miss Zamela Kiviet)** were apprehended by the Hawks hereby refer. The Board of Directors of Aspire met on the **30 May 2016** and deliberated on the event leading to this arrest and other matters of importance to the life of the organisation. The **Board wishes to place certain facts on record with regards to the arrest of its Executives.**

1. The manner in which the arrest was carried out is condemned in the harshest of terms. The Board is of the view that there could have been a dignified manner of carrying out such an arrest especially in the light that the investigations are still continuing and accused persons are innocent until proven guilty, if the arrest was necessary at all. Bearing in mind the professional integrity of the staff members concerned and the organisation which they represent, as opposed to the unnecessary heavy handed tactics that was used by the Hawks.
2. The three Executives were arrested and charged with Fraud, Theft and Money Laundering, as per the documents presented in court. These charges relate to the R309 000 payment they processed for the settlement of the legal fees of Ms Mnqeta, the former CEO of Aspire.
3. The payment of Ms Mnqeta's legal fees was agreed to as part of her negotiation with the Amathole District Municipality (ADM) Council, represented by the Municipal Manager, to have her reinstated to her former position after she had signed a settlement agreement with the previous Board. The agreement was that she would be paid out the balance of her employment contract in exchange for her resignation.
4. This payment was made then in terms of a resolution of the ADM Council, as the share-holder, and with the full knowledge and support of the Board at the time. The current Board is also satisfied that the Executives were justified in carrying out the instructions of the ADM Council.
5. Their case, as presented in Court during their bail hearing, is totally separate from that of the Executive Mayor of ADM, Honourable Nomasikizi Konza, and therefore plays no part in the alleged "R6m fraud bust" as reported in the Daily Dispatch.
6. In light of the above, the Board will support the three executives, not only in their defence of these charges, but if appropriate, in their seeking legal recourse should it be established that their arrests were wrongful or that their prosecutions were malicious.

**Ms Portia Loyilane - Chairperson: Aspire - 30 May 2016**

