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County Assembly committees scrutinize financial statements

By County Assembly Communications Team

The County Assembly of Bungoma's sectoral committees have conducted thorough reviews of the consolidated financial statements and reports presented by various county departments for financial year 2023/2024. The scrutiny aimed at assessing the budget allocation and ensuring efficiency in expenditure.

November 4, 2024, Chief Officers and senior officials from the Departments of Education and Vocational Training, Agriculture, Fisheries, Irrigation and Cooperative Development, Tourism, Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Roads, Transport, Infrastructure and Public Works, Labour Relations, Members' Services and Facilities, and Gender, Culture, and Social Welfare appeared before the committees. The executives were questioned on

their approved annual budgets, the extent of fund utilization in both recurrent and development expenditures, as well as outstanding bills and budgetary discrepancies.

Committee members sought explanations for unutilized funds in several departments, with some departments attributing their challenges to delayed disbursements by the national government.

The committees also inquired about each department's revenue collection, project implementation progress, and the status of imprest reports.

These budget interrogation sessions are set to continue tomorrow, with final deliberations expected to conclude on Friday November 8th, 2024



Members of the Committee on Roads, Transport and public Works during interrogation of financial statements for FY 23/24



Hon. Okasida Johnston Ipara MCA Tongaren Ward and Hon. Benjamin Otsiula MCA Khasoko Ward attending the committee interrogation of the financial statements for FY 23/24



Members of the County Assembly during interrogation of Financial statements for FY 23/24



Members of the Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Irrigation and Co-operatives during interrogation of the County Executive on financial statements for FY 23/24

Committee on Finance and Economic Planning interrogates consolidated financial statements and reports for FY 2023/2024

By County Assembly Communications Team

The County Assembly Committee on Finance and Economic Planning interrogated financial statements and reports for the Financial Year 2023/2024 at the County Assembly precincts on Thursday, November 7th, 2024.

The County Executive team, led by the Chief Officer in charge of Finance, Mr. Robert Simiyu, was tasked with explaining the borrowing from emergency funds and the department's commitment to clearing pending bills.

The Committee, led by the Chairperson, Hon Barasa Mukhongo, interrogated the team on the financial

statements and reports as they sought clarity on the County expenditures vis a vis exchequer releases.

The Department, for its part, noted that despite receiving 92% of the exchequer funds, most budgeted activities had not been paid for due to insufficient donor funds and unrealized revenue collection targets.

The Committee also inquired why the Hospital Management Information System that had been installed at Bungoma County Referral Hospital had not been operationalized, leading to a risk of loss of public funds through the use of a manual

payment system in the hospitals instead of a cashless system.

The Committee noted that contractor retention fees were placed under pending bills, raising concerns about the accuracy of the pending bills. The Committee tasked the team to provide a comprehensive report detailing the operations of the retention account and transactions.

The Finance Committee noted with concern that despite attaining a revenue collection target of 54%, the department had not prioritized resource mobilization strategies and enforcement of revenue collection, as evidenced by their

lack of expenditure of the Ksh. 5 Million allocated for the same.

The committee also noted that most departments appearing before the Sectoral Committees over similar interrogations had apportioned blame on the Finance Department for the discrepancies in the reported figures. The finance team disputed the claims, stating that most departments submit the reported figures and should not dissociate themselves from the reports.



Chief Officer Finance Robert Simiyu, Director of Accounts Ambrose Makokha accompanied by staff from County Treasury while appearing before the County Assembly Committee on Finance and Economic Planning for interrogation of financial statements for FY 23/24



Members of the Committee on Finance and Economic Planning during an interrogation of the County Executive on financial statements for FY 23/24



Members of the Committee on Finance and Economic Planning during an interrogation of the County Executive on financial statements for FY 23/24

SRC delegation visits County Assembly of Bungoma on monitoring and evaluation mission

By County Assembly Communications Team

A delegation from the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC), led by Commissioner Hon. Isaac Kipkemboi Melly, conducted an evaluation visit at the County Assembly of Bungoma, praising the Assembly's commitment to transparent governance and effective management of public resources.

