

**ZULULAND DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT  
ACCOUNTING POLICIES**  
for the year ending 30 June 2012

**1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**1.1 BASIS OF ACCOUNTING**

**1.1.1 BASIS OF PRESENTATION**

The annual financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis of accounting and are in accordance with historical cost convention unless specified otherwise. The annual financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Standards of Generally Recognised Accounting Practices (GRAP) issued by the Accounting Standards Board in accordance with Section 122(3) of the Municipal Finance Management Act, (Act No 56 of 2003). Accounting policies for material transactions, events or conditions not covered by the GRAP Standards have been developed in accordance with paragraphs 7, 11 and 12 of GRAP 3. These accounting policies and the applicable disclosures have been based on the South African Statements of Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (SA GAAP) including any interpretations of such Statements issued by the Accounting Practices Board. A summary of the significant accounting policies, which have been consistently applied except where a transitional provision has been granted are disclosed below.

**1.2 PRESENTATION CURRENCY**

These annual financial statements are presented in South African Rand, which is the functional currency of the municipality.

**1.3 GOING CONCERN ASSUMPTION**

These annual financial statements have been prepared on the assumption that the municipality will continue to operate as a going concern for at least the next 12 months.

**1.4 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

When the presentation or classification of items in the annual financial statements is amended, prior period comparative amounts are restated. The nature and reason for the reclassification is disclosed. Where accounting errors have been identified in the current year, the correction is made retrospectively as far as is practicable, and the prior year comparatives are restated accordingly. Where there has been a change in accounting policy in the current year, the adjustment is made retrospectively as far as is practicable, and the prior year comparatives are restated accordingly.

**1.5 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT**

**1.5.1 INITIAL RECOGNITION**

Property, plant and equipment are tangible non-current assets (including infrastructure assets) that are held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, rental to others, or for administrative purposes, and are expected to be used during more than one year. Items of property, plant and equipment are initially recognized as assets on acquisition date and are initially recorded at cost. The cost of an item of property, plant and equipment is the purchase price and other costs attributable to bring the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by the municipality. Trade discounts and rebates are deducted in arriving at the cost. The cost also includes the necessary costs of dismantling and removing the asset and restoring the site on which it is located. When significant components of an item of property, plant and equipment have different useful lives, they are accounted for as separate items (major components) of property, plant and equipment.

Where an asset is acquired by the municipality for no or nominal consideration (i.e. a non-exchange transaction), the cost is deemed to be equal to the fair value of that asset on the date acquired.

Where an item of property, plant and equipment is acquired in exchange for a non-monetary asset or monetary assets, or a combination of monetary and non-monetary assets, the asset acquired is initially measured at fair value (the cost). If the acquired item's fair value was not determinable, its deemed cost is the carrying amount of the asset(s) given up.

Major spare parts and servicing equipment qualify as property, plant and equipment when the municipality expects to use them during more than one period. Similarly, if the major spare parts and servicing equipment can be used only in connection with an item of property, plant and equipment, they are accounted for as property, plant and equipment.

**1.5.2 SUBSEQUENT MEASUREMENT - COST MODEL**

Subsequent to initial recognition, items of property, plant and equipment are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment losses. Land is not depreciated as it is deemed to have an indefinite useful life.

Where the municipality replaces parts of an asset, it derecognises the part of the asset being replaced and capitalises the new component. Subsequent expenditure incurred on an asset is capitalised when it increases the capacity or future economic benefits associated with the asset.

**1.5.3 DEPRECIATION AND IMPAIRMENT**

Depreciation is calculated on the depreciable amount, using the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets. Components of assets that are significant in relation to the whole asset and that have different useful lives are depreciated separately. Depreciation on new acquisitions is charged to the statement of financial performance in the financial year in which the asset is available for use.

