

September 2021



FLORIDA BLACK CAUCUS
OF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

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President's Message



Greetings FBC-LEO Members and Friends,

I am still overjoyed from the wonderful experience of seeing so many of you last month, at the FBC-LEO Annual Breakfast during the FLC Annual Conference. This breakfast was the largest and one of the most successful events in FBC-LEO's history. Not only did we enjoy good food and company, but we were also "fed" by the soul-stirring words of Congresswoman Val Demings. Following that uplifting experience, we have already started making plans for the 2022 FBC-LEO Spring Conference and for a membership reception at the League's Legislative Conference in November. So

stay tuned for additional information about both.

We also had the opportunity to witness our FBC-LEO Past President, Commissioner Phillip Walker, get sworn in as the new President of the Florida League of Cities. This was indeed a celebratory moment for us all. We wish FLC President Walker a successful year ahead and we will support him any way we can.

Special thanks to all of those who volunteered at our first FLC Annual Conference FBC-LEO Booth to spread the word about our organization. On the heels of a successful membership drive that has brought over 100 new members to our organization, we are excited to implement new programs and initiatives that will continue to grow our membership and provide useful resources and support for our members. We've come this far by faith, and there's no stopping us now!

Teresa Watkins Brown

President Teresa Watkins Brown
Councilwoman, City of Fort Myers

Member News

Congratulations!



Congratulations, Commissioner Phillip Walker

At the FLC Annual Conference in August, FBC-LEO Past President Phillip Walker, Commissioner, City of Lakeland was sworn in as President of Florida League of Cities.

Please join us in celebrating this awesome accomplishment.



Welcome to our new FBC-LEO Members

Warmest welcome! We are delighted to have you as members of the FBC-LEO organization and look forward to getting to know you.

- **Anessa Canidate**, Councilwoman, Quincy
- **Keith A. Dowdell**, Mayor, Quincy
- **Ronte Harris**, Councilman, Quincy
- **Petrina McCutchen**, Commissioner, Fort Meade
- **Mary Richardson**, Commissioner, Dundee
- **Kathy Washington**, Councilwoman, Welaka

IN MEMORIAM



Rufus "Butch" Alexander III

It is with our deepest sorrow that we announce the passing of long-time FBC-LEO member, Fort Pierce Commissioner Rufus Alexander III.

Commissioner Alexander was laid to rest on Saturday, August 8.

View his obituary [here](#).

2021-2022 Board of Directors

FBC-LEO 2021-2022 Board of Directors



President

Teresa Watkins Brown
Councilwoman
City of Fort Myers



Assistant Treasurer

Jackie Gary Clarke
Vice Mayor
Village of Indiantown



1st Vice President

Morris L. West
Mayor
City of Haines City



Parliamentarian

NanDrycka King Albert
Councilwoman
City of Midway



2nd Vice President

Justin Campbell
Commissioner
City of Palatka



Historian

Jaha Cummings
Councilman
City of Punta Gorda



Immediate Past President

Phillip E. Walker
Commissioner
City of Lakeland



Chaplain

Eugene Fultz
Mayor
City of Lake Wales



Secretary

Jessica Davis
Commissioner
City of DeLand



Sergeant-At-Arms

Samuel Berrien
Mayor
City of Fort Meade



Assistant Secretary

Alexander H. Smith
Commissioner
City of Apopka



Regional Coordinator/ Membership Coordinator - North

Rufus Borom
Commissioner
City of Palatka



Treasurer

Hazelle P. Rogers
Mayor
City of Lauderdale Lakes



Regional Coordinator/ Membership Coordinator - South

Kenneth Thurston
Mayor
City of Lauderhill

Thank you, Booth Volunteers

A special thanks to the volunteers who staffed the FBC-LEO Booth during the Florida League of Cities' Annual Conference.

Your help was vital to establishing FBC-LEO's presence at this event.

