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County Assembly Committees Interrogate Sector Budget Proposals For FY 2025/26

By Marsh Misiko, Erick Ngobilo and Rosemary Wachiye

Various sectoral committees of the County Assembly are currently interrogating the 2025/2026 budget proposals submitted by different departments. The outcome of these deliberations will be compiled and submitted to the Liaison Committee.

The Liaison Committee has temporarily assumed the functions of the Budget and Appropriations Committee, whose term expired. Efforts to reconstitute the committee have stalled due to a pending court case challenging its composition. The matter is awaiting hearing and determination.

Day one encompassed the Committees on Tourism, Environment; Water and Natural Resources; Roads, Transport, Infrastructure and Public Works; Health Services; Gender, Culture and Social Welfare and Education and Vocational Training.

The Committee on Tourism, Environment, Water and Natural Resources chaired by the Vice Chairperson of the Committee Hon. Martin Cheseto (MCA Cheptaisi) interrogated officials from the County Department of Tourism, Environment, Water and Natural Resources, led by CECM Hon. Andrew Wamalwa with his departmental officers. The committee analyzed the budget, scrutinizing the financial provisions checking the funding gaps identified in specific departmental programs.

While exploring tourism and environment, one of the key issues of discussion was the budget detail-

ing line allocations for field allowances for the Kenya Magical Expo. The committee noted the increasing expenditure to publicize the County in the event and its relevance in deepening tourism and revenue collection. Further the committee tackled the issue on the classification of garbage management funds from development expenditure to recurrent expenditure. They sought an explanation on this budgetary route and demanded that relevant contract documents alongside the total sums be submitted for scrutiny.

The committee noted the outstanding pending bills and focused on prioritizing them with the current budgetary allocations. Under Water and Natural Resources, drilling of boreholes was given priority and allocation of resources, implementation and sustainability of KOICA Water initiative.

During the session, the committee showed that there is a commitment to address multi sector concerns by ensuring budgetary allocation is precise to the top priorities in order to strengthen the impact of public funds in the next financial year within tourism and environment sectors, as well as water and natural resources.

The County Assembly Committee on Roads and Public Works also held a consultative meeting with the Department of Roads to review its budget estimates for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

The committee, chaired by Hon. Polycarp Wandabusi (Vice Chair) who stood in for Chairperson Hon.

Frankline Simotwo, noted that the Department has been allocated Ksh 1.3 billion. This comprises Ksh 616 million for departmental operations and KSh 729 million for ward-based projects.

The committee observed a 10% reduction in the departmental allocation from the KSh 685 million approved in the County Fiscal Strategy Paper (CFSP). The Department was represented in the interrogations by CECM Mr. Bonaventure Chemayek and Chief Officer Mr. Edward Makhandia.

Key concerns raised by the committee included the allocation of KSh 184 million under the Road Maintenance Levy Fund (RMLF), even though the matter is still under discussion in Parliament. The committee expressed concern that such an allocation could negatively impact the department's budget ceiling.

Additionally, the committee demanded a comprehensive list of all projects the Department plans to implement under the proposed budget. Members raised issues around the incomplete dual carriageway project, questioning why the machinery used in its implementation had not been handed over to the County. In response, Mr. Chemayek clarified that the agreement for the construction of the dual carriageway did not include the purchase of machinery, as the equipment had been leased by the contractor.

The committee also sought answers on pending bills dating back to 2017, urging the Department to prioritize their settlement.

Another point of concern was the allocation of KSh 21 million for street lighting and maintenance. Members questioned why the function, previously handled by the Department of Trade, had been moved to the Roads and Public Works Department without the corresponding transfer of staff and equipment.

The committee cautioned against duplication of projects among the Department, ward-based initiatives, and the Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA). They emphasized that each entity should undertake its own projects to avoid overlaps.

Meanwhile, the County Assembly Committee on Gender and Culture engaged the Department of Gender and Culture over its FY 2025/26 budget proposals. Committee members questioned the prioritization of certain projects, particularly the proposed construction of a women empowerment centre, which they argued was not an immediate priority. They emphasized the need to focus on impactful programs such as women and youth empowerment, and support for persons living with disabilities.