The SRC visit aimed at assessing how well the County Assembly has implemented SRC's remuneration guidelines, especially on allowances, is part of a broader, nationwide initiative targeting Ministries, Departments, Agencies, and County Governments. This ongoing exercise seeks to align public wage bills with the goal of achieving a manageable 35 percent ratio in line with recent resolutions from a

wage bill conference organized by the SRC.

The delegation began with a courtesy call to the Clerk of the County Assembly, Mr. Charles Wafula, and then moved to discussions with the Speaker, Hon. Emmanuel Situma, to dive into issues impacting the County Assembly's efficiency and welfare of the Members of County Assembly (MCAs).

Hon. Melly, an SRC Commissioner representing the Parliamentary Service Commission, stressed the importance of engaging County Assemblies directly, noting that these discussions would play a crucial role in shaping SRC's future recommendations on remuneration and allowances for MCAs and staff.

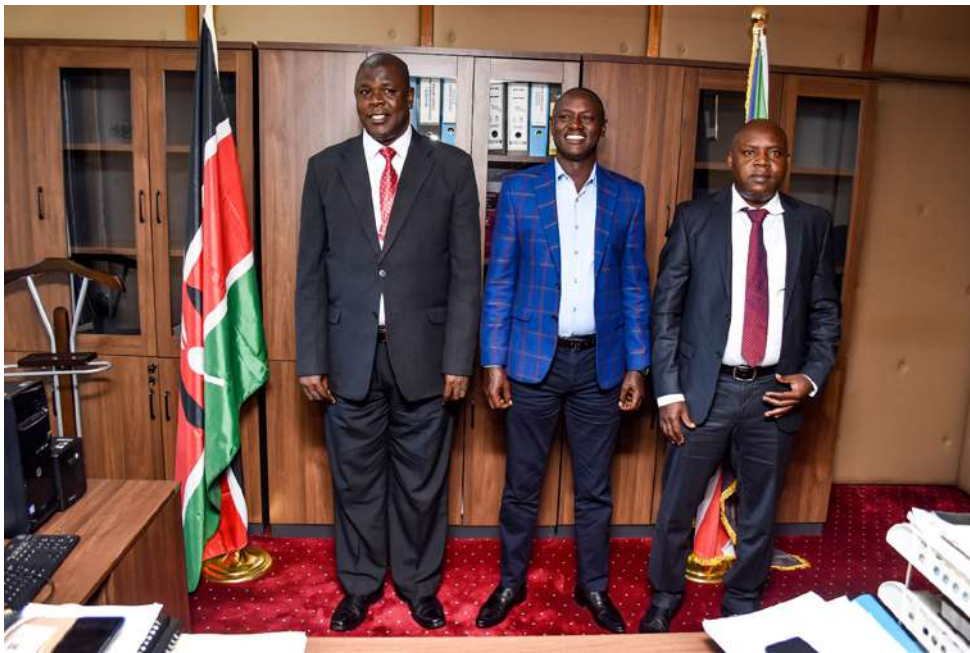
During the discussions, Speaker Situma presented a strong case for reviewing MCAs' sitting allowances, mileage, and pension plans. He also advocated for adjustments in the qualifications required for the role of Speaker, as well as an independent funding mechanism for county assemblies separate from the County Executive. Such changes, he argued, would empower Assemblies to operate more effectively.

The Clerk Mr. Wafula asked SRC to standardize staffing levels in MCA ward offices across the country. He underscored that sitting allowances are essential for ensuring MCAs' attendance at sessions, which is vital to maintain quorum for County Assembly business.

Mr. Wafula also called for clear

guidelines on the status of external County Assembly Board Members, citing ambiguity around whether they are full-time or part-time employees, a distinction that can impact operational efficiency.

