



Clanwilliam, 30 June 2025

**RESPONSE BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR, DR RUBEN RICHARDS OF THE  
CEDERBERG MUNICIPALITY  
TO THE MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE SUBMITTED BY THE  
DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE AND PATRIOTIC ALLIANCE.  
MOTION DATED 18 JUNE 2025**

1. Speaker, fellow councillors, members of the Administration, members of the public who are attending this council meeting today, and all residents of the Cederberg;
  
2. I take this opportunity to respond to the MONC against me, in terms of Section 53.9 of the Rules of Order as approved by this council on 31 August 2023, and which says:

The Speaker, Executive Mayor or Deputy Executive Mayor to whom the motion relates, **has the right and must be allowed the opportunity during the special Council meeting to respond to every allegation made —**

- (a) in the motion to remove from office; and
- (b) during the meeting.

3. Speaker and residents of the Cederberg, I, Ruben Robert Richards, am a duly elected member of the council of the Cederberg local municipality. I currently serve the Cederberg in the capacity of Executive Mayor. I carry a mandate from the residents of Cederberg, and in particular, a mandate from Cederberg Eerste – the group which has led the rescue of the Cederberg Municipality since we took office in November 2021.
4. Today, in this open session of council, my political opponents have publically accused me of being a criminal and covering up corruption. My political opponents are the Democratic Alliance and the Patriotic Alliance who have signed this MONC.
5. They have accused me, among others, of covering up corruption (“Sy krimenele gedrag en toesmeerdery van die korrupsie is vir die Raad en gemeenskap ‘n verleentheid”). On social media, the Democratic Alliance councillor, Dr John Hayes, has even gone so far as insinuating that the Cederberg municipality under my leadership can be likened to that of a criminal syndicate.
6. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, my political opponents have submitted to this council a charge sheet against me (here referred to as a MONC). They have not provided any evidence. They have made wild, spurious and vexatious allegations against me. They have engaged in what I can only describe as a malicious attempt to assassinate by character and good name.
7. Without providing any evidence, my political opponents have concluded I am an incompetent mayor. They are requesting that this council must

get rid of me. They say in their MONC: “Die Raad moet ‘n bevoegde Burgemeester aanstel, wie na die belange van die Cederberg Munisipaliteit en sy inwoners kan omsien.” – (The council must appoint a competent mayor who will look after the interests of the Cederberg Municipality and its residents.”)

8. Speaker, this MONC is a political fight and, unfortunately, in political fights, truth and facts become an inconvenience. The political agenda of the DA in partnership with the PA, is that they want to control the council. They want to get their hands on the money, which under my leadership we have managed to save. They are desperate for power. Therefore, they will construct a narrative/story filled with lies and misinformation in order to achieve their political objectives.
9. Speaker, I am on record, having invited and pleaded with my opponents to please respect the rule of law, follow due process, and go to the police and lay criminal charges against me so that I can appropriately defend myself in a court of law. But you see Speaker, my political opponents (i.e., DA and PA) – those who have signed this MONC – and let me name them – Cllr Farmer, Cllr Blaauw, Cllr Hayes, Cllr Joos Engelbrecht; they have not provided one shred of evidence for the allegations they have made against me. This MONC has provided no evidence of wrong doing. There is no truth to the charges they have against me. They do not have any facts to substantiate their claims against me.
10. Therefore, Speaker, my political opponents have decided to do what coward politicians do; they peddle lies and untruths. Their sole objective is to gain power and not to serve the interests of the people – and certainly not to serve the interest of truth and integrity. If my political

opponents were to use but only one ounce of the energy they have put into trying to get rid of me, and put that energy into service delivery, the Cederberg would be in an even better condition. But instead, they choose to sow seeds of destruction. They choose to destroy those who have rescued this municipality.

11. Speaker, the record will show, that under my leadership, the municipality has shifted from being bankrupt to being solvent; from a negative bank balance to a positive bank balance. Under my leadership, this municipality has improved. We now have a new fleet of service delivery vehicles. I invite my political opponents to try and be guided by facts and not by their evil political agendas. The facts are that the Cederberg Municipality, under my leadership, has improved and now has over R100m rand in the bank.
12. Speaker, allow me to make one more point. Our Rules of Order provide guidance as to how one behaves as a councillor.
13. Section 33 of our Rules confirm that a councillor has freedom of speech in any meeting of the council and in any committee of which the councillor is a member. This freedom of speech is enshrined in legislation such as the Structures Act and the Western Cape Privileges and Immunities of Councillors Act. However, the Rules say that in exercising that freedom of speech, the councillor must **“avoid personal attacks on other councillors, and refrain from defaming another councillor, a person or an institution.”**
14. In other words, a councillor cannot go around attacking and accusing fellow councillors or the municipality, in a defamatory manner – calling

them criminals or describing them as criminal syndicates. This is precisely what my political opponents have done. They have signed a document – a MONC – which they have now read into the public record; a MONC, which is contrary to the Rules of Order and which, in my view, contravenes the law.

15. Furthermore, Section 22.1.2 of our Rules of Order prescribes a Motion should not advance arguments which expresses “an opinion or contains unnecessary, incriminating, disparaging or improper suggestions about fellow councillors.” Speaker, these are matters and remedies I will pursue outside of this council meeting regardless of the outcome of the vote today.
16. Mr Speaker, I must just say that I am bitterly disappointed that my political opponents would stoop to this level of gutter politics, based on lies and misinformation. I still naively refuse to accept that “this is politics”. My opponents have chosen to violate the very Rules of Order, which they have sworn to uphold when they took office as councillors. This is criminal, in my view. With this MONC they have the nerve to call upon on this council to condone their disrespect for the rule of law. Speaker, I therefore dismiss this MONC with the contempt that it deserves.
17. Speaker, I must also just add some further information for the general public to be aware of. I have been under attack from the Democratic Alliance (now joined by the PA), ever since we decided to take action against a councillor of the Democratic Alliance and removed him from a position which he held in the council. It remains our view that this councillor of the DA has shown a total disregard for the Rules of Order and the constitution of our country. All I will say, Speaker, is that the

days of associating black people with being monkeys are long over. These are matters, which will be revealed in due course as the investigations into these matters are being finalised.

18. My political opponents have attempted to use any and every means possible to attack me, to defame me, to besmirch my name and reputation. I have remained silent until today, because I now only have the appropriate channel to respond to allegations made against me in this public forum.
19. I am putting my response on record in this environment of a council meeting in terms of the rights and privileges accorded to me in terms of the Rules of Order.
20. Speaker, you will know that I have consistently requested my political opponents to show respect for the Rule of Law and invited them to lay charges against me, using the appropriate channels and structures as afforded to us by our constitution. We do not live in the Wild West. We do not subscribe to vigilantism. We do not support gangster-type behaviour when it comes to governance. Political bullying is not how one governs in South Africa and certainly not the Cederberg. That approach belongs to the apartheid era and not the democratic era.
21. Speaker, I conclude my comments with an appeal to all councillors to use this opportunity to show that they are worthy of being called councillors. I would ask that councillors vote for the truth and the respect for the rule of law as we not only rebuild the Cederberg, but also our country at large.

*Response to Motion of No Confidence (MONC) submitted by Democratic Alliance and Patriotic Alliance against Dr Ruben Richards representing Cederberg Eerste.*

*Date of MONC - 18 June 2025. Date of council meeting – 30 June 2025*

---

22. I thank you.

ends