

Wednesday 13th October, 2021 COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF SIAYA DEBATES

REPUBLIC OF KENYA
SIAYA COUNTY ASSEMBLY
THE HANSARD

Second County Assembly - Fifth Session

Wednesday 13th October, 2021

The House met at the County Assembly Chamber at 9.30 a.m.

[The Deputy Speaker (Hon. Odongo) in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MOTION

ADDRESS BY MAYOR ANDREW PROKOP OF TABER CANADA

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members representing Majority Leader.

Hon. Booker: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir! I Move:

THAT the thanks of the County Assembly to be recorded for the exposition of the public policy contained in the Address of Mr. Andrew Prokop, the Mayor of Taber, Canada to the Assembly delivered on Wednesday, 6th October, 2021 laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, 12th October, 2021.

The Address is as follows and allow me to read;

Re: Mayor Prokop's October 6, 2021 Address to the Assembly of the County Government of Siaya

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, His Excellency the Governor, and the assembled members of the County Government of Siaya.

It is an honor to be granted the opportunity to speak with you all today. I hope that I find you all well and safe. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me virtually.

I would like to start by saying thank you to those members of the delegation of the County Government of Siaya who visited Canada in 2018. We had an extraordinary visit from your delegation, and are thankful for the time they were able to spend in Taber and in Alberta. While circumstances have interrupted plans for a second visit, I hope that we shall have the opportunity to meet in person with each other once again.

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Above all, it is our sincerest hope that the delegation was able to see and learn some valuable information about the services we offer for water and wastewater, as well as see the vast technologies we have available for irrigation. It was a true honour to welcome the delegation, and hope that our hospitality lived up to your expectations.

I have been asked to speak with you in regards to a number of topics today, ranging from governance to irrigation. I hope that in the brief time I have with you that I am able to provide some useful information and discussion points we can continue our conversations from following today.

Since we are speaking as one governmental body to another, I would first like to address the topic of governance, and touch a little on how our own government operates. In Taber, we have seven sitting elected officials: one Mayor and six Councilors. Every four years, the citizens of Taber elect their Council and elect the Mayor. In fact, our municipal election will OFFICE OF THE MAYOR A - 4900 50 ST TABER, AB CANADA T1G 1T1 TELEPHONE: (403) 223-5500 FAX: (403) 223-5530 <http://www.taber.ca> email: mayor@taber.ca TOWN OF TABER be occurring in less than 2 weeks' time.

It is my understanding that the role of one of our Councillors is equivalent to a Member of the County Assembly in Kenya. The role of our Councillors is to be the voice of their citizens within Council Chambers. They are meant to speak for the community as a whole, and serve our community as one unit. We are governed by one particular piece of legislation called the Municipal Government Act, but are also bound by all laws our Provincial and Federal Governments also enact.

We are responsible for local bylaws and policies that govern only our Town and our citizens. While the Mayor is considered the head of Council, the Mayor is the first among equals, meaning that all seven members of our Council have an equal say and equal vote in our democratic process.

Once Council makes a final decision, the entirety of Council must support that decision, whether they voted for it or not. Once a decision of Council is rendered, the majority has spoken, and that decision becomes the official policy of Council. That is why our discussions in Council are meant to be robust and respectful.

We listen to all sides and arguments, but once a decision has been made, all members of Council support each other by following the same direction. One of the more important decisions any Council makes will involve the twinning of municipalities. Twinning involves a great deal of deliberation, as it impacts the future of a municipality and creates a legacy that impact the history of the municipality forever.

Since Siaya County has proposed the twinning of Taber and Bondo, both of our governments will be tasked with the deliberation of what that means to both communities. Canada has no formal body that exclusively deals with municipal twinning agreements. However, should the twinning of these two municipalities move forward, it will have to be a decision mutually agreed upon by both governments by resolution.

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The Town of Taber has a history of twinning with a municipality in Japan, although this relationship focusses on cultural exchanges with students, and less of an inter-governmental knowledge sharing aspect as Siaya County has proposed. Should both government bodies agree by resolution to twin the municipalities, an agreement on the scope of the twinning, various associated assistance, and funding will have to be crafted.

