

How Veterans Can Become Involved with Activities of the Local Government

By Adriaan Theron¹, 31 March 2016

Introduction

Participating in the local government can provide opportunities to Military Veterans who want to participate in the local community, either through a business venture or just through general involvement. In this way they could help with the provision of benefits to registered military veterans.

Ward Committees

Ward committees exist as the primary vehicle for public participation in municipal affairs:

- They constitute the most feasible and pragmatic base for civic representation.
- Ward committees form the link between the community and the ward councillors.
- By virtue of being a function of civic society and not party political they can function independently of the structures imposed by party alliances.

Legislation and the national guidelines for the composition of a ward committee state that each ward will have a ward committee, made up of not more than 15 members. The 15 elected people should represent a diversity of interests in the ward and be equitably representative of women. Diversity has typically been understood to mean a variety of representation, e.g. civic or rate-payers bodies, development organisations, labour unions, business associations, transport and commuter associations, women, youth, faith-based, cultural and other organisations². These members are elected by communities residing in the ward area. The ward also has a ward councillor (politically elected member) who is the chairperson of the ward committee.

The structures of wards in local government allows for sectoral representation or geographical area representation. Sectoral representation implies that there are a grouping of people who have some common denominator (such as an organisation) that has significant support within the community. This implies that military veterans can be represented on the ward committees if they have enough representation within that ward.

Each municipality has a number of wards and military veterans can potentially be represented on all of them.

To get representation on the ward committee, the sectoral structures (for example women's groups, farmers' organisations, and veterans' organisations) have a meeting to nominate their representative to represent their sectoral interest in the ward committee. Geographic areas constituting the ward are requested to send their nominated representatives to serve as members of the ward committee.

It is possible for committee members to engage with both the municipal line departments and the sub-committees of council such as housing, sport and numerous others to ensure the effective support to the sector represented. This implies that such a representative can ensure that there

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² For actual legal provisions see section 73 (1) – (4) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998

are housing projects scheduled for the veterans and that attention is given to getting these projects completed.

Preferred Service Provider

In order to supply goods or provide services to the local government (municipality), the business needs to be registered on the Supplier Database. The business is then able to quote and bid for services and goods as advertised by the municipality.

The entity that registers on this database could be a sole proprietor or formally registered business. Any person who wants to register on this database needs to go to the specific local government website and find the application form to register. You will typically find a procurement or supply chain management department responsible for managing the database.

Complete and submit this application form with all the required supporting documents. These applications require the applicant to register for specific services. The municipality will notify you when the registration has been completed. You will then be able to tender for jobs required by the local government which include administrative work as well as physical work such as maintaining the gardens, repairing the road and other infrastructure etc.

If you are not registered, you will not be able to participate.