The committee also criticized the Department for failing to enact regulations targeting youth, women, and people with disabilities, and challenged the leadership to take a more proactive role in initiating and implementing transformative programs.



Sectoral Committees conduct interrogations of the County Annual Budget for FY 2025/2026, while County Executive officials defend departmental proposals

Day 2 Sector Committees Interrogation Of County Annual Budget For FY 2025/ 2026

By Rosemary Wachiye, Marsh Misiko and Erick Ngobilo

The interrogation of the County Annual Budget for FY 2025/2026 continued for a second day on May 23, 2025, with the County Assembly Sector Committees holding sittings. These included the committees for Public Administration and ICT; Agriculture, Finance and Economic Planning; Trade, Energy and Industrialisation; Lands, Urban, Physical Planning and Housing; Youth, Sports and Labour Relations; and Members' Services and Facilities.

The committee on Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Irrigation and Cooperatives Development interrogated the Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Irrigation and Cooperatives Development officials led by Chief Officer in charge of Agriculture Ms Dinah Makokha on the County Annual Budget FY 2025/2026.

The department had been allocated Ksh. 117 million for farm inputs, specifically for fertiliser purchases aimed at benefiting 500 farmers per ward. The Committee commit-

ted to increasing this budget allocation to Ksh. 270 million to serve 1,000 farmers per ward for the purchase and distribution of fertilizer across all wards. Additionally, the department was allocated Ksh. 67.5 million for the purchase of certified crop seeds to support 500 beneficiary farmers per ward with maize seeds.

The department was allocated 2 million for the purchase of coffee seedlings in the last FY 2024/2025, which went towards paying pending bills. The department wants to increase the acreage of coffee farming. The Committee noted with concern that the budget allocation of Ksh. 2 million for the purchase of coffee seeds was insufficient. The Committee therefore requested an increase in the coffee seed budget to Ksh. 10 million to adequately serve the 55 coffee cooperatives in the county.

The Chief Officer Mr. Andrew Musungu informed members that the Department had distributed indigenous chicken and galla goats to Musikoma Ward, bee

keeping hives to Naitiri-Kabuyefwe Ward, bee hives and dopper sheep to Kaptama Ward and galla goats to Bukembe East Ward thus needed more funding to procure more livestock and distribute to other Wards. Requested for Ksh. 8 million for the renovation of the 4 slaughterhouses in Bungoma, Sirisia, Kimilili, and Webuye.

The Committee on Finance and Economic Planning held an interrogation meeting in the auditorium for the financial year 2025/2026. The meeting was chaired by Hon. Jack Kawa. Its main goal was to ensure adequate use of public funds and transparency in expenditure. One of the first issues raised was the allocation of Kshs.100 million to the Emergency Fund. The committee questioned the executive whether the procedures for reimbursement, as outlined in sections 110 to 115 of the PFM Act, had been followed. The executive explained that Kshs.53.8 million had been used to fund projects such as the Milele Kitinda Bridge, which cost 8 million, and the Kibochi Nasaka

Bwake culvert, which cost 9.6 million.

The committee also interrogated the Kshs.42 million that was budgeted for ICT networking, which included Kshs.25 million for maintaining the revenue system and Kshs.17 million for developing the Health Management Information System (HMIS). The committee sought clarity on the cost needed to fund the system in a year and the system's role in improving revenue. The department stated that the system was still under development. Additionally, the committee demanded whether the Ksh.69 million allocation for KRA penalties was a recurring expense and requested supporting documents.

The executive explained that it had cleared a Kshs.50 million debt and that it had a debt of Kshs.683 million which was resolved at the KRA Tribunal and reduced to Kshs.57 million, which is expected to be fully cleared by June 30, 2025. The Committee also noted that the county owed Kenya Power



County Assembly Sector committees review and scrutinize the proposed 2025/2026 annual budget

and Lighting Company (KPLC) Kshs 35.2 million, despite it being budgeted for in every department, and were informed that the issue was being resolved in consultation with KPLC.

The Committee on Public Administration and ICT, during its review of the Annual Budget for FY 2025/2026, raised major concerns regarding the allocation of medical insurance. The Committee noted that despite budgeting Ksh. 200 million for medical insurance in the previous financial year, the services provided were inadequate. They further resolved to retain the previous year's amount to cover all county government employees.

