

**Minutes**  
**Florida League of Cities, Inc. Annual Conference**  
**August 15-17, 2024**  
**Diplomat Beach Resort, Hollywood, Florida**

The Florida League of Cities' Annual Conference was held at the Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, Florida, on August 15-17, 2024. There was an attendance of more than 800 delegates and guests, representing approximately 241 municipal governments.

Principal speakers included Richard Florida, world's leading urbanist and international bestselling author of "The Rise of the Creative Class", and Erica Dhawan, internationally recognized leading authority, speaker, and advisor on 21st-century teamwork, collaboration and innovation.

On Thursday, August 15, delegates began arriving for various workshops and events of the annual conference. In the morning, a "Continuing Education in Ethics" workshop was held. That afternoon, the League's legislative policy committees conducted a joint meeting. Three workshops, "Cities 101", "Speaking So They Hear You!", and "Retail Matters: From Downtown to Big Box" were also held. The FLC Nominating Committee met in the afternoon, as well as the Resolutions Committee. A Speed Networking event was held for first-time attendees. That evening, the President's Welcome Reception was held for all conference delegates to attend.

Friday, August 16, began with the Federal Action Strike Team (FAST) meeting, followed by three concurrent sessions "Blueprints for Change: Best Practice Solutions for Florida's Housing Crisis", "Best Practices for Natural Disasters: A Guide for Elected Officials" and "Using AI". These were followed by the Opening General Session presided by Greg Ross, FLC President, Mayor, Cooper City. The session welcome address was given by Jeannie Garner, Florida League of Cities Executive Director and CEO. At this time, Mayor Gib Coerper, Alachua, was announced as the winner of the E. Harris Drew Municipal Official Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Defender of Home Rule Award was presented to Senator Jason Pizzo. Richard Florida, world's leading urbanist and international bestselling author of "The Rise of the Creative Class," was the keynote speaker.

That afternoon, three additional rounds of concurrent sessions were held. Round two topics were: "Citizen Engagement: Communicating Your Budget", "Homelessness in Public Areas: Practical Approaches to HB 1365", and "Understanding the Grand Puzzle: Setting up for Success." Round three topics were: "Unified Leadership: Building Collaborative Council-Manager Relationships" and "Building Rapport: How to Get Along Without Giving Up". Round four topics were: "Leadership Workshop" and "The Future of Municipal Service Delivery".

Also, that day, the Advocacy Committee met, and the Florida Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials held a breakfast meeting. The Board of Directors met Friday afternoon, and in the evening a Florida League of Cities Membership Networking Reception was held, and a Young Elected Municipal Officials Dessert Reception was held.

On Saturday, August 17, several local/regional leagues held breakfast meetings.

At 9:00 a.m. that morning, President Greg Ross, Mayor, Cooper City, called the Business Session to order and announced that a quorum of delegates was present. Voting delegates were requested to be seated in the designated area. President Ross advised delegates that if it were necessary for a Division of the House to be called, an explanation of the system of casting weighted votes would be provided in advance.

The meeting was conducted in accordance with the League's By-Laws and *Robert's Rule of Order*. Each voting delegate was properly registered and received voting credentials and ballots identifying the delegate's weighted vote. Kraig Conn, the League's general counsel, served as parliamentarian.

The first order of business was a motion duly made and seconded to approve the 2023 conference minutes as posted on the League's website. The motion was adopted.

President Ross then recognized the chairs of the League's five legislative policy committees and thanked them and committee members for their service.

He also recognized the chairs of the Federal Action Strike Team and the Advocacy Committee thanking them for their service. He then announced there was no unfinished business to come before the membership of the Florida League of Cities.

President Ross called for a report of the Resolutions Committee. Committee Chair Michael Blake, League First Vice President and Mayor, Cocoa, introduced each resolution and moved its adoption. Each motion was duly seconded, and each resolution was adopted.

## **2024-01**

### **A RESOLUTION OF THE FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC., EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO THE CITY OF COOPER CITY AND THE BROWARD LEAGUE OF CITIES FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF GREG ROSS AS PRESIDENT OF THE FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES.**

**WHEREAS**, Greg Ross, Mayor of the City of Cooper City, served as President of the Florida League of Cities (FLC) from 2023-2024; and

**WHEREAS**, the citizens, Commissioners and staff of the City of Cooper City were understanding of the demands placed upon Mayor Ross in his role as President of the FLC; and

**WHEREAS**, during his presidency, Mayor Ross focused on the Serving Our Cities initiative, which centered around intentional collaboration, expanded education and respectful public service; and

**WHEREAS**, the membership and staff of the FLC recognize that the commitment of the City of Cooper City and the Broward League of Cities to Mayor Ross' presidency ensured his active

participation in FLC activities and unselfish service to the FLC and it permitted him to successfully promote the programs, projects and philosophy of the FLC during the past year; and

**WHEREAS**, the membership and staff of the FLC also wish to recognize and personally thank Mary Lou Tighe, the Broward League of Cities Executive Director, all of the dedicated City of Cooper City staff and members of the Broward League of Cities for their efforts in providing outstanding assistance to President Ross and FLC staff in coordinating his duties with the City and with the FLC, and all City staff went above and beyond the call of duty and their outstanding contributions to this effort are applauded and greatly appreciated.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.**

**Section 1.** The FLC membership and staff do officially and personally appreciate the commitment the City of Cooper City's citizens, Commissioners and staff made to Mayor Ross' presidency.