Responding to the issues raised, Hon. Melly assured the Assembly of SRC's commitment to review and address these concerns. He emphasized the value of the insights provided by Speaker Situma and Clerk Wafula, committing to incorporate them into future SRC policy recommendations.



Speaker of the County Assembly of Bungoma Hon Emmanuel Situma (Left) SRC Commissioner Hon. Isaac Kipkemboi Melly (Centre), Clerk of the County Assembly Mr. Charles Wafula (Right) during the Monitoring and Evaluation visit



Speaker of the County Assembly of Bungoma Hon Emmanuel Situma (Centre) SRC Commissioner Hon. Isaac Kipkemboi Melly (Right), Clerk of the County Assembly Mr. Charles Wafula, Principal Human Resource Officer Mr. Abraham Wekesa (Far right) and other SRC officials during the Monitoring and Evaluation visit.

Unlocking Opportunities: How County Assembly's Library Training Programs are shaping digital and financial futures

By Martha Alaka

The County Assembly Digital Skills Lab is one of the Jitume Centers that have been established upon launch by H.E President William Ruto in December 2022. The Jitume Program is a government initiative aimed at providing access to digital skills, e-services and online opportunities to youth across the country. The program is implemented by Ministry of ICT and the Digital Economy led by Konza Technopolis, ICT Authority and TVET Authority. Through this program, youth undertake on the job training with pathways for digitally enabled jobs. The youth also stand to gain from various online courses and receive certification upon completion. The Jitume Centers have between 50 to 100 Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) with broadband connectivity, reliable power, security and a program coordinator provided by Konza Technopolis Development Authority.

The County Assembly of Bungoma Library (Digital Skills Lab-Jitume Centre) has hosted three extensive

training programs aimed at equipping participants with valuable skills in digital writing, financial markets, and visual content creation. These sessions, led by experienced trainers from partners accredited by Konza Technopolis; ran from April to October 2024 and provided participants with hands-on learning to enhance their professional capabilities in a digital-driven world.

The first cohort held from April 29 to May 3, 2024 led by Mr. Stephen Maingi, from eMobilis, focused on online writing skills and income generation opportunities on digital platforms. Topics included content creation, search engine optimization (SEO), monetization strategies, and portfolio building. Attendance varied daily, averaging about 25 participants, with sessions that introduced them to freelance platforms like Upwork and Fiverr, affiliate marketing, and digital tools. The training concluded with a review and Q&A session, allowing participants to clarify concepts and seek personalized advice. This

program provided practical skills to kickstart or boost careers in online content creation and digital income generation.

The second training cohort, facilitated by Mr. Evans Terer (Ajira Kenya) from June 17 to 20, 2024, targeted individuals interested in financial literacy and trading. The course covered fundamentals of financial markets, risk management, and trading strategies, with 39-51 participants attending daily. Mr. Terer offered insights into trading platforms like MetaTrader, and taught strategies to analyze market trends, manage risks, and make informed decisions. The program highlighted the significance of financial literacy and equipped attendees with tools to enter the world of financial trading.

From October 22 to 25, 2024, Mr. Oliver Mwangi from Digital Opportunity Trust(DOT)Kenya led the third cohort on videography, photography, and digital storytelling. With practical lessons on camera operations, editing tech-

niques, and content strategies, participants learned to create engaging visual content for platforms like YouTube and Instagram. Attendance ranged from 11 to 18 participants, and the training ended with a session on monetizing content, which sparked strong interest. Attendees gained valuable skills in visual storytelling, technical camera handling, and editing, preparing them to produce high-quality content for digital platforms.

These training programs at the County Assembly of Bungoma Library were a positive step toward empowering local talent. Despite fluctuating attendance, the sessions were interactive and well-received. Recommendations for future sessions include topic-specific follow-ups, targeted outreach for higher attendance, and establishing a support network for ongoing skill development. The comprehensive training initiatives fostered digital literacy and practical knowledge in areas vital to the modern economy, giving participants a foundation to thrive in online careers, financial markets, and creative content creation.