In addition to the issue of pension area allocation of 100 million Kenyan shillings, the department is required to provide a list of all pension areas and those to be settled; also, the county should be giving out a one-year contract rather than six months. Ksh. 220,600,000 was approved on the County Fiscal Strategy Paper to cater for salaries, and a breakdown was provided as follows: Ksh. 100 million on pension areas, Ksh. 90 million on casuals, Ksh. 21.6 million for recruitment and Ksh. 10 million for promotions.

Other issues raised included missing figures for sewerage charges under utility supplies and services,

an incorrect breakdown captured under communication supplies, and a substantial increment in rent for both the Council of Governors liaison office and the County First Lady's office.

The Committee on Labour Relations, Members Service, and Facilities analysed the report on the budget for FY 2025/2026. Key issues of concern were the reduction in domestic travel, training expenses, and routine maintenance of other assets. The meeting was attended by the clerk of the County Assembly of Bungoma, Mr Charles Wafula, and was accompanied by other County Assembly staff. The Committee sought to know the total contract sum of the two-year projects of construction of the official speaker's residence and debating chambers and what had been paid.

Mr. Wafula informed the Committee that the speaker's residence had been allocated Ksh. 35 million and that the actual amount paid was Ksh. 16,624,406, further stating that the building is expected to be completed by next month. A request was submitted to increase the medical insurance allocation from Ksh. 33,645,383 to Ksh. 40,469,383. Mr. Wafula explained that while the medical insurance had been initially allocated Ksh. 40 million, the approved amount was reduced to

Ksh.33 million due to County Revenue Allocation (CRA) ceilings. Consequently, an additional Ksh.7 million was requested to restore the allocation to the original Ksh.40 million to enhance service delivery.

County executive officials from the Department of Education and Vocational Training appeared before county assembly committee members to discuss the annual budget estimates for FY 2025/26. The meeting focused on addressing pending bills totaling Ksh.241,241,281.77, of which Ksh.228,281,614.77 has been allocated for development and Ksh.12,959,667 for recurrent expenditure. From the recurrent allocation, Ksh.7,125,000 has been designated for domestic travel, subsistence, and other transportation costs. The department's proposed budget stands at Ksh.179,807,737, comprising Ksh.75,495,953 for recurrent expenses and Ksh.104,311,784 for development projects.

Hon. Ken Wanyama chaired the session, during which committee members deliberated on several matters pertaining to the education and vocational training sector. Key issues discussed included the significant increase in training expenses, the employment of Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) personnel, and

the construction of vocational training colleges.

The committee questioned the effectiveness of the school feeding program. Department officials explained that learners receive porridge three days per week, while parents provide meals for the remaining two days. The committee directed the department to submit a comprehensive work plan and progress report detailing completed activities and future plans for the program.

Under the development budget, committee members raised concerns about delayed supplier payments. They directed the department to follow up and ensure timely payments to all suppliers. The annual budget estimates for FY 2025/2026 have allocated Kshs. 27,311,704 for supplier credit.

The committee also expressed concern about inadequate support for vocational training colleges through capitation funding. The annual budget estimates have allocated Kshs. 10,000,000 for VTC capitation, matching the current year's allocation. The department received Kshs. 5,000,000 to fund various activities, including the construction of a home craft center at Ngoli. An additional Kshs. 6,250,000 has been allocated for equipping vocational training colleges countywide.

Following the conclusion of the budget interrogations, the committees will submit their findings to the Liaison Committee for further review before presenting the final budget to the County Assembly for approval.

Ad Hoc Committee Investigates Cess Collection And Utilization In Bungoma County

By Rosemary Wachiye

The ad hoc Committee of the County Assembly of Bungoma, chaired by Hon. Benjamin Otsiula and comprising 11 members of the County Assembly, was appointed on April 9, 2025. The committee was mandated to investigate and scrutinize the collection, waivers, and utilization of all revenue collected from agricultural produce cess throughout Bungoma County.

The formation of the committee was prompted by a motion tabled by Hon. Johnstone Ipara regarding cess collection and utilization in Bungoma County. The committee was mandated to examine both structured and unstructured cess collection and evaluate the implementation of the Bungoma County Agricultural Produce Cess Act of 2017.

