

Lami Town Council



LAMI TOWN COUNCIL

Our Ref

The Chairman – Honorable Viam Pillay
Social Standing Committee
Parliament House
Suva.

By: Electronic Mail

Dear Sir,

Re: Additional Information Requested

Please find attached Councils response in reference to your correspondence.

Council takes this opportunity to thank the Social Standing Committee for visiting Council and meeting management.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Azam Khan
Chief Executive Officer (acting)

Response to Question One

The increase in population and economic activities has seen a demand for additional Downtown space and infrastructure investment. Lami Town Council is working closely with Government with Director Town and Country Planning to revise the Downtown Development plan.

Response to Question Two

The number of ratepayers for Lami Town Council is 1220.

Table showing the rates collection for the years 2004-2014

Year	Rates Collected		Total Rates
	General Rates	Rates in Arrears	
2004	\$ 245,572.00	\$ 709,478.00	\$ 955,050.00
2005	\$ 390,122.00	\$ 130,730.00	\$ 520,852.00
2006	\$ 258,696.00	\$ 586,550.00	\$ 845,246.00
2007	\$ 245,851.00	\$ 581,405.00	\$ 827,256.00
2008	\$ 253,306.00	\$ 681,348.00	\$ 934,654.00
2009	\$ 367,576.00	\$ 701,102.00	\$ 1,068,678.00
2010	\$ 294,642.00	\$ 162,689.00	\$ 457,331.00
2011	\$ 364,078.00	\$ 217,923.00	\$ 582,001.00
2012	\$ 355,166.00	\$ 168,408.00	\$ 523,574.00
2013	\$ 356,106.00	\$ 199,189.00	\$ 555,295.00
2014	\$ 421,409.00	\$ 115,737.00	\$ 537,146.00
Total	\$ 3,552,524.00	\$ 4,254,559.00	\$ 7,807,083.00

The total arrears as at 12th April 2022 stands at 12,173.35. The Council has issued the demand notices and the tenants have made arrangement with the Council to clear the arrears with monthly rentals. The major reasons given for the default payment is the impact of Covid 19.

The main causes of the rental arrears were due to the tenants seeking time to clear the arrears due to financial difficulties. The monthly follow ups needed to take place to improve on rental accumulation.

The rates profiling exercise was done in 2020 whereby the Council visited the individual rate payers and had updated the rate payers basic information's such as phone contact, tin # and the reasons for non-payments. Some of the reasons noted for the default were owners' overseas, short term financial difficulty and legal property disputes. Council has provided the

rates payers with arrangements options to the Council whereby the rates can be cleared on an instalments basis.

The monthly follow ups are made and monthly statements are provided to the tenants. The management has adopted to monthly review of debtors and ensures that such cases are reviewed. The monthly debtor's reconciliations are now carried out and reviewed. Council is placing caveat & charge on properties having outstanding rates, MOU has been signed with FRCS, iTLTB and FPT to share information and strengthen rates collection.

Council has managed to strengthen its revenue collection and for the first time Council will be able to collect 80% of its current rates. With the current revenue collections Council has managed to provide the services required by the ratepayers. However, with the strengthening of other revenue streams will assist the Council in carrying out some of its Capital projects.

There are 89 vacant lots listed at Lami Town out of 1220 properties.

Response to Question Three

- a. Since the appointment of the Special Administrators the Council has been able to increase collection rate to above 75% per year. Council has further being able to remove Special Loan Rates through payment of all outstanding loans.
- b. On average per year Council has recorded sixty (60) complaints. Complaints are generally in relation to Drainage and Dog Management.
- c. The Council continues to upgrade and maintain public amenities. Tikaram Park upgrade commenced in year 2015. Rubbish collection is every Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays for Household Waste and Green & White goods are provided in every second month within the boundary. Grass cutting is conducted fortnightly within the boundary. Drainage cleaning is conducted every month within the boundary and culvert inlets are being cleared weekly. The Fiji Roads Authority has been upgrading roads and the budget allocated to Lami Town Boundary for Road maintenance is five times fold compared to prior 2012 spent on road upgrade. Major roads resealing has been carried out during 2021/22 and FRA has planned to upgrade residential areas over the next 12 months.
- d. Health department always conduct its inspections on Supermarkets, Restaurants, Bakeries, all Food Establishments in every fortnightly within our jurisdiction. Team Health will be conducting the General Hygiene Practices to all Food Establishments in end of April to assist in their food handlers and also the maintaining of hygiene within their establishments.

The Council works closely with the Fiji Police Force and has been upgrading lights and installing CCTV to keep Lami safe. Council has been working with Ministry for Environment and

Waterways to continue strengthening Good Environment Practices so that the Environment is resilient.

