

2024 Convention Review Special Issue

The Alabama

# MUNICIPAL

Official publication of the Alabama League of Municipalities

Journal

## CONVENTION 2024 REVIEW

■ HUNTSVILLE ■ MAY 15 - 18 ■



### Dothan Mayor Mark Saliba Becomes League President



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Charles Murphy - *Mayor, Robertsdale (2010-11)*  
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Johnny Ford - *Councilmember, Tuskegee (1989-90)*

# About ALM:

The Alabama League of Municipalities is a nonpartisan membership association of over 450 incorporated cities and towns. Since 1935, the League has worked to strengthen municipal government through advocacy, training and the advancement of effective local leadership. As the recognized voice of Alabama's cities and towns, ALM's member municipalities benefit from a variety of member programs, services and activities that are impossible to accomplish alone.



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Official publication of the Alabama League of Municipalities

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*The League's new president, Dothan Mayor Mark Saliba accepted the leadership gavel from immediate past president, Hartselle Mayor Randy Garrison, on May 17, 2024, at the 2024 Annual Convention in Huntsville.*



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# Outgoing President's Farewell Address

2024 OPENING SESSION ■ MAY 15 ■ HUNTSVILLE

Mayor Randy Garrison, Hartselle ■ ALM President 2023 - 2024

**G**ood afternoon my friends, I do not use that term loosely! Over the past 12 months I feel that I have made many new friends around the great state of Alabama. I have enjoyed meeting and working with so many of you this past year. It has been said that you can judge a man's worth by the number of friends he has, not his bank account. With that being the case, I am a wealthy man.

It has been a wonderful blessing to serve you all as president of the Alabama League of Municipalities. When I stepped into this role last year in Birmingham, I contemplated whether I was qualified to take on the task, especially following in the footsteps of my predecessors. However, I have had tremendous support from the League's membership; I owe you all a debt of gratitude for choosing me to work for and represent you this past year.

I have had the honor of representing our League at the National League of Cities, in Atlanta and Washington, D.C., at the Alabama State House and at several different city and town functions within our great state.

I appreciate the faith and confidence you all had in me during this past year, and I have tried my best to fulfill the role.

I would like to begin by thanking Mayor Tommy Battle and his staff for hosting the annual convention, as well as working with League staff to ensure a successful event.

I have been in a couple of meetings with Mayor Battle during the past year, and he is a defender of his city and the folks who live here. You all are in good hands. I cannot think of a better person to lead the largest city in Alabama.

I know I not only speak for Hartselle, but all of the smaller cities in north Alabama, when I say we are thankful for the success Huntsville metro has enjoyed, after all, "a rising tide really does raise all ships!"

I would also like to thank our vice president, Mayor Mark Saliba, of Dothan. He is making a significant difference for his city, and it has been a pleasure to serve alongside him this year as we worked together for the League. He and his terrific wife Angie's friendship has meant a lot to me and my wife Lynn.

I would be completely remiss if I did not mention the resolute, hardworking members of the Alabama League of Municipalities staff. I have enjoyed the close working relationship with so many of the staff members this year. Greg and Kayla are doing an impressive job leading this group



of men and women. We have superstars in our director and deputy director. Also, both are great at choosing restaurants if you have the chance to travel with either one!

Additionally, I have enjoyed the time I have spent this year with Bryan Parker and Baker Allen advocating for our members. These two guys work hard at keeping our municipal powers where they belong, in the hands of local governments. They eat, live and breathe advocating for our cities and towns, and on a lighter note, they are fun to travel with as well.

I am not sure where our municipal authority would be without the dedication of the League's advocacy team. It seems each year there are more, of what I would refer to as,



attacks on our ability to govern and operate our cities and towns. From unfunded mandates, trying to alter the ability to fund city services and making it difficult for local officials to be able to make their communities the best place for the citizens to live, work and play. I wish our folks could have more time to push legislation to improve our cities and towns and provide opportunities, but, unfortunately, much of their time is spent defending legislation that will harm our local governing abilities.