**Section 2.** The FLC membership and staff also appreciate the support and commitment from the Broward League of Cities to ensure President Ross had a successful year as FLC President.

**Section 3.** A copy of this resolution be presented to the City of Cooper City and the Broward League of Cities.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Florida League of Cities, Inc. in conference assembled at the League's 2024 Annual Conference at the Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, FL, this 17th Day of August 2024.

**2024-02**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC., RECOGNIZING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 21-27, 2024, AS "FLORIDA CITY GOVERNMENT WEEK" AND ENCOURAGING ALL FLORIDA CITY OFFICIALS TO SUPPORT THIS CELEBRATION BY PARTICIPATING IN FLORIDA CITY GOVERNMENT WEEK ACTIVITIES.**

**WHEREAS**, city government is the government closest to the people and the one with the most direct daily impact upon its residents; and

**WHEREAS**, city government provides services and programs that enhance the quality of life for residents, making their city their home; and

**WHEREAS**, city government is administered for and by its citizens and is dependent upon public commitment to and understanding of its many responsibilities; and

**WHEREAS**, city government officials and employees share the responsibility to pass along the understanding of the services provided by cities and their benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, Florida City Government Week is a very important time to recognize the significant role played by city government in our lives and to spread the word to all Floridians that they can shape and influence this level of government, which is closest to the people; and

**WHEREAS**, the Florida League of Cities and its member cities have joined together to teach students and other citizens about municipal government through a variety of activities.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.:**

**Section 1.** The Florida League of Cities, Inc., encourages all city officials, city employees, school officials and citizens to participate in events that recognize and celebrate Florida City Government Week.

**Section 2.** A copy of this resolution be provided to the membership of the Florida League of Cities, Inc.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Florida League of Cities, Inc., in conference assembled at the League's 2024 Annual Conference at the Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, FL, this 17th Day of August 2024.

**2024-03**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC., URGING CONGRESS TO REFORM AND INCREASE FUNDING TO THE HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAMS.**

**WHEREAS**, natural disasters, including hurricanes, floods, wildfires and earthquakes, pose an ongoing threat to communities in Florida and across the United States and result in loss of life, property damage and economic hardship; and

**WHEREAS**, Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), provide crucial funding for projects that reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural disasters; and

**WHEREAS**, the HMA program includes the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program, the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grant program, the Building Resilience Infrastructure and

Communities (BRIC) grant program and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), all of which are essential in helping communities prepare for and recover from natural disasters; and

**WHEREAS**, current funding levels for the grants within the HMA Program are insufficient to meet the growing demand for mitigation projects, which leaves many communities vulnerable to the devastating impacts of natural disasters; and

**WHEREAS**, there continues to be a dire need for reforms to the HMA Program to streamline the application process, prioritize equitable and cost-effective distribution of funds and increase support for underserved and disadvantaged communities disproportionately affected by natural hazards; and

**WHEREAS**, strengthening the HMA Program would provide additional support for state and local governments working to implement effective hazard mitigation strategies, increase resilience and promote sustainable development in vulnerable areas; and

**WHEREAS**, a study from the National Institute of Building Sciences found that every dollar spent on disaster mitigation saves six dollars in future disaster costs, which reduces the long-term burden on taxpayers; and

**WHEREAS**, investing in hazard mitigation is not only a matter of public safety but also an investment in the economic stability and resilience of communities across the nation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.:**

**Section 1.** The Florida League of Cities, Inc. urges the United States Congress to increase funding for Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants to meet the rising needs of communities facing natural hazards.

**Section 2.** The Florida League of Cities, Inc. calls upon Congress to implement reforms to the HMA Program that streamline the application process, prioritize equitable and cost-effective distribution of funds and provide targeted support for underserved and disadvantaged communities.

**Section 3.** A copy of this resolution be sent to President Joe Biden, the Florida congressional delegation, the National League of Cities and the membership of the Florida League of Cities, Inc.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Florida League of Cities, Inc., in conference assembled at the League's 2024 Annual Conference at the Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, FL, this 17th Day of August 2024.

There being no further resolutions, President Ross expressed appreciation to Committee Chair Michael Blake and the members of the Resolutions Committee for their efforts.

President Ross called for a report of the Nominating Committee. Chair Jolien Caraballo, Vice Mayor, Port St. Lucie offered the following nominations:

For President: Mayor Michael C. Blake, Cocoa. President Ross called for additional nominations. There being none, Chair Caraballo moved that the nominations be closed, and a unanimous vote be cast for Mayor Blake for president. The motion was duly seconded and adopted without dissent.

For First Vice President: Councilmember Holly D. Smith, Sanibel. President Ross called for additional nominations. There being none, Chair Caraballo moved that the nominations be closed, and a unanimous vote be cast for Councilmember Smith for first vice president. The motion was duly seconded and adopted without dissent.

