MINUTES OF MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRETORIA ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION, PROPERTY LAW COMMITTEE AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CITY OF TSHWANE, REVENUE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT, ON THE 10th of JULY 2020, HELD VIA MS TEAMS

1. ATTENDANCES AND APOLOGIES:

PRESENT:
SAM CHEPAPE (TSHWANE REVENUE PRETORIA)
NORMAN MKHWANAZI (TSHWANE REVENUE PRETORIA)
SOPHIE DLADLA (TSHWANE RATES)
KEDIBONE MORADI (TSHWANE RATES)
VINCENT MHLONGO (INTERFILE)
NANETTE VAN VEENHUYZEN (TSHWANE FINANCE)
NICOLE PAGEL (PAA)
GARETH SHEPPERSON (PAA)
MIRIAM JANSEN VAN VUUREN (PAA)
ANTON THERON (GAA)
DONALD MOKGEHLE (PAA)
CHANTELLE GLADWIN-WOOD (JAA)
LOUISE KRUGER (JAA)

NOTE: There was not attendance register taken, so there may have been more personnel in attendance. It was difficult to take attendance over Teams.

APOLOGIES:
RONNY SHILENGE (DIVISIONAL HEAD OF REVENUE)
JODIE VAN BROEKHUIZEN (PAA)
ANNEMARIE BURGER (TSHWANE RATES)

2. MATTERS ARISING

a. **"Memo Request Hold":** This query was resolved;

b. **Applications are disappearing from the system:**
No examples were received, therefore Tshwane could not investigate this.

c. **Once queries are logged, they cannot be traced:**
Escalation and retrieval tab was explained in the manual.

d. **Requests for an instruction manual explaining how the system works and how to escalate applications:**
Instruction manual was received from Interfile and distributed to members.

e. **What is the estimated turn-around time for applications and certificates:**
7 days for a clearance memos and 5 to 7 days for a clearance certificate, but these are only the anticipated turnaround times once the backlog is under control.

f. Exclusive Use Areas:
Tshwane officials will be meeting with Interfile to adapt the system to include Exclusive Use Areas. Until then, the EAU certificates are and will be issued manually.

3. FOR DISCUSSION:

i) Memo of 6 July 2020: Inaccuracies:

According to the Stats in the memo of the 6th of July, there is only 1 application outstanding from May 2020. The PAA obtained lists from members of applications submitted in May 2020, and which have not been actioned yet. According to the preliminary list, there are way over 600 applications still outstanding from May. Further lists were submitted by members just before the meeting. Mr Chepape undertook to go through the list and attend to all applications on that list by the 17th of July 2020. He confirmed further that they have had team meetings and the City of Tshwane have undertaking to get the backlog cleared within 4 weeks from the date of the meeting. He confirmed further that two thirds of the Tshwane staff were back in the offices and that the rest are working from home.

Mr Chepape undertook to furnish the PAA with updated stats of all applications outstanding by no later than Tuesday the 14th of July 2020.

The PAA asked if it would be possible to obtain the stats of all outstanding applications, per firm. Mr Mkhwanazi confirmed that he is able to draw an age analysis of all applications and give accurate stats. He and Mr Chepape confirmed further that they can give stats per firm and same will be sent out to the PAA, by the 14th of July 2020, for distribution to the PAA members.

The question was posed on whether members should re-apply for figures or wait for their old applications to be attended to. Mr Chepape requested that the members do not re-apply. He assured the members that all applications will be attended too. He confirmed further that they have even more personnel working on the backlog applications now.

With regard to queries being forwarded to Joe Moloto, Mr Chepape requested that all email queries go to him rather. Mr Mkhwanazi suggested that the City allocate a specific email address for queries, which more than one person has access to, so that one person is not burdened with all the queries. They will look into this.

ii) Expiration of figures before clearance issued:

Delays in processing applications has been dealt with above. The question was posed on whether there is merit in asking members to upload updated meter readings / photos ever 2 weeks to avoid rejections / delays in applications. Mr Mkhwanazi will check with Interfile if they are able to upload updated photos or if they can add such a facility to the system.

iii & iv) Delays in issuing figures – update and feedback on proposed plan of action and delays in issuing certificates – update and feedback on proposed plan of action:

Dealt with above

v) Members still waiting to be registered on the system:

All of these queries must be referred to Mr Chepape and he will refer them to Vincent from Interfile.