In its formal undertakings, the committee probed cess-paying entities in Bungoma County to determine the cess collection procedures, operations of the 37 cess collection points, utilization of cess funds, and enforcement of cess legislation.

According to the chairperson, the committee was mandated to ensure the county government receives all required cess levies. This investigation aimed to promote transparency and accountability in the management of public funds.

The committee also examined submissions from West Kenya Sugar Company, the county solicitor, Bungoma Cooperative Unions, Bungoma County Cess Committee, and the county departments of agriculture, finance and economic planning, and roads, infrastructure, and public works.

The committee further investigated and conducted verification of the actual payment of cess by West Kenya Sugar Companys-à-vis the submission by the County Department of Finance and Accounts to ascertain the true position of the cess collected.

The County Department of Finance and Economic Planning, while appearing before the Committee, was tasked to provide evidence of cess collection and its utilization by the legislation. The department officials were led by the County Executive Committee member Mr. Chrispinus Barasa, Chief Officer Mr. Robert Simiyu, and Acting Director in charge of Revenue Mr. Moses Walekhwa.

The department committed to officially gazette 37 cess collection points and ensure their full operationalization in accordance with the Act. To strengthen corporate cess collection, the department announced plans to deploy officers at weighbridges, thereby preventing revenue losses and improving compliance. Additionally, they pledged to come up with recommendations for managing cess funds and pursuing collection of cess from tea and coffee proceeds.

It was evident that only a few out of the 98 co-operative societies in Bungoma County were compliant with cess payment requirements. This concerning issue of widespread non-compliance prompted extensive debate among committee members, who sought clarification from representatives of the Cooperative Unions. In response, the officials committed to conducting awareness campaigns among farmers' unions and implementing stronger measures to enforce compliance moving forward.

Upon completion of the probe, the committee will compile a report and present its findings to the County Assembly within 30 days.



Ad Hoc Committee investigates cess collection practices with relevant Bungoma County stakeholders

County Assembly Liaison Committee Engages Auditor General's Office On Audit Report Processing

By Erick Ngobilo

The Liaison Committee of the County Assembly of Bungoma on Tuesday held a consultative meeting with a representative from the Office of the Auditor General to streamline the handling of various audit reports currently before the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

The meeting comes in the wake of a legal case that stalled the reconstitution of the PAC, leaving the Liaison Committee temporarily in charge of its mandate.

Chaired by Deputy Speaker Hon. Stephen Wamalwa, the committee raised concerns over delays by the Auditor General's office in responding to requests by the County Assembly for participation in interrogations of audited entities. Members also questioned the perceived prioritization of the Senate over County Assemblies in the Auditor General's engagements.

In response, Ms. Virginia Onyuka, representing the Office of the Auditor General, emphasized the need for clear and timely communication—particularly regarding the dates and venues for interrogations—to enable her office to adequately prepare and participate.

Ms. Onyuka clarified that both the Senate and County Assemblies have distinct roles in processing audit reports, which may lead to different recommendations. She noted that County Assemblies are well-placed to conduct more detailed reviews since they focus solely on entities within their jurisdictions, unlike the Senate, which handles reports from across the country.

The Clerk of the County Assembly, Mr. Charles Wafula, reaffirmed the Assembly's commitment to strengthening collaboration with the Auditor General's office to ensure timely and efficient processing of audit reports.

Bungoma County Assembly Staff Trained on Integrated Performance Management

By Rosemary Wachiye

On Monday, May 26, 2025, the County Assembly of Bungoma launched a training program for staff on integrated performance management, which aims to enhance institutional efficiency and service delivery. The training was facilitated by directors from the Public Service Performance Management Unit under the Executive Office of the President in the national government.

The participants were taken through the Integrated Performance Management Guidelines for County Governments, which, according to Mr. Robert Ngei, have incorporated County Assemblies in performance management participation.

Mr. Ngei noted that county governments have initiated the implementation of performance contracts and encouraged the participants to acquaint themselves with the

guidelines.

Key issues discussed included the design and implementation of performance contracts, roles and responsibilities of key players in the County Assembly, performance target setting, mid-year reviews, and end-year appraisals.

Speaking at the official opening of the training, County Assembly Clerk Mr. Charles Wafula emphasized that the program is designed to equip staff with essential performance management skills that will strengthen the institution's operational capacity.

