

Amatola Water Board on hunt for new CEO

Successful candidate set to pocket between R1.5m and R2.5m remuneration annually on a five-year performance-based contract

VUYOLWETHU SANGOTSHA

The Amatola Water Board is casting the net wide in its search of a new CEO.

The water utility has advertised a CEO post, with the successful candidate set to pocket a R1.5m to R2.5m remuneration package on a five-year performance-based contract.

Amatola spokesperson Nosisa Sogayise said the absence of the "critical strategic member" in the organisation put pressure and strain as the executives had to act interchangeably.

"That alone is a challenging scenario that affects the strategic performance in the organisation," she said.

Sogayise said a new CEO would be tasked with steadying the ship.

"The CEO has a responsibility to stabilise the organisation working together with the executives, the board and organised labour," she said.

"Good governance incorporates everything that has to do with effectiveness and responsible management, which entails also stabilising the institution."

The last time the board had a full-time CEO was in 2018 when it hired Vuyo Zitumane, who resigned in November 2020 after allegations of nepotism emerged in the wake of infighting among interim board members.

The National Prosecuting Au-

thority declined to prosecute Zitumane, who left the water utility under a cloud.

The Special Investigating Unit recommended last year that Zitumane and other current and former officials from the water board be criminally prosecuted on charges of flouting procurement processes relating to Covid-19 related contracts.

To add to Amatola woes, water & sanitation minister Senzo Mchunu reversed the appointment of Petrus Maselaganye Matji, hired as Amatola Water CEO early in 2022.

However, Amatola declined to comment on the reasons behind Mchunu's decision, referring questions to the ministry.

Asked whether Mchunu had approved the current search for an Amatola Water CEO, the minister's spokesperson, Kamogelo Mogotsi, promised to respond later.

"The minister is travelling at the moment," Mogotsi said.

In August 2022, Dr Linda Makuleni assumed duty as acting CEO. She had previously been CEO at SA Weather Service for 10 years.

Asked why it took so long to fill the critical post, Sogayise said a number of factors contributed to the delay.

"In the main, a suitable candidate has yet to be identified for the position.

"The position requires a balance in the water sector management level, broad stakeholder engagement and management, public sector experience and proven experience in dealing with organised labour.

"Amatola Water is an engineering-based organisation, hence the position strongly requires an engineering background and qualifications."

Sogayise said Amatola intended to finalise the recruitment of the permanent CEO within 90 days, "looking at the involved processes".

She said in the executive positions the recruitment had a tendency of taking longer than anticipated due to other circumstances that prevail in the process.

"This is one of the positions that the interim board is determined to fill after the position of the CFO to stabilise the organisation," she said.

"It is in the organisation's interest to get the position of the CEO speedily filled, especially with Amatola Water involved in many projects, including the intervention at Makana local municipality, etc.

"Amatola Water is in the process of increasing bulk water volumes to both Buffalo City Metro and Amathole District Municipality [key bulk water customers] with package plants setting in the process at Sandile water treatment works.

"This number of projects needs a full-time person to report to the board of Amatola Water and to the stakeholders as well.

"The kind of work that Amatola Water does needs to leave no vacuum.

"Moreover, the water sector is a demanding business. It needs prompt decision-making as it deals with the lives of people. In this sector, decision-making is not postponed."

The Dispatch reported in May that problems at Amatola Water Board appear far from over after the Makhanda high court ruled in favour of five board members whose term of office was terminated by Mchunu in 2022.

Mchunu fired the 10-member board in March 2022 citing instability in the water utility as the reason.

The other five members did not challenge Mchunu's decision to fire them.

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DENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

the people, not for the people"

SPECIAL MEETING:

8 (2) of the Local Government Act
in Section 15 (1) of Standing Rules
Municipality will hold its Special Council

3 (Friday)
10h00

Local Government: Municipal
it is also open to members of the

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