The annual depreciation rates are based on the following estimated average asset lives:

<b>Infrastructure</b>	
Water	15-70 years
Sewerage	15-70 years
<b>Community</b>	
Buildings	30 years
Recreational Facilities	20-30 years
<b>Heritage assets</b>	
Paintings and artifacts	Indefinite
<b>Finance lease assets</b>	
Office equipment	5 years
<b>Other</b>	
Buildings	30 years
Specialist vehicles	7 years
Other vehicles	7 years
Office equipment	3-7 years
Furniture and fittings	7 years
Emergency equipment	10 years
Computer equipment	5 years

The residual value, the useful life of an asset and the depreciation method is reviewed annually and adjusted where necessary. Any changes are recognised as a change in accounting estimate in the Statement of Financial Performance. The municipality tests for impairment where there is an indication that an asset may be impaired. An assessment of whether there is an indication of possible impairment is done at each reporting date. Where the carrying amount of an item of property, plant and equipment is greater than the estimated recoverable amount (or recoverable service amount), it is written down immediately to its recoverable amount (or recoverable service amount) and an impairment loss is charged to the Statement of Financial Performance. Heritage assets, which are culturally significant resources and which are shown at cost, are not depreciated owing to the uncertainty regarding their estimated useful lives. Similarly, land is not depreciated as it is deemed to have an indefinite life.

#### 1.5.4 DERECOGNITION

Items of Property, plant and equipment are derecognised when the asset is disposed of or when there are no further economic benefits or service potential expected from the use of the asset. The gain or loss arising on the disposal or retirement of an item of property, plant and equipment is determined as the difference between the sales proceeds and the carrying value and is recognised in the Statement of Financial Performance. Where the carrying amount of an item of property, plant and equipment is greater than the estimated recoverable amount, it is written down immediately to its recoverable amount and an impairment loss is charged to the Statement of Financial Performance.

#### 1.6 INTANGIBLE ASSETS 1.6.1 INITIAL RECOGNITION

An intangible asset is an identifiable non-monetary asset without physical substance. Examples include computer software, licenses, and development costs. The municipality recognises an intangible asset in its Statement of Financial Position only when it is probable that the expected future economic benefits or service potential that are attributable to the asset will flow to the municipality and the cost or fair value of the asset can be measured reliably. Internally generated intangible assets are subject to strict recognition criteria before they are capitalised. Research expenditure is never capitalised, while development expenditure is only capitalised to the extent that:

- the municipality intends to complete the intangible asset for use;
  - it is technically feasible to complete the intangible asset;
  - the municipality has the resources to complete the project; and
  - it is probable that the municipality will receive future economic benefits or service potential.
- Intangible assets are initially recognized at cost.

Where an intangible asset is acquired by the municipality for no or nominal consideration (i.e. a non-exchange transaction), the cost is deemed to be equal to the fair value of that asset on the date acquired.

Where an intangible asset is acquired in exchange for a non-monetary asset or monetary assets, or a combination of monetary and non-monetary assets, the asset acquired is initially measured at fair value (the cost). If the acquired item's fair value was not determinable, its deemed cost is the carrying amount of the asset(s) given up.

#### 1.6.2 SUBSEQUENT MEASUREMENT - COST MODEL

Intangible assets are subsequently carried at cost less accumulated amortization and impairments. The cost of an intangible asset is amortized over the useful life where that useful life is finite. Where the useful life is indefinite, the asset is not mortised but is subject to an annual impairment test.

### 1.6.3 AMORTISATION AND IMPAIRMENT

Amortisation is charged so as to write off the cost or valuation of intangible assets over their estimated useful lives using the straight line method. The annual amortisation rates are based on the following estimated average asset lives:

Computer software 5-7 years

The amortization period and the amortization method for an intangible asset with a finite useful life are reviewed at each reporting date and any changes are recognized as a change in accounting estimate in the Statement of Financial Performance.

The municipality tests intangible assets with finite useful lives for impairment where there is an indication that an asset may be impaired. An assessment of whether there is an indication of possible impairment is done at each reporting date. Where the carrying amount of an item of an intangible asset is greater than the estimated recoverable amount (or recoverable service amount), it is written down immediately to its recoverable amount (or recoverable service amount) and an impairment loss is charged to the Statement of Financial Performance.

### 1.6.4 DERECOGNITION

Intangible assets are derecognized when the asset is disposed of or when there are no further economic benefits or service potential expected from the use of the asset. The gain or loss arising on the disposal or retirement of an intangible asset is determined as the difference between the sales proceeds and the carrying value and is recognised in the Statement of Financial Performance.