Both of our government administrative staff will be able to work on these logistics to bring it to our respective governments to deliberate further on the future of potential twinning. Should the twinning come to pass, it will be marked as an historic decision that outlines what each municipality will offer each other.

As we are speaking of historic decisions, I would like to speak a little of Taber's history to give you an idea of how our community became a hub of irrigated farmland.

The story of Taber has been closely linked with irrigation for the majority of our history. Our first largest OFFICE OF THE MAYOR A - 4900 50 ST TABER, AB CANADA T1G 1T1 TELEPHONE: (403) 223-5500 FAX: (403) 223-5530 <http://www.taber.ca> email: mayor@taber.ca TOWN OF TABER economy was the mining industry, but when the 1920s saw the decline of mining, our community was faced with potential economic ruin.

Fortunately our pioneers had the foresight to see that a new technology could lead to a different economic driver, and therefore the installation of irrigation throughout Southern Alberta led Taber to a major recovery that saw us through the Great Depression and has created the agriculture-based community we see today.

In brief, the irrigation throughout our region is done through the use of pivots. These are essentially large pipe-based sprinkler systems that sit above cropland and move in a pre-determined configuration, watering the crops as they move. Computers operate the majority of our pivots in Southern Alberta, and farmers are able to put them on schedules and different rotations depending on the crops, time of year, and weather.

These systems are particularly effective on large landmasses, and are an integral part of the agricultural industry in Southern Alberta. Farmers purchase an allocation of water from the Taber Irrigation District based on the peak accumulation from our watershed.

Our irrigation water comes directly from the Old man River Basin, which receives its water from the Waterton, St. Mary, and Belly Rivers. Taber is fortunate to be well placed in a water rich area. It is my understanding that Siaya County is close to the freshwater Lake Victoria, and therefore I believe that Siaya County is also well placed for the potential of introducing irrigation to the area.

We have had the opportunity to hone our technology over 100 years in Southern Alberta, so we can investigate the possible ways of irrigating your land and deliver fresh water to your villages, through the advice of the Taber Irrigation District and our experts here. Because of the varied landscapes in Southern Alberta, we know there is likely to be technology that works well in Siaya County as well, regardless of the differences the geography may bring. We look forward to more discussions on this topic as we work together.

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While we are discussing the topic of sharing technologies, I am able to report that our Engineering and Public Works Department has been determining the details for sending a used waste collection truck to Siaya County.

While our Council has not yet made a final decision, we can confirm that the cost for your government to ship it will be just over \$30,000 Canadian. We look forward to further discussions on how best we will be able to assist with this endeavor.

I realize this is a great deal of information I have presented to you this afternoon, but it is my hope that it has given you some insight into our own processes and the potential future paths we may walk together.

The collaboration between our two governments will require a great deal of effort, but I have no doubt it will be worthwhile, and that our communities will grow with one another.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR A - 4900 50 ST TABER, AB CANADA T1G 1T1 TELEPHONE: (403) 223-5500 FAX: (403) 223-5530 <http://www.taber.ca> email: mayor@taber.ca TOWN OF TABER.

I most certainly believe that out of all the previous options mentioned, the most exciting and viable opportunity is the direct possibility to deliver fresh water to your villages in a very effective manner, that can and will be of great benefit to all of your Siaya County rural village residents.

Thank you once again Mr. Speaker, the Governor, and the assembled for taking the time to hear my very informative address. Wishing you all the very best.

Thank you so much, and have a great day.

Before I call the Member for East Gem to second, I would also like to congratulate the Mayor of Prokop for giving us very good ideas on irrigation, I applaud this and urge the County Government of Siaya to continue engaging with such important people so that we can keep our County going.

It is a challenge to us that the Council of Taber is only surrounded with two rivers while we are surrounded with a very big lake and rivers in Siaya County. We should learn from them and take advantage of this information and make Siaya better than we found it. Thank you and I ask the Member of East Gem to second.