Deputy Speaker of the County Assembly of Bungoma Hon. Stephen Wamalwa(Centre), Deputy ClerkLegislative Services Dr. Leonard Monos(Right) and the Trainer from Ajira Kenya Mr. Evans Terer pause for photo with the Second Cohort of the Ajira Digital Training program



Second cohort participants of the Ajira program using computers in the County Assembly E-Library



First cohort participants of the Ajira program listening to a presentation during an introductory training in the County Assembly Paskari Nabwana Hall

Note: Training programs in the County Assembly Library are open to the Assembly fraternity and the Bungoma County community at large. Members and staff are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities to enhance digital skills and embrace emerging technological trends.

Fostering unity in governance: Historic joint conference between County Assembly and executive charts path for enhanced service delivery

By County Assembly Communications Team

The County Assembly and County Executive of Bungoma have convened a significant strategic retreat to evaluate their performance over the past two years and forge stronger collaborative frameworks. The joint conference brings together Members of the County Assembly, the County Executive Committee, and a section of the staff to assess achievements, address challenges, and develop comprehensive strategies for enhanced inter-governmental relations.

The leadership from both arms of government deliberated on crucial matters including passed legislations and their implementation, project oversight, and service delivery optimization to ensure seamless governance for the people of Bungoma County. They discussed and ironed out the existing gaps and challenges faced during their collaborative work towards forging co-relations on matters before Committees and the role of the County Executive.

In his opening remarks, speaker of the County Assembly Hon Emman-



Deputy Clerk Legislative Services Dr. Leonard Momos facilitating a session at the joint strategic conference retreat involving Members of the County Assembly and County Executive officials in Kisumu

uel Situma stated that the County Assembly of Bungoma does not exist in isolation, indicating that external partnerships have played a key role in fostering growth and improvement in the County Assembly.

Hon Situma revealed the existing challenge of communication breakdown between the County Assembly and the County Executive, which he said should be worked on to eliminate delays in providing timely and accurate information whenever the County Assembly requests information on matters before Committees.

Over a month ago, the County Assembly had submitted the Public Participation Bill and the Civic Education and Access to Information Bill to the County Executive. However, the bills were not yet assented to, nor has the Assembly received any feedback on them. Therefore the County Assembly leadership has urged the County Executive to prioritize these pending bills and provide a timely response.

The Speaker further called for



The speaker of the County Assembly, Members of the County Assembly staff of the County assembly service Service Board(CASB) and County Executives officials attending a joint strategic conference retreat involving Members of the County Assembly and County Executive officials held in Kisumu

teamwork and cooperation from Hon members and County Executive officials to enhance legislation, oversight, and representation. As he urged Hon Members to be well acquainted and informed about the County Assembly legislations whenever they appear before radio stations for interviews so that they give informed position of the issue under discussion.

Clerk of the County Assembly of Bungoma Mr. Charles Wafula stated that the conference was aimed at providing a platform to County Executive Committee Members to present on how their departments are working towards implementing legislations passed by the County Assembly.

He further highlighted that the County Assembly acts as a backbone of accountability since they ensure the maximizing of County revenue collection mechanisms and optimum use of resource by the County Executive.

Mr. Wafula called upon them to foster a united path, together with a shared vision and aligned goals so that they can accomplish more than what they have done so far. As he quoted the words of Hellen Keller "alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

Leader of minority Hon Anthony Lusenaka appreciated the secretariat comprising of members of staff for the good work they are doing attesting to the improved quality of reports being developed by the County Assembly. Hon. Lusenaka also noted that all visiting delegations during the recent County Assemblies Sports Association

(CASA) Games commended the County Assembly for its exemplary performance, which was facilitated by effective administration and leadership. He urged the County Executive to receive the Assembly's feedback constructively and implement measures to enhance service delivery.

