

## No end in sight to city manager stalemate

The standoff between Cooperative Governance MEC Fikile Xasa and Nelson Mandela Bay mayor Athol Trollip over the appointment of the city manager continues, with neither willing to back down.



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The two are at loggerheads over the appointment of Johann Mettler as city manager, a position he held in an acting capacity from December 2015.

It appears that both sides have a different interpretation of regulation 12 (3) of the Municipal Systems Act.

Xasa has accused the metro of not complying fully with the act in the appointment of Mettler.

Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs spokesman Mamkeli Ngam said: "The letter from councillor Trollip dated 24 January 2017 actually confirms that there were three councillors participating in the selection process, instead of two councillors ([e the executive mayor as chairperson and another councillor designated by the council])."

Ngam said the panel had included acting executive director of corporate services Vuyo Zitumane, something that should not have happened as she was a staff member of the municipality.

"The regulation explicitly prohibits a staff member of a municipality from serving as a panel member."

He said the MEC had already taken a decision in the matter that could not be reviewed without an empowering provision to do so.

On the other hand, the municipality referred The Herald to a letter it sent the MEC, including the attachment from Oceana HRP, which acted as consultant on the matter, with the names of the five- member recruitment panel.

The metro said it had complied with the act and its recruitment process was compliant and fair.

Ngam said: "Xasa has responded in detail to the correspondence from the executive mayor on the above matter.

"In the interest of nurturing good intergovernmental relations and cooperative governance, the MEC would prefer to engage with the municipality directly and not via the media on the matter at hand."

The Mettler matter has also strained the relationship between Trollip and deputy mayor Mongameli Bobani, threatening the stability of the metro's coalition government.

Last month, Bobani sided with Xasa over issue and it took the intervention of both party leaders for the pair to iron out their differences.

**Source:** Herald

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