While it may seem taking the sales tax off hearing aids is not a big deal, it is our duty to remind those with lawmaking power that just as a snowball grows larger rolling downhill, each attempt to obstruct our funding abilities just adds difficulties for us to provide everyday services our citizens not only expect but deserve. I have a new respect for each of our folks who work in or for advocacy, it is not an easy job.

For those looking to improve your economic development efforts, Bryan is your go to for that as well. He will work hard to help your community develop a game plan for recruiting new businesses with the League's Economic Development Academy.

Furthermore, Rob Johnston, Kaleb Beck, and the newest legal team member, Joseph Holley, are always there to answer a call and inform and protect you with their legal skill and expertise.

Barry Crabb makes sure all the League finances are in order. Cindy Price will help you with the best education possible with the League's Certified Municipal Official Program. Keely Smith will ensure the League has the best conferences and events possible. Mary Jackson will help your city become an ACE community, and Debra Pascal can take care of any problem you call her about.

Finally, someone I have genuinely enjoyed working with is Lori Johns, the communications director of the League. Lori is awesome! From making sure I was standing in the right place at events, suggesting talking points, advising on whether to wear a tie or not, editing my articles, and so much more, she has been awesome. The League was lucky to secure Lori, and Lori, I will miss working so closely with you after this week.

I know I have not named everyone, but just know each of you plays a key role in the League and are appreciated by the membership.

I cannot imagine not having the League to lean on and learn from in my almost eight years serving as mayor of Hartselle. There is so much information that no one is aware of until you take the oath of office or sit behind the mayor's desk. Unfortunately, that lack of understanding can sometimes lead to controversy and distrust. All you have to do is watch the news or look on social media to see how easy it is for officials to



*Pictured: President Garrison and his granddaughter, Frances Lynn.*





make bad decisions and bring a bad light to their community. That is why I am so proud of our team at the League for getting the Alabama Municipal Training Act passed this session. Now, every member, new and old, can ensure they are staying up-to-date on the latest laws and resources to support their communities.

We are all better together and I am thankful to be part of the Alabama League of Municipalities.

Moving on, I would like to thank the folks I work with each day beginning with my city council, who support my ideas, even though they may think sometimes that I have lost my mind. They really care about our community, and it is a blessing to work with them to move our city forward.

I have an awesome group of leaders on our administrative staff who serve as department heads. They each are true public servants and unselfishly work each day to make life better for our citizens. They have been especially supportive this year as I have served in this capacity, and I am so thankful for them.

I would like to thank my wife Lynn for not only supporting me in this role, but also being my traveling partner this past year. She has been a trooper, even handling everything at home while I worked late hours in and out of town. When your spouse is also your best friend, traveling together is awesome.

If you know me, you know that I love my family. I am grateful I have added another grandchild during this past year. So, we now have a four-year-old grandson, an almost three-year-old granddaughter and 15-month-old granddaughter. Lynn and I raised two boys so when we added two daughters and now two granddaughters, we came full circle.

I should have shared this first, but I thank God that He has allowed me this year to work with all of you. I shared last year in Birmingham that I knew God placed me in my role as mayor. I know for a fact that He allowed me to serve in this role as well. It has been a blessing that I will always treasure. I often share the saying, “he who has been given much, much will be required”. I know I have been blessed and surrounded by good folks; I hope I have given back to you as much as you have given me this year.

One of the challenges I asked of each of you last year was to get involved in the League in whatever ways that you could whether attending conferences, meetings, training sessions or legislative events. I have been informed that most events have had an increase in attendance this past year. So, I am going to help take credit for that! I am just kidding, you all who attended the events are the true winners and all credit goes to you for gaining new knowledge to better serve your citizens. Just as I stated earlier, the League Empowers its Members to be Engaged! You have every opportunity to engage with your fellow colleagues this week, to engage with your League team for guidance and to engage with your

state and federal officials about issues you are dealing with.