Volunteers:

- **Samuel Berrien**, Mayor, Fort Meade
- **Rufus Borom**, Commissioner, Palatka
- **Shirley Green Brown**, Vice Mayor, Alachua
- **Marilyn Davis**, Commissioner, Lauderdale Lakes
- **Melissa Dunn**, Commissioner, Lauderhill
- **Dwight Hinkson**, Commission Aide, Lauderdale Lakes
- **Curtis Johnson**, Commissioner, Fort Pierce
- **NanDrycka King Albert**, Councilwoman, Midway
- **Lawrence Martin**, Commissioner, Lauderhill
- **Petrina McCutchen**, Commissioner, Fort Meade
- **Hazelle Rogers**, Mayor, Lauderdale Lakes
- **Eryn Russell**, Ambassador, Florida League of Cities
- **Alexander Smith**, Commissioner, Apopka

FBC-LEO Annual Breakfast Recap

The FBC-LEO Annual Breakfast Meeting on Friday, August 13, was a considerable success. Over 100 attendees shared a hot breakfast, while the members elected the 2021-2022 Board of Directors.

Congresswoman Val Demings was the guest speaker. She delivered a powerful and timely address that illustrated many of the issues impacting the communities the members represent.

Below is a photo recap of the event.





FEMA: Prepare to Protect



Prepare to Protect: Before Peak Hurricane Season
*by: Pam Forrester, External Affairs Specialist, Region IV,
Federal Emergency Management Agency*

Prepared - Not Scared
Disasters Don't Wait - Make a Plan

FEMA's 2021 theme for National Preparedness month is Prepare to Protect. To prepare ahead for a disaster is to protect everyone you love. These are important messages for businesses and families to follow as Mother Nature's wrath and man-made disasters wreak havoc on lives across the country and in our own back yards.

September is National Preparedness Month. It is the time to update plans for businesses, homes, schools, churches and families to help lessen the impact, before a disaster strikes. In Florida and throughout the southeast United States, September is the peak of the Atlantic Hurricane season. With predictions for an active season, the states could see multiple strong storms impacting communities.

Are you prepared for the next big event that can happen suddenly, with little or no warning, anytime and anywhere? Can you answer "yes" to this question?

In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York City's Twin Towers and the Pentagon in Washington D.C., 20 years ago this month, the Department of Homeland Security began urging all citizens to prepare for emergencies and disasters. In 2003, the Ready campaign and Ready.gov website were created as a public service to educate and empower people to prepare and respond to emergencies. With resources and checklists, the website guides businesses, and families to prepare for unforeseen disasters. Dozens of links lead to information on how anyone can ready themselves for specific disasters, from hurricanes in our region to earthquakes in other parts of the United States. They provide details and a starting point for conversations in the workplace with employees or at home with children.

[Read more.](#)

[Download Flyer](#)

Task Force on Abandoned African American Cemeteries



On June 4, 2021, Governor DeSantis signed into law **CS/CS/HB 37 (Chapter 2021-60, Laws of Florida)** relating to Abandoned Cemeteries. The bill created a 10-member Task Force on Abandoned African American Cemeteries. The purpose of this task force is to:

1. Study the extent to which unmarked or abandoned African American cemeteries and burial grounds exist throughout the state.
2. Develop and recommend strategies for identifying and recording cemeteries and burial grounds while preserving local history and ensuring dignity and respect for the deceased.

Jaha Cummings, Councilman, City of Punta Gorda and FBC-LEO Historian, has been appointed to the Task Force.

Councilman Cummings is asking the FBC-LEO membership to provide information regarding abandoned African American cemeteries in their municipality to ensure that any abandoned cemeteries in their city/county can be duly noted as part of the committee's work. A brief, one-page, historical background of the cemetery's establishment, current condition, impending threats, etc., would be helpful.

Please send this information to Councilman Jaha Cummings at jcumings@cityofpuntagordafl.com by September 20.

For more information about the task force, [click here](#).
[Click here](#) to read an article about the task force.

Events & Training Opportunities

#FLCities Strong Webinar Series

September 13, 2021
10:00 a.m. ET



Tune in monthly for insight and encouragement as Dr. Scott Paine and Shwanda Barnette host engaging conversations that take listeners beyond today's headlines. They'll explore what cities are doing and can do to turn the challenges of the present into better futures for their municipalities and their residents.

Click the "Register Here" button to register for the September FLCitiesStrong broadcast!

Register Here

Institute for Elected Municipal Officials I

**Days Hotel by Wyndham Celebration
Kissimmee, FL
October 8-10, 2021
8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. ET**



Room Rate: \$99.00++ per night
Member Registration Rate: \$300

Registration Coming Soon.

Questions? Contact adelune@flcities.com.

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**Florida Black Caucus of Local Elected
Officials**