Hon. Siguru: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to second the Motion and probably do an insight into the address by the mayor. I realize that we have not really done so much in terms of embracing technology in trying to enhance our agricultural activities. The basic agricultural practices that we do are majorly meant for subsistence.

With such ideas, intertwining counties and municipalities, we believe that it is a technological shift that the County Government is supposed to be addressing and embracing in equal measures. The ideas that were contained in this address are very good but the suggestions that have been floated in should really be given a lot of emphasis.

We really need to move with speed and embrace this. From the address I have seen that this team is ready to dispose some of the machineries to us. It is a good start that we need to

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support as representatives of citizens of Siaya. They have indicated that they want to have a second visit which has not been possible. By these submissions I second the Motion.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Members.

(Question proposed)

Hon. Oriaro: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, for granting me this opportunity. My take on the Business at hand, I want to make a few observations on behalf of Central Alego Ward. We are learning outside there that the County spends millions without feedback, there are openings that can be tapped in the best interest of the public whose money we spend.

The number one key are which out rightly must stand. In 2018 I met a delegation from Siaya County Government that had visited Canada, a matter that has always been kept under, were it not for revelation by the Mayor himself, nobody would have known this.

So, a question arises, why do we go outside? Is it based on private persuasions to get the so called international per diem? Because the standard practice ought to have been, if the team that visited Canada in the name of the County Government of Siaya really meant business as it is hinted here from the perceived host, they ought to have communicated to this House to address as matters of policy 2018/19/20 and now we are in 2021.

We are now going for elections, I want to thank the leadership of this House because if it were not for him having stood on liberal grounds, he won't have associated himself with this because naturally even vide this letter, it is the Governor who would have communicated to this House even by attachment of this letter of appreciation.

The items contained which means a lot in terms of development, I can see devolved functions are underscored here, this ought to have formed even our Annual Development Plan that the House has and finally budget making process. My tears get drained inside for the people of Siaya because it's like we have got wrong leaders. Away from that observation, I was once privileged to be the last lot of the defunct local authorities, I served in this House in 2007 up to 2013 when devolved dispensation came and here I am continuously as a representative, this is my 3rd time and I will be here even in the 4th time.

Local authorities which were to be analogous to foreign local authorities, a clear line of service delivery is drawn on it. A clear governance is drawn here, while local authorities in Kenya were meant to be puppets of the National Government, where councilors were to be seen and I say that if you came to represent your people you would be clobbered in this House.

Elsewhere, councilors were truly representing their public, what a contrast? They were representatives, the Taber are out to serve, and they were only six but look at the aspect of Public Participation. Once they have heard views they consolidate it and lay it the way we do it in the Floor and people discuss. Once the simple majority has endorsed it, the entire Taber domain through their representatives' support it and it becomes a true policy. This is the foundation of the devolved government we are not having where people's views should be heard.

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We are being taught by a mere Mayor on how to implement devolve functions, this is a good lecture. It comes from his side on realizing that we were supposed even to make another visit to validate our discussions and to develop a method of practical measure which maybe they are now learning.

They are reminding us, the coming Governor of Siaya has got a greater opportunity than the coming Assembly where we will be. The current lot we have is busy for other things, so this is a good piece that will jump start our functions.

Issues of irrigation, why I support this one really, you know what plagued Africa especially after Colonization which was an off shoot of Western imperialism, if you read how Europe under developed Africa, by Professor Walter Rodney, he says that Colonization was development by contradiction; that it failed to transfer technology, that is why we are still waiting for the West to get technology.

Look at even the Standard Gauge Railway, if you go to Rae Region in Germany, the kinds of trains we are having were shelved off in 1959. The technology that they are using is very advanced. They almost used a double jet train just like the normal jumbo Jet. Others used the magnetic train.

So the kind of technology that our brothers outside there are out to share and we are learning it, this is just a Mayor. What about if we had a National Link with the State Leadership? Such as irrigation? And I am talking as a farmer, I don't come from the Lake but I am all about using agricultural technology to harness agricultural potential.

