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Mossel Bay municipal manager to pay back more than half a million rand

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Mossel Bay's municipal manager Colin Puren has been ordered to pay back more than half a million rand following an urgent motion that was brought by Mayor Dirk Kotzé during a special council meeting this week.

At the meeting it was decided to revoke Puren's previous salary package.

This follows pressure from opposition parties about Puren's salary scale and a case of fraud that opposition parties have made against the Democratic Alliance caucus in Mossel Bay that is being investigated by the Hawks.

Opposition parties in the municipality say although they agreed with Puren's appointment as municipal manager, the DA caucus withheld recommendations by Western Cape Local Government MEC Anton Bredell, and the then-Cogta Minister, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma on the remuneration of Puren's salary.

Puren was however appointed on the highest level and will therefore now have to replay the difference.

The African Christian Democratic Party said it welcomed the decision that Puren pay back the money, which amounts to exactly R573 805.75.

The ACDP said in a statement that the irregularities with Puren's appointment would not have come to light if a former DA councillor, Anco Barker, had not blown the whistle on it.

The party said this prompted the FF Plus and other opposition parties to file criminal charges of fraud and corruption against the DA caucus in the Mossel Bay council.

"All things considered and the DA's denial of any irregularities, the decision that Puren must pay back monies that he earned unlawfully is an admission of guilt that the appointment at the highest salary scale was unlawful and that the council was deliberately deceived about it," the ACDP's statement read.

"The FF Plus is satisfied that the over-payment will be recovered, but is still of the opinion that the mayor and his councilors acted unlawfully and will closely monitor the course of the criminal complaint."



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