"The implementation of performance management systems has served as a critical foundation, enabling our County Assembly to achieve significant milestones in delivering efficient and effective services to the people of Bungoma," Mr. Wafula stated.

The clerk highlighted the benefits

already realized through performance management implementation, noting that established structures, including management committees, have contributed to measurable improvements across various departments.

Mr. Wafula stressed the importance of consistently utilizing performance management tools, particularly the daily workbooks, as part of the Assembly's commitment to operational excellence. He directed departmental heads to ensure regular performance appraisals are conducted in accordance with established guidelines to strengthen monitoring and evaluation processes.

"I encourage all staff to approach this training with the seriousness it deserves. The knowledge gained will not only enhance our collective ability to fulfill the County Assembly's mandate but also contribute to individual professional development," the clerk said.

The clerk also announced plans for specialized training programs, tasking both the ICT and human resources departments with organizing data protection training to ensure full compliance with the Data Protection Act. Additionally, conflict of interest training has been identified as essential knowledge for all County Assembly personnel.

In his closing comments, Mr. Wafula stated that he believes these efforts will help the Bungoma County Assembly take part effectively in national performance management systems, allowing them to compare themselves with other government organizations that have successfully set up similar systems.

The training represents part of the County Assembly's broader commitment to institutional development and improved public service delivery in Bungoma County.



A section of County Assembly staff trained on integrated Performance Management by directors from the Public Service Performance Management Unit under the Executive Office of the President

Staff Sensitized On Performance Management And Taken Through Medical Talk

By Rosemary Wachiye

All staff of the Bungoma County Assembly participated in a comprehensive sensitization program on Performance Management on Thursday, May 30, 2025, in preparation for signing annual performance contracts on July 1, 2025.

The training was facilitated by directors from the Public Service Performance Management Unit under the Executive Office of the President and aimed to equip staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in their duties.



Addressing the staff, Clerk of the County Assembly of Bungoma Mr. Charles Wafula stated that Performance management was in the 21st Wave and it was a government directive to have all institutions under performance management.

Mr. Wafula explained that the performance management system would establish proper structures to advance excellence in service delivery and performance outcomes.

"Performance management



The Clerk of the County Assembly of Bungoma Mr. Charles Wafula and the Principal Human Resource Officer, address participants during Performance Management training for staff at the Paskari Nabwana Hall

involves measuring performance to determine work quality, and it provides the framework through which promotions, rewards, and sanctions can be implemented," the Clerk stated.

He challenged the Human Resource Department to lead the implementation process and announced that the County Assembly is restructuring its training programs to ensure they are tailored toward professional growth.

The Clerk commended all staff members for maintaining authentic professional integrity, as demonstrated during the recent verification of their professional certificates.

During his presentation, Mr. Bernard Beigon guided staff through the performance contract process, which serves as the government of Kenya's flagship performance management tool for driving socio-economic transformation. He also covered the performance appraisal system.

He explained that the Staff Performance Appraisal System (SPAS) enables supervisors to assess employee performance, facilitating structured communication between employees and their immediate supervisors through systematic performance reviews.

Staff received training on developing work plans and setting clear performance targets for appraisal periods based on strategic goals, historical performance, and resource availability. The training

emphasized the importance of meetings between appraisers and appraisees to discuss and agree on targets as well as appraisal ratings at the end of each period.

Mr. Tyson Githinji presented the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in the County Assembly's integrated performance management process, including the County Assembly Service Board (CASB), the County Assembly Performance Management Committee, the Head of Human Resource Department, appraisers, and appraisees.

Mr. Robert Ngei delivered a presentation on the guiding principles of the rewards and sanctions framework, covering performance standards, fairness, natural justice, equal opportunity, right of appeal, effective communication, coaching and mentoring, and professionalism.

The ICT Department, led by Mr. Ariel Wekesa, presented the digitized daily workbook—a tool aimed at enhancing performance management through real-time accountability of duties undertaken by individual staff members.

The training concluded with a medical education session presented by Zion Medical Facility, located in Bungoma. The presentation addressed various health concerns with particular emphasis on prostate cancer awareness. Staff were informed about the importance of early medical checkups to detect potential signs of the disease and prevent its adverse effects.



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