## 1.7 INVENTORIES

### 1.7.1 INITIAL RECOGNITION

Inventories comprise current assets held for sale, consumption or distribution during the ordinary course of business. Inventories are initially recognised at cost. Cost generally refers to the purchase price, plus taxes, transport costs and any other costs in bringing the inventories to their current location and condition. Where inventory is manufactured, constructed or produced, the cost includes the cost of labour, materials and overheads used during the manufacturing process. Where inventory is acquired by the municipality for no or nominal consideration (i.e. a non-exchange transaction), the cost is deemed to be equal to the fair value of the item on the date acquired.

### 1.7.2 SUBSEQUENT MEASUREMENT

Inventories, consisting of consumable stores, raw materials, work-in-progress and finished goods, are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value unless they are to be distributed at no or nominal charge, in which case they are measured at the lower of cost and current replacement cost. Redundant and slow-moving inventories are identified and written down in this way. Differences arising on the valuation of inventory are recognised in the Statement of Financial Performance in the year in which they arose. The amount of any reversal of any write-down of inventories arising from an increase in net realisable value or current replacement cost is recognised as a reduction in the amount of inventories recognised as an expense in the period in which the reversal occurs. The carrying amount of inventories is recognised as an expense in the period that the inventory was sold, distributed, written off or consumed, unless that cost qualifies for capitalisation to the cost of another asset. In general, the basis of allocating cost to inventory items is the first-in, first-out method.

## 1.8 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

### 1.8.1 INITIAL RECOGNITION

Financial instruments are initially recognised at fair value.

### 1.8.2 SUBSEQUENT MEASUREMENT

Financial Assets are categorized according to their nature as either financial assets at fair value through profit or loss, held-to-maturity, loans and receivables, or available for sale. Financial liabilities are categorised as either at fair value through profit or loss or financial liabilities carried at amortised cost ("other"). The subsequent measurement of financial assets and liabilities depends on this categorisation and, in the absence of an approved GRAP Standard on Financial Instruments, is in accordance with IAS 39.

## 1.9 INVESTMENTS

Investments, which include short-term deposits invested in registered commercial banks, are categorised as either held-to-maturity where the criteria for that categorisation are met, or as loans and receivables, and are measured at amortised cost. Where investments have been impaired, the carrying value is adjusted by the impairment loss, which is recognised as an expense in the period that the impairment is identified. Impairments are calculated as being the difference between the carrying amount and the present value of the expected future cash flows flowing from the instrument. On disposal of an investment, the difference between the net disposal proceeds and the carrying amount is charged or credited to the Statement of Financial Performance.

### 1.10 TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES

Trade and other receivables are categorised as financial assets: loans and receivables and are initially recognised at fair value and subsequently carried at amortised cost. Amortised cost refers to the initial carrying amount, plus interest, less repayments and impairments. An estimate is made for doubtful receivables based on a review of all outstanding amounts at year-end. Significant financial difficulties of the debtor, probability that the debtor will enter bankruptcy or financial reorganisation, and default or delinquency in payments (more than 180 days overdue) are considered indicators that the trade receivable is impaired. Impairments are determined by discounting expected future cash flows to their present value. Amounts that are receivable within 12 months from the reporting date are classified as current. An impairment of trade receivables is accounted for by reducing the carrying amount of trade receivables through the use of an allowance account, and the amount of the loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Performance within operating expenses. When a trade receivable is uncollectible, it is written off. Subsequent recoveries of amounts previously written off are credited against operating expenses in the Statement of Financial Performance.

### 1.11 TRADE PAYABLES AND BORROWINGS

Financial liabilities consist of trade payables and borrowings. They are categorised as financial liabilities held at amortised cost, are initially recognised at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost which is the initial carrying amount, less repayments, plus interest.

### 1.12 CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

Cash includes cash on hand (including petty cash) and cash with banks (including call deposits). Cash equivalents are short-term highly liquid investments, readily convertible into known amounts of cash, that are held with registered banking institutions with maturities of three months or less and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value. For the purposes of the cash flow statement, cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand, deposits held on call with banks, net of bank overdrafts. The municipality categorises cash and cash equivalents as financial assets: loans and receivables.

Bank overdrafts are recorded based on the facility utilised. Finance charges on bank overdraft are expensed as incurred. Amounts owing in respect of bank overdrafts are categorised as financial liabilities: other financial liabilities carried at amortized cost.

