

## Meetings!

By Michael Laban. The HRT held and attended the following meetings last month.

- 01 July, Rugare B
- 03 July, Kuwadzana
- 08 July, Tafara.
- 09 July, Rugare A
- 10 July, Town House
- 12 July, Kuwadzana 3C
- 12 July, Zororo.
- 13 July, Sunningdale
- 13 July, Ward 30/31
- 02 July, Tafara
- 05 July, Rugare B
- 09 July, Kuwadzana.
- 09 July, ZWRCN offices
- 10 July, Budiriro
- 12 July, Warren Park
- 13 July, Glenview.
- 13 July, Marlborough
- 19 July, Kuwadzana 4

CoH Pre-budget meetings with women, disabled, and youth  
 Cleancity Meeting, Newlands.  
 21 July, Waterfalls, 1 August, National Clean Up  
 3 August, Warren Park D

This shows considerable activity, down at the grass roots. The acquisition of knowledge that can be shared at grass roots level. Education and training done at the grass roots level.

At least one meeting did not happen because the Cllr did not attend, but several more still happened despite

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*CoH toilets / ablutions in Mbare hostels.*



the Cllr’s absence. It is lamentable that Councillors do not seem to be able to be accountable, and show their faces, to the bosses - the people who elected them.

The people were most interested in (as seen by the time spent on the subjects) water and sanitation/health (which includes refuse collection), and roads. A most common question, “why are residents paying for services which are nonexistent”. Coupled with the most common message from any meetings to discuss the Supplementary Budget of next year’s Budget, “no increase in rates”.

And from High to Low Density suburbs, the same concerns were raised. Communication.

- The City must improve on transparency through dissemination of relevant information.
- The City does not give adequate time to residents for these submissions to be meaningful.
- No provision of budget copies at District Offices.
- Consistent feedback during budget review meetings.
- The people are willing to work with the CoH but residents are motivated to be partners in an open and transparent institution, not a closed, hidden one which only comes out to demand more money.

Leadership training was given by the HRT at appropriate meetings The HRT is a trust formed to empower citizens of their rights, to educate them to become a free and prosperous citizenry, and the HRT is non partisan - we work with any elected representatives...

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**Edit and layout**  
 K&I Presentations

# Retention: 10 %, then 25 %, but really nothing.

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By Michael Laban. Item 25 of the 1840th Council Minutes of 16 December 2014 outlines the set up of Ward Development Committees, to administer the 10 percent funds that will be retained by each ward, so that ratepayers can see actual benefits, and therefore be impelled to pay their rates. This was good news, we would get, and see to be getting, results from our rates. Ward Development Committees were set up (ours in January 2015), Wards were arranged into Areas, people were promoted to Area Administrators, every Area had it's own bank account, and we set out to encourage people to pay their rates, and pay them at the local office.

The reality took longer to get excited about. The 10 percent was never retained. All the bank accounts were raided by the CoH central Finance Dept...., and sometimes they remitted 10 percent to some wards. Usually the more vocal ones. And we struggled to know what our income was. We were given figures, but never told if this was all the income to the ward (billboards, parking fees, licences, etc.) or just the rates? In May 2016, we were finally given a list of the Ward 7 debtors

of 2015, so we could put pressure on our neighbours and ask them to clear their debts. But it was fast becoming obvious that CoH wanted us to do their job for them (collect the rates) but were not about to tell us anything, or let us have any information. There was no two way street.

Our October 2016 minutes showed, \$10 000 for August has been received. Only two months late to be remitted (a far cry from "retention") and surely a bit less than we thought it should have been. It would mean that CoH only collected \$100 000 in rates for a whole month, and Ward 7 is not a poor area! Through 2016, we got maybe \$84 000. We believe it should have been several million, almost half a million a month. And from October, we were not getting any money. They were selling us CoH materials (gravel and tar, etc.) at their rate/value.

But, at the end of 2016, we were told we would now "retain" 25 percent! We asked for details. We were promised documents, as soon as the workshop in Kadoma was over and it was fi-

nalised! Reports said, change "10" to "25" percent, otherwise everything else is the same.

And it was the same. There was no retention. There was no remittance. We have not received even a figures since it became 25 percent. Which in many ways is hardly surprising. All information is that 75 percent of the CoH income goes into employment costs (and in July 2015 the audit shows the seven senior executive were taking \$1.5 million a month in employment costs). So if 25 percent was retained at the ward level, that left 0 percent for the city to do anything with (like buy water treatment chemicals, new refuse collection vehicles, buy electricity...)

Post elections, nothing has changed.

*Mbare Matapi - where retained rates needed to be spent.*

## BIQ, the sad story and state of affairs

By Michael Laban. CoH is still struggling to replace BIQ following challenges in implementing the new system. The HRT has established from Cllrs and officials that there is divided opinion on whether or not to maintain the BIQ system. From informal sources, the group calling for replacement of BIQ

includes the IT manager and the Town Clerk. Reports say the main reason for wanting to move away from the BIQ is that they (the IT people) have failed to do a trial balance and bank reconciliation due to technical incapacities.

Attempts to introduce a new billing system has also encountered serious challenges which include the server being located in South Africa, absence of prime data, and erratic/inconsistent checking of bills. Sample bills seen have revealed that the CoH has to provide a PDF document which is transferred



electronically to South Africa where the server is domiciled. Bills shown reveal that for addresses do not have proper billing details. For example, I have seen - "47 Borrowdale Brook Road, Willowvale", and "10th Floor, Willowvale."

The current situation and status - since 21 March (when BIQ was disconnected) officials say they are unable to produce bills for residents.

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