So this is an eye opener in the water sector. Water is devolved, and when we see water, we see Agriculture which is also a devolved function, in the end we shall have a lot of quality agricultural products, with that we are guaranteed in our lives, and then we can productively contribute towards our economy. Then the water aspect, if they can harness water for irrigation.

People have gone to Israel, I have gone there privately not as a delegation of this County, see how they do their irrigation, they purify the sea water which is too salty, where when the standards are compared to the one we have in Kenya, we can't even rhyme it with the bottled water we have, but they use it for irrigation, even the waste products from the sewerage system, they purify it to the level which cannot even be compared to the drinking water we have even tap water, but they dump it into the sea.

So, these people use water for irrigation, purified water, so much as I wish that we were having an awake Governor, we would have tapped into such like potentials so that River Nzoia, R. Yala, so many highly placed water tables like in Gem, Rarieda, Bondo, too vast arable land, very ideal for irrigation, too much throughout.

What was needed was only to pump Lake Victoria's water or Yala's water to take it somewhere reservoir and then by way of gravity, the bulk of the land in Sakwa, I really thank the people of Sakwa because they are settling elsewhere, the bulk of land remains, that area is ideal for irrigation, can even feed the entire Western, leave alone Yala Swamp that they have also messed up, where Agriculture was to be practised.

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So I really want to thank that Mayor, but through my Speaker, because in Africa we say what my brother has eaten we have eaten, so I really thank my Speaker Hon. Okode, for having arrived at a practical commune, for having practical contact with this Mayor of Taber, I pray that we will be back with our Speaker so that we will push this, because, matters of policy naturally emanate from the Executive, ours is just to approve.

So time has already waned, we cannot push through this because it is multi sectoral. We see water, Agriculture, we see Health, and that goes in consonance with one health policy agenda that we are also supposed to push so that all sectors (the way we learn from the academic wall) we talk of inter disciplinary so that when it comes to service delivery, the one health policy can embrace all these. I support.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, Hon. Oriaro. Hon. Willis, Chair Agriculture.

Hon. Ochieng: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, we have learnt a lot from the Mayor's address. It happens that I represent a fishing community and as we talk, there is no catch of fish as it used to be, and from the Mayor's address, we have also seen that they have also advanced from the mining to farming and they developed a working irrigation for their Members who are now depending on irrigation farm produce.

Same I want to believe would apply to our community. It is high time we shared this idea, all this technology to our fishing community and Siaya at large, do that we don't just rely on rain water but we do a serious irrigation that could supplement the rain waters that our people depend on. As a matter of fact, I would like to echo on what Hon. Siguru here said.

You know we believe in seeing and learning, and on that note, if the County Government of Siaya could organize a bench mark just to go and see how this technology works and also get to know the Policies that are put in place that are guiding such a wonderful technology in Canada, so that we can come back and do the same to the Siaya County residents and have a way of ensuring our residents are helped to do their productions in the farm.

Having said that and from the offer of Mayor Andrew and his Government, thus the machine for the irrigation, having seen the prize of transporting it to Kenya, it is something to do with not more than Kshs 2.5 million. I want to believe this is not something that must be budgeted for.

I want to urge the County Government of Siaya to move with speed and make sure that they transport this machine to Kenya and to make sure that it helps our people. I know it will be one of its kind in this County, and that is why I was of the opinion that if the County Government would also assign some staffs to go and do a bench mark on how this machine is operated and how we can extend these services to some areas that might not be covered.

As I wind up my speech, I want to sincerely thank the mayor and wish him good luck as they will be going to election in two weeks' time, I pray for him to be re-elected so that our partnership with his Government should exist and see light and continue. Otherwise thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Willis. Having heard the discussion from the Honorable Members I would wish that we differ the remaining discussion to the afternoon

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session as Members still digest what has been put before them. I therefore request that we move to the next Order.

MOTION
ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members there being no other Business, will you be upstanding for adjournment.

There being no other Business, the House stands adjourned until today Wednesday afternoon at 2.30 p.m. in the Chamber.

The House rose at 11.42 a.m.