### 1.13 UNAUTHORISED EXPENDITURE

Unauthorised expenditure is expenditure that has not been budgeted, expenditure that is not in terms of the conditions of an allocation received from another sphere of government, municipality or organ of state and expenditure in the form of a grant that is not permitted in terms of the Municipal Finance Management Act (Act No.56 of 2003). Unauthorised expenditure is accounted for as an expense in the Statement of Financial Performance and where recovered, it is subsequently accounted for as revenue in the Statement of Financial Performance.

### 1.14 IRREGULAR EXPENDITURE

Irregular expenditure is expenditure that is contrary to the Municipal Finance Management Act (Act No.56 of 2003), the Municipal Systems Act (Act No.32 of 2000), the Public Office Bearers Act (Act No. 20 of 1998) or is in contravention of the Municipality's supply chain management policy. Irregular expenditure excludes unauthorised expenditure. Irregular expenditure is accounted for as expenditure in the Statement of Financial Performance and where recovered, it is subsequently accounted for as revenue in the Statement of Financial Performance.

### 1.15 FRUITLESS AND WASTEFUL EXPENDITURE

Fruitless and wasteful expenditure is expenditure that was made in vain and would have been avoided had reasonable care been exercised. Fruitless and wasteful expenditure is accounted for as expenditure in the Statement of Financial Performance and where recovered, it is subsequently accounted for as revenue in the Statement of Financial Performance.

### 1.16 LEASES

#### 1.16.1 MUNICIPALITY AS LESSEE

Leases are classified as finance leases where substantially all the risks and rewards associated with ownership of an asset are transferred to the municipality. Property, plant and equipment or intangible assets subject to finance lease agreements are initially recognised at the lower of the asset's fair value and the present value of the minimum lease payments. The corresponding liabilities are initially recognised at the inception of the lease and are measured as the sum of the minimum lease payments due in terms of the lease agreement, discounted for the effect of interest. In discounting the lease payments, the municipality uses the interest rate that exactly discounts the lease payments and unguaranteed residual value to the fair value of the asset plus any direct costs incurred.

Subsequent to initial recognition, the leased assets are accounted for in accordance with the stated accounting policies applicable to property, plant, equipment or intangibles. The lease liability is reduced by the lease payments, which are allocated between the lease finance cost and the capital repayment using the effective interest rate method. Lease finance costs are expensed when incurred. The accounting policies relating to derecognition of financial instruments are applied to lease payables. The lease asset is depreciated over the shorter of the asset's useful life or the lease term.

Operating leases are those leases that do not fall within the scope of the above definition. Operating lease rentals are accrued on a straight line basis over the term of the relevant lease.

#### 1.16.2 MUNICIPALITY AS A LESSOR

Rental income from operating leases is recognised on a straight-line basis over the term of the relevant lease.

### 1.17 PROVISIONS

Provisions are recognised when the municipality has a present or constructive obligation as a result of past events, it is probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation and a reliable estimate of the provision can be made. Provisions are reviewed at reporting date and adjusted to reflect the current best estimate. Where the effect is material, non-current provisions are discounted to their present value using a pre-tax discount rate that reflects the market's current assessment of the time value of money, adjusted for risks specific to the liability (for example in the case of obligations for the rehabilitation of land). The municipality does not recognise a contingent liability or contingent asset. A contingent liability is disclosed unless the possibility of an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits is remote. A contingent asset is disclosed where an inflow of economic benefits is probable. Future events that may affect the amount required to settle an obligation are reflected in the amount of a provision where there is sufficient objective evidence that they will occur. Gains from the expected disposal of assets are not taken into account in measuring a provision. Provisions are not recognised for future operating losses. The present obligation under an onerous contract is recognised and measured as a provision.

### 1.18 REVENUE

#### 1.18.1 REVENUE FROM EXCHANGE TRANSACTIONS

Revenue from exchange transactions refers to revenue that accrued to the municipality directly in return for services rendered / goods sold, the value of which approximates the consideration received or receivable.

Service charges relating to sewerage and sanitation are based on the number of sewerage connections on each developed property using the tariffs approved by the council and are levied monthly.

Service charges relating to water are based on consumption. Meters are read on a monthly basis and are recognised as revenue when invoiced. Provisional estimates of consumption are made monthly by the system if the reading was not obtained. The provisional estimates of consumption are recognised as revenue when invoiced. The system automatically reverse the provisional readings, when the reading has been captured on the system.