vi) Allegations of Fraud and Corruption in Tshwane offices;

The committee members have received various allegations of possible fraud and corruption within the Tshwane offices. For example, a certain Mr XXX, who allegedly works at the Tshwane offices, but not in the clearance department, is adverting on social media that he can obtain figures within 24 hours at a cost of R950.00. There are many such people advertising these services, which means that someone at Tshwane is getting paid to expedite certain applications. All of the aforementioned information and posts have already been emailed to Mr Shilenge and Mr Chepape. The members are willing to assist wherever necessary to eradicate such practices. Mr Chepape confirmed that the City takes such allegations seriously and undertook to launch an investigation into the matter.

It was also suggested by Mr Shepperson, that, as the Tshwane System is capable of drawing an age analysis, it should be easy to trace figures or certificates which were issued within 24 or 48 hours of application / payment. It is accepted that some may have been the result of legitimate interventions by authorised personnel, but the remainder must surely point towards some form of corruption, especially when a pattern arises regarding the actual applicant. It was submitted that this should be the easiest way to identity the alleged culprits.

vii) REFUNDS – update:

The priority right now is to get rid of the backlog in clearance memos and certificates. Very little has been done as far as refunds are concerned, as there are not many personnel working on the refunds. All agreed that refunds, at this point in time, is not the priority.

viii) Meter readings – update:

This is the biggest problem relating to the issue of clearance figures. Mr Chepape acknowledged that there has been no improvement in this area since the meeting of the 6th of June, and it is mainly because the meter readings have not be done, that clearance figures have been so delayed. Mr Chepape will be discussing this matter with Mr Shilenge urgently as it is a major problem and they undertook to make this a priority, so that clearance applications are not delayed further by the lack of meter readings.

ix) Procedure for updating records after registration:

The new deeds office search gets uploaded onto the system, after registration, and Tshwane then updates their records and processes the refund. The new owner will, however, still have to go into the Call Centers to open their utility accounts. There is obviously going to be a massive backlog once they start working on the refunds, but according to Mr Chepape, the Customer Care centers are still able to assist in dealing with issues and problems after registration.

CONCLUSION / SUMMARY:

- There is an undertaking from Tshwane to send the updated stats by Tuesday the 14th of July 2020;
- Specific stats, per firm will also be supplied;
- Tshwane will revert regarding the uploading of new meter readings, to speed up the process;
- Any firms that are still trying to get registered on the system, must email Mr Chepape to liaise with Interfile;
- Allegations of fraud and corruption will be urgently investigated;
- Nanette will email the recording of the meeting to all attendees;
- The backlog will be cleared within 4 weeks.

4. NEXT MEETING

TBC

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Date: 15 JULY 2020

THE CITY OF TSHWANE

Ronny Shilenge

Divisional Head: Revenue Management

BY EMAIL: RonnyS@tshwane.gov.za; SamCH@TSHWANE.GOV.ZA

RE: RECORDAL

1. We hereby confirm that on 10 July 2020 a meeting was held between the Property Committee of the Pretoria Attorneys Association ("PAA") and the City of Tshwane regarding Rates Clearance Certificates, Rates Clearance Figures and related aspects.

2. Due to a general interest in the items for discussion, representatives of the Johannesburg Attorneys Association and the Gauteng Attorneys Association were also in attendance.

3. We hereby record and place on record inter alia that:
   - 3.1 Tshwane undertook to send the updated statistics by Tuesday the 14th of July 2020;
   - 3.2 Specific statistics, per firm will also be supplied;
   - 3.3 Tshwane will revert regarding the uploading of new meter readings;
   - 3.4 Any firms that are still trying to get registered on the system, must email Mr Chepape to liaise with Interfile;
   - 3.5 Allegations of fraud and corruption will be urgently investigated;

3.6 Nanette (from City of Tshwane) will email the recording of the meeting to all attendees;

3.7 Tshwane undertook that the backlog will be cleared within 4 weeks.

4. We acknowledge receipt of the items referred to in 3.1 and 3.2.

5. With regard to point 3.7 above, and in light of previous similar undertakings from the City of Tshwane, we request that weekly updates of the relevant statistics be made available to the PAA in order to ensure that sufficient progress is being made in clearing the backlog as per the undertaking.

Gareth Shepperson

Chairperson – Property Committee

(Sent electronically and therefor unsigned)