For Second Vice President: Mayor Mark Franks, Shalimar. President Ross called for additional nominations. There being none, Chair Caraballo moved the nominations be closed, and a unanimous vote be cast for Mayor Mark Franks for second vice president. The motion was duly seconded and adopted without dissent.

Chair Caraballo then announced the committee's nominees for the Board of Directors representing the 14 districts were as follows: (1) Mayor J.B. Whitten, Crestview; Councilman William Schatzle, Niceville; (2) Vice Mayor Jake Hill, Lake City; Council Member Thomas DeVille, Penney Farms; (3) Mayor Chris Cloudman, DeLand; Mayor Nancy Miller, Daytona Beach Shores; (4) Deputy Mayor Diana Adams, West Melbourne; Councilmember Sarah Stoeckel, Titusville; (5) Mayor Louie Davis, Waldo; Councilmember Cal Rolfson, Mount Dora; (6) Mayor John Dowless; Edgewood; Commissioner Joseph McMullen, Oakland; Commissioner Rosemary Wilsen, Ocoee; (7) Mayor Dorothea Taylor Bogert, Auburndale; Vice Mayor Morris West, Haines City; (8) Commissioner Thomas Reid, South Pasadena; Councilor Trish Springer, Seminole; (9) Mayor Ed Dodd, Sebastian; (10) Commissioner Brian Williams, Palmetto; (11) Vice Mayor Joanne Ribble, Estero; (12) Vice Mayor Kimberly Glas-Castro, Lake Park; Mayor JohnPaul O'Connor, Westlake; Mayor Chelsea Reed, Palm Beach Gardens, Mayor Molly Young, Tequesta; (13) Mayor Felicia Brunson, West Park; Commissioner Traci L. Callari, Hollywood; Commissioner Joy Carter, Coral Springs; Commissioner Joyce Davis, Dania Beach; Vice Mayor Todd Drosky, Deerfield Beach; Commissioner Bob Mayersohn, Parkland; Vice Mayor Susan Starkey, Davie; (14) Mayor Joseph Corradino, Pinecrest; Mayor Karyn Cunningham, Palmetto Bay; Mayor Rodney Harris, Miami Gardens; Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson, El Portal.

President Ross called for additional nominations. There being none, Chair Caraballo moved that the nominations be closed, and a unanimous ballot be cast for the nominees as presented. The motion was duly seconded and adopted without dissent.

Chair Caraballo then moved the committee's nominees for the Board of Directors representing the 10 most populous cities: Jacksonville – Council Member Rahman Johnson; Miami – Commissioner Damian Pardo; Tampa – Councilman Luis Viera; Orlando – Commissioner Robert Stuart; St. Petersburg – Council Member Copley Gerdes; Hialeah – Mayor Esteban Bovo; Port St. Lucie – Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan; Tallahassee – Commissioner Dianne Williams-Cox; Cape Coral – Mayor John Gunter; Fort Lauderdale – Mayor Dean Trantalis.

President Ross called for additional nominations. There being none, Chair Caraballo moved that the nominations be closed, and a unanimous ballot be cast for the nominees as presented. The motion was duly seconded and adopted without dissent.

Chair Caraballo then announced the By-Laws provide that past presidents serving in office also serve on the Board of Directors and those individuals are: Mayor Scott Black, Dade City; Mayor Joy Cooper, Hallandale Beach; Mayor Pat Bates, Altamonte Springs; Commissioner Leo E. Longworth, Bartow; Vice Mayor Isaac Salver, Bay Harbor Islands; Commissioner Tony Ortiz, Orlando; Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo, Port St. Lucie; and Mayor Greg Ross, Cooper City (at the end of his presidency).

President Ross then thanked Chair Caraballo and the Nominating Committee for their efforts and congratulated the newly appointed Board of Directors of the Florida League of Cities.

There being no comments for the "Good of the Order" and no further business to come before the membership of the League, upon motion, the Business Session was adjourned.

At the Second General Session, the Florida League of Cities President's End of Year Video was shown. The keynote speaker was Erica Dhawan an internationally recognized leading authority, speaker and advisor on 21st century teamwork, collaboration and innovation.

Following the Second General Session, the League's past presidents were recognized during a luncheon held in their honor. Past presidents in attendance were: Robert "Bo" Donly; Raul Martinez; Ilene L. Michelson; Clarence Anthony; Samuel Ferreri; Mayor Scott Black, Dade City; Frank Ortis; Mayor Joy Cooper, Hallandale Beach; Mayor Pat Bates, Altamonte Springs; P.C. Wu; Matthew Surrency; Gil Ziffer; Commissioner Leo E. Longworth, Bartow; Vice Mayor Isaac Salver, Bay Harbor Islands; Phillip Walker; and Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo, Port St. Lucie. Also, during the luncheon, President Michael Blake was installed, and appropriate recognition was provided.

Following lunch, a workshop "Maximizing Your Membership: Exploring FLC's Services" was available for attendees. The League's Board of Directors also met that afternoon.

During the Inaugural Celebration that evening, delegates enjoyed dinner and entertainment, and the 2024 Annual Conference was adjourned.