Interest revenue is recognised on a time proportion basis.

Revenue from the rental of facilities and equipment is recognised on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease agreement.

Revenue arising from the application of the approved tariff of charges is recognised when the relevant service is rendered by applying the relevant tariff.

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when substantially all the risks and rewards in those goods is passed to the consumer.

Revenue for agency services is recognised on a monthly basis once the revenue collected on behalf of agents has been quantified and once the terms of the agency agreement have been complied with.

#### 1.18.2 REVENUE FROM NON-EXCHANGE TRANSACTIONS

Revenue from non-exchange transactions refers to transactions where the municipality received revenue from another entity without directly giving approximately equal value in exchange. Revenue from non-exchange transactions is generally recognised to the extent that the related receipt or receivable qualifies for recognition as an asset and there is no liability to repay the amount. Fines constitute both spot fines in the form of meter tempering fines. Fines are recognised when payment is received.

Revenue from public contributions and donations is recognised when all conditions associated with the contribution have been met or where the contribution is to finance property, plant and equipment, when such items of property, plant and equipment qualifies for recognition and first becomes available for use by the municipality. Where public contributions have been received but the municipality has not met the related conditions, a deferred income (liability) is recognised.

Contributed property, plant and equipment is recognised when such items of property, plant and equipment qualifies for recognition and become available for use by the municipality.

Revenue from the recovery of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure is based on legislated procedures, including those set out in the Municipal Finance Management Act (Act No.56 of 2003) and is recognised when the recovery thereof from the responsible councilors or officials is virtually certain.

#### 1.18.3 GRANTS, TRANSFERS AND DONATIONS

Grants, transfers and donations received or receivable are recognised when the resources that have been transferred meet the criteria for recognition as an asset. A corresponding liability is raised to the extent that the grant, transfer or donation is conditional. The liability is transferred to revenue as and when the conditions attached to the grant are met. Grants without any conditions attached are recognised as revenue when the asset or expense is recognised.

### 1.19 BORROWING COSTS

Borrowing cost are recognised as an expense in Statement of Financial Performance in the period they become due and payable.

#### 1.20 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

##### Short-term Employee Benefits

Remuneration to employees is recognised in the Statement of Financial Performance as the services are rendered, except for non-accumulating benefits, which are only recognised when the specific event occurs.

The costs of all short-term employee benefits such as leave pay, are recognised during the period in which the employee renders the related service. The liability for leave pay is based on the total accrued leave days at year end and is shown as a creditor in the Statement of Financial Position. The municipality recognises the expected cost of performance bonuses only when the municipality has a present legal or constructive obligation to make such payment and a reliable estimate can be made.

### Defined Contribution Plans

A **defined contribution plan** is a plan under which the municipality pays fixed contributions into a separate entity. The municipality has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to service in the current or prior periods. The municipality's contributions to the defined contribution funds are established in terms of the rules governing those plans. Contributions are recognised in the Statement of Financial Performance in the period in which the service is rendered by the relevant employees. The municipality has no further payment obligations once the contributions have been paid.

### Defined Benefit Plans

A **defined benefit plan** is a post-employment benefit plan other than a defined contribution plan.

### Pension obligations

The Municipality's personnel are members of either the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) or one of the Natal Joint Municipal Pension (NJMPF) retirement funds, namely the Superannuation, Retirement and Provident Funds. Except for the NJMPF Provident fund, the aforementioned funds are defined benefit funds. As these defined benefit funds are multi-employer funds, the allocation of any surplus/deficit to individual municipalities cannot be determined. Furthermore disclosure of further details such as actuarial assumptions, cannot be attributed to any specific employer and is of no relevance to users of the municipality's financial statements. As the required disclosure information cannot be obtained the funds are all treated as defined contribution funds.

### Municipal Councillors

Councillors belong to the Councillors Pension Fund which is a defined contribution fund and employers have no legal or constructive obligation for any shortfalls in valuation of the fund. **Other post-employment benefit obligations**

The municipality does not provide post retirement health care benefits to any of its employees and therefore has no liability for such benefits.

### VAT

VAT is accounted for on the payment basis i.e. VAT is paid over to SARS only once payment is received from debtors and/ or when actual payment is made to creditors.