

City of Mbombela engages in talks with Eskom

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MBOMBELA - The City of Mbombela Local Municipality (CMLM) is engaging with Eskom to settle its debt and prevent the power utility from cutting the municipality's electricity in December.

Eskom said that no agreement has yet been reached, but CMLM has confirmed that acting CFO, Wiseman Khumalo is engaging with Eskom regarding settling the debt.

Last week, acting municipal manager Neil Diamond accused Eskom of acting in bad faith, after the publication of a notice which alerted residents of an indefinite shut down of all bulk electricity to the city by December 19 due to non-payment and mounting debt.

"However, the municipality is not going to be cut as such. It must be noted that the municipality's Eskom account is about one and a half months in arrears, unlike other municipalities where accounts could be long overdue," said municipal spokesman, David Shabangu.

According to a statement released by

Eskom spokesman, Eric Khoza, the power utility continues to engage with CMLM on overdue accounts.

"It is unfortunate that such engagements have not yet provided the desired outcomes," he said. Khoza added that there is currently no payment plan between Eskom and the municipality.

According to the notice published by Eskom on Thursday October 26, CMLM is currently indebted to Eskom to the amount of R152,4 million for the bulk supply of electricity, part of which has been outstanding and in escalation since September 2016.

Operational manager of the Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business & Tourism (KLCBT) Linda Grimbeek, said the chamber was cautiously optimistic that the power will not be cut.

"A revenue-enhancement strategy has been put into place to ensure all outstanding debt owed to the CMLM is paid in order to ensure that it can honour its payments to Eskom. On behalf of the KLCBT I have confirmed and verified the information made

public regarding talks between the CMLM and Eskom to ensure that the lights stay on, but as an organisation we will not sit idly by and will be keeping a close eye on developments," she said.

- The urgent application brought to the High Court in Mbombela on Tuesday by the

Graskop, Sabie and Lydenburg chambers of commerce to compel Thaba Chweu Local Municipality to settle its debt, was denied.

Gwilym Reese, Sabie chamber chairman, said the court ruled the application as not urgent, and that they would approach the Constitutional Court.



Images: Sourced pixabay