

Town clerk suspended over sh38m

NEBBI

By Benedict Okethwengu

Nebbi municipal council has voted to suspend their acting town clerk, Festo Thugitho, accusing him of causing a financial loss of sh38m.

Thugitho was suspended during a council meeting presided over by Howard Musa, the speaker, after a day-long debate late last month.

A source who attended the meeting, said the councillors based their decision on the internal audit report for the month of September.

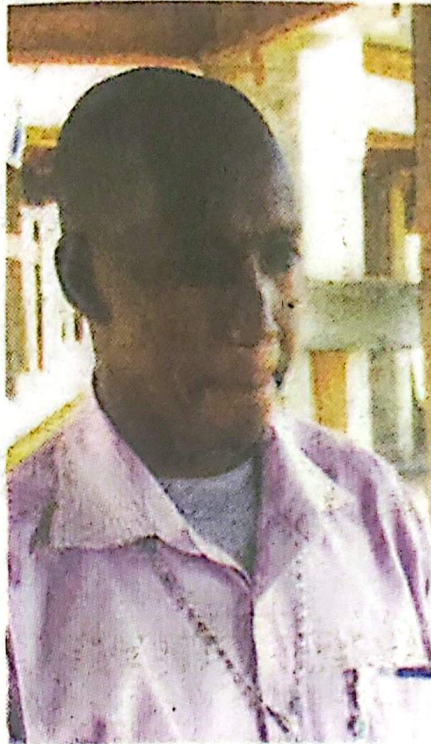
The report, a copy of which *New Vision* has obtained, states that the contract for the main and minor market was duly awarded by Nebbi district, but no agreement was signed with the council.

The market was contracted to Almutu Investment, an Arua-based company, for six months.

It further states that the contractor paid only sh10m as part payment of the total contract sum of sh48m, which was payable in three months.

The report also revealed that the contractor was allowed to commence work without the mandatory advance payment as is usually required by the contract agreement.

They said Thugitho was given an opportunity to defend



Thugitho during the meeting

ON THE GROUND

■ Doreen Okaba, the female councillor representing the Central ward, moved the motion before being seconded by Brian Mungujikisa, the male councillor representing the youth.

the report, but the councillors rejected his explanation.

"Thugitho's argument was not convincing, so the council

unanimously voted him out of office in order to recover the money," the source said.

Musa confirmed the development to *New Vision* when contacted on Friday.

"Yes, the council has resolved to remove the acting town clerk from office. He can only be allowed back after recovering the sh38m," he said.

Thugitho defends himself

When contacted, Thugitho admitted that the councillors had voted him out of office, which he described as illegal.

He denied the council's assertion that he caused the sh38m financial loss to the council, vowing to only handover office to the duly appointed accounting officer, subject to relevant laws of Uganda.

He said the cheques, worth sh40m, were issued in the name of Nebbi municipal central division, confirming the contractor's commitment to the existing contract, besides the sh10m paid into the council's account.

He added that the executive terminated Almutu Investment's contract and immediately rented it out to someone else, noting that this has since resulted in a statutory notice to sue for breach of contract.