Leader of Majority Hon Joseph Nyongesa called upon the Members of the County Assembly and County Executive to ensure proper implementation and ensuing oversight is done so that citizen's interests are catered for.

Deputy Clerk Legislative Services Dr. Leonard Momos presented on the legislative progress as he analyzed bills, regulations and policies passed by the County Assembly. In his presentation, Dr. Momos called upon Hon members to use statements for oversight yet he noted that some Departments only had few statements such as Sectors on Trade and Industrialization and Roads, Infrastructure and Public Works.

Site visits as a way of oversight by the County Assembly such as Committee on Education, Youth and Sports and Roads Infrastructure only had few site visits. Fact finding and use of legislation to undertake oversight by Committees were also highlighted.

The Committee on Finance revealed that the legislations passed have improved collection of own source revenue to the recent attainment of Kshs. 388 Million which is the highest revenue collection since 2013.

Laws that had been passed by the County Assembly from inception of devolution up to date face challenges in implementation due to lack of regulations. Hon Situma stated that the County Assembly's efforts to get regulations from the County Executive were not fruitful due to vacancy of the County Attorney and urged the Executive to expedite the same and bring forth regulations for better implementation of passed laws.

A resolution was made for the County Assembly to fast track the passage of the 3 pending policies to ensure compliance with the law

before the 5th of December, 2024, such policies were Bungoma County Youth policy, 2024, Bungoma County Sports Policy, 2024 and Bungoma County Water Policy, 2024.

Clerk of the County Assembly Mr. Charles Wafula(Left), Speaker of the County Assembly Hon. Emmanuel Situma(Centre) and the Leader of Majority Hon. Joseph Nyongesa(Right) at the joint strategic conference retreat involving Members of the County Assembly and County Executive officials held in Kisumu



Bungoma County Assembly to take short recess to clear pending business

By County Assembly Communications Team

The County Assembly of Bungoma proceeded a short recess on November 7th, 2024 with plans to resume on November 19th according to the approved Calendar. Before the December recess, the Assembly aims to complete all reports already tabled in the House or to pending before various committees.

Speaking at today's House Business Committee meeting, Speaker Hon. Emmanuel Situma emphasized the importance of addressing pending

reports, announcing that five key reports currently awaiting processing will be completed before the December break.

Hon. Situma pointed out that any new reports would only be introduced in the next session, following the House's resumption after the long December recess.

"We don't intend to have any business pending before the House by the time we close for the long recess. Let's mop up all pending business and ensure it is dispensed



Members of the County Assembly of Bungoma attending a sitting at the County Assembly plenary



Members of the County Assembly of Bungoma attending a sitting at the County Assembly plenary

with," he stated.

Among the business scheduled for next week's sittings are a report by the Powers and Privileges Committee on the integrity framework for the Bungoma County Assembly, a report by the Justice, Cohesion, and Legal Affairs Committee on the ethnic and diversity audit of the County Public Service, a report by the Sectoral Committee on Finance and Economic Planning regarding the Bungoma County Annual Development Plan, a review by the Budget and Appropriations Committee of the Bungoma County

Budget Outlook Paper, a report by the Finance and Economic Planning Committee on the evaluation of selected revenue streams of the Bungoma County Government, and a report by the Sectoral Committee on Tourism, Environment, Water, and Natural Resources concerning the Nzowasco De-clustering task force.



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Website: www.bungomaassembly.go.ke

Email: info@bungomaassembly.go.ke

FaceBook: Bungoma County Assembly

X: @Assembly Bungoma

Team Leader: Mr Charles Wafula

Writers: Rosemary Wachiye

Mash Misiko

Eric Ngobilo

Martha Alaka

Photography: Public Communications Section

Designer: Shelton Nyongesa