I have gained tremendous knowledge in my role this year, and I plan to put it to effective use in our city. The contacts I have made will make it easier to seek funding for projects, find answers to questions and overall be a better public servant. One does not have to be knowledgeable about every topic, simply know where to seek the information you need.

I shared with you all last year that one of my goals when elected mayor was to celebrate our city and share with all I could about how great she is; I wanted to be the one who shouted from the treetops that we are the best. Well, I hope I have done that for the League and all of you this year. If so, I have succeeded.

This past year, I have worked to help ensure your local authority and ability to fund your municipalities remains intact, from legislation to remove sales tax from items, capping property, and ad valorem taxes to working to increase the SSUT rate and keeping our share of the proceeds. I believe working together we have succeeded in these areas.

I hear folks say I must, or I have to do something, or I have to go work. Well folks, let us change that mantra, we get to go to work to serve our cities and towns and those who call each one home.

I use this adage often when speaking to folks, “We have to plant trees that we will not enjoy the shade of.” I hope together we have done that this year.

We are blessed to live, work, play and serve in Alabama. Thank you all again for allowing me the opportunity to serve you and the League. May God continue to bless each of you. ■



*Pictured: President Garrison and his wife, Lynn.*

# Executive Director's Report: Empowering Engagement

2024 BUSINESS SESSION ■ MAY 17 ■ HUNTSVILLE

Gregory D. Cochran ■ ALM Executive Director

**G**ood afternoon! Thank you, Mayor Garrison, for that kind introduction and for your exceptional service as our president. I have truly enjoyed working with you and our vice president, Mayor Mark Saliba, this past year. I appreciate your friendship and leadership.

Members, I am so grateful for each of you and your commitment to our organization. Thank you for investing your time in being here. The ALM staff worked diligently in preparation of this convention and ensuring your time here is well spent. Let's give them a hand for a job well done!

We trust you have gained knowledge, new talking points and made lasting relationships during your time at this convention.

I wish to express my appreciation to Mayor Tommy Battle, the council and staff of the city of Huntsville for collaborating on the 2024 Convention and cohosting Wednesday evening's welcome reception. I'd also like to congratulate them on their new city hall! Huntsville is a shining example of how vision, hard work and intentional placement of resources will grow your community.

This year's convention theme, Empowering Engagement, was chosen because of the countless ways our organization is strategically working to engage You, our members.

Throughout the year, the ALM staff coordinates meeting opportunities and listening sessions for You to engage with state and federal policymakers, strategic partners, peers and noted speakers on pertinent topics relative to municipal governance. Our goal is to provide You, as local officials, with the best resources and tools to enhance Your ability in delivering a vibrant community for Your constituents.

We have built a dynamic advocacy team with Bryan Parker and Baker Allen in collaboration with our legal team led by Rob Johnston along with Kaleb Beck. These guys are committed to providing our officials with the best possible guidance on legislative and legal issues. While it has only been a few months since the legal team gained Joseph Holley and Ashlen Nettles, I am pleased with the contributions both of them are making so far! I am also excited to share we just hired our legislative intern, Adam Kilpatrick. He is a quick learner and will help support our advocacy efforts.

The work done by our advocacy, legal and member services teams relies heavily on our communications team

of Lori Jhons and Karl Franklin. They are creating the most outstanding quarterly association magazine, posting our latest information and photos on all our social media platforms and keeping our website up to date. I am thrilled to announce that we have built a new media studio to keep you engaged with our latest events, host educational trainings and launch a video podcast. This has been a dream of mine for several years; so, I cannot wait to share more information with you soon. Having the ability to communicate our narratives is vital to all that we do in representing your communities.