Council is promoting micro business and has been encouraging various micro business activities in within the Town area to support economic opportunities. Informal settlements are being provided with solid waste management services and in partnership with UN Habitat Council has a resilient officer who works closely with committees established in the informal settlements under a special Informal Settlement upgrade program. The officer is establishing a Disaster Risk program for the Town. All buildings in within the Town are built in accordance with the National Building Code to ensure resilience. In reference to Gender Mainstreaming, the Council has 58% staffs who are female. The Council is trying to improve on Gender balancing at General workforce level.

The Council has submitted for audit annual accounts ending year 2019, 2020 and 2021 accounts are projected to be sent before 31st July, 2022. The Council plans to be at par with audits from financial year 2022/23. In addition, Council has prepared draft annual reports to current.

Response to Question Four

The management has adopted to monthly review of debtors and ensures that such cases are reviewed. The monthly debtor's reconciliations are now carried out and reviewed. For the first time this year Lami Town Council will collect 80% of its current rates. Council is placing caveat & charge on properties having outstanding rates, MOU has been signed with FRCS, iTLTB and FPT to share information and strengthen rates collection. The Council has employed a Senior Accountant who has been assigned to look after the financial and Audit for the Council and ensure that the internal control procedures are strictly followed and the issues highlighted in the Audit report are addressed and attended too and a monthly update report be circulated to the management. Council has invested in the accounting software MYOB which will enable to electronically records data and monthly reconciliations are carried out to maintain proper records.

Response to Question Five

The Council had an overdraft facility of \$50,000 for its general operations funds account. The Council had its loan obligations where by the monthly repayment of \$7,621.26 was made to the bank. The Council has no financial obligations as per records 2021 onwards on a long term basis. The Council further has no short term financial obligations apart from trade payables.

The surplus or deficit (subject to audit) are as follows:

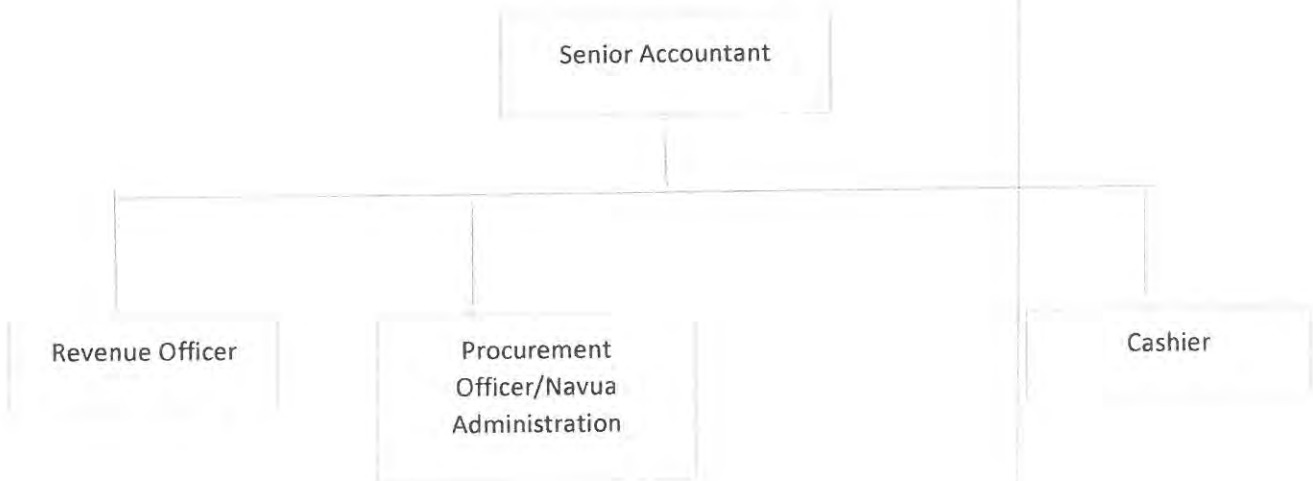
Year	Surplus/Deficit
2015	\$ 153,119.00
2016	\$ 78,398.00
2017	\$ 131,953.00
2018	\$ 126,657.52
2019	\$ 163,241.22
2020 (first seven months)	\$ 92,000.00

Please note that the Council reduced rates by 5% in 2020 following the removal of Special Loan Rates.

- The Lami Town Council has been supported by the Management of SCC including DF and Internal Auditor. Council is reconciling accounts on a monthly basis to ensure that any discrepancies identified are sorted out. Council has implemented the SOP's for each department and ensure that it's followed and monthly reports are prepared for management meetings.

7.

Finance Organizational Structure – Lami Town Council



All positions have been substantially filled.

Qualification are as follows:

Position	Year started	Name	Qualification
Senior Accountant	2018	Rajay Prasad	Bachelor in Commerce Pursuing Professional Accounting Studies
Revenue Officer	2018	Mehnaz Fazil	Diploma in Accounting
Procurement/Navua Delegated Management	2019	Yashmeen Nisha	Diploma in Accounting
Cashier	2014	Sheenal Prakash	Diploma and pursing degree in Human Resource Management