Unfortunately, during these past few years, we have seen unprecedented attacks on the authority of municipal governance and municipal revenues. Several legislative proposals introduced during this session, thank God it wrapped up last week, would have and are impacting state and local tax preemption or the exemption status for goods and services being provided across Alabama. Each of these





types of proposals by themselves would only have a marginal impact on municipal budgets; however, when aggregated by preempting or exempting several items, it becomes worrisome of the impacts on your local budgets. From groceries, hearing aids, feminine and baby products, recreational equipment, school supplies, disaster relief supplies, and capping ad valorem tax growth, this all adds up when compounded. This along with regulatory preemptions or exemptions on data mining facilities, commercial construction, zoning, police jurisdictions and interference from other special interest groups makes it difficult for you to do your job and provide quality of life services your citizens deserve and demand.

Now some of this is just playing politics, but some may be attributed to a lack of understanding and realization of unintended consequences. That is why we are constantly looking at ways for you and our team to engage with state

the Alabama League of Municipalities. Though technology has changed and there are more distractions, our message is the same – Alabama municipalities deserve the right to make decisions for themselves. As municipal officials, you see the issues firsthand and speak to your citizens at the ballpark, church and the grocery store. You pass out your cell phone number and give time and money to your nonprofit organizations and kids groups. You attend ribbon cuttings, civic events, work sessions and council meetings – all for little money and thanks in return, but you do it because you care. You do it because you want to make improvements and, for many, you do it because you want your kids, grandkids and their kids to come to love and enjoy your city or town just as much as you do.

We ultimately want to help You better tell Your stories. In fact, we need You to tell Your stories on a daily basis

# EmPOWERing Engagement!



and federal officials. The advocacy team along with Hal Bloom and Sara Elizabeth Burnham, worked tirelessly to hold off and modify some of those proposals. This year we were able to meet with legislators that have worked in local government to ask for feedback and share concerns with them. We are taking their feedback and coming up with more ways to diligently go before the whole legislative body to explain the impact their decisions are having on municipal governments.

While we did have to play a lot of defense this session, we are proud we were able to get our legislation, the Alabama Municipal Officials Training Act passed, making Alabama one of the first states in the country to require training. We believe this training will better position local officials to understand core subjects necessary to maintain their operations, abide by state laws and help your communities prosper. This is especially important with the 2025 elections around the corner. We are expecting a wave of retirements and a lot of new officials entering the public service arena. We appreciate Sen. Jabo Waggoner and Rep. Jim Hill for carrying and supporting this legislation. The act will take effect January 1, 2025, and we will share more information through our communication channels in the coming months.

For 89 years, advocacy has been the spirit that has driven

to the public and lawmakers. This is why Kayla Bass and Lori Jhons are spearheading a partnership with NP Strategy, a strategic public relations firm, to strengthen our messaging to members and state policymakers. We are going to work with them to create additional tools to help you remind citizens why they choose to live and raise families in your communities. Through this effort, we are revamping our Live Locally Alabama campaign and are excited to unveil our new logo!



In the coming months, we will share with you videos, graphics and printed materials for you to incorporate in your daily presentations to civic clubs, leadership groups and council meetings. These materials will be designed to share the narrative of why municipal officials work hard every day to deliver on expectations of their citizens.

Moving on, 2024 marks another special milestone for the League. This fall, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of our Certified Municipal Official program. During the past 30 years, we have had over 5,200 officials engage in the CMO program. We have had 1,522 officials earn the CMO Basic certification, 834 officials earn the Advanced certification and 97 officials earn the Emeritus certification. Alabama was the second league in the nation to implement an educational training program for municipal officials, and, this year, we are building on this legacy with the passage of the Alabama Municipal Officials Training Act. We hope now we will see more communities obtain the Certified Municipal Achievement Award. I commend Cindy Price, our CMO administrator, for growing this program and leading the effort to modernize it through the iMIS portal.

As another training incentive and in celebration of the anniversary, CMO Emeritus graduates will be able to obtain a new lapel pin. Officials that reach between 120 and 199 hours will receive our existing pin; those that reach between 200 and 299 hours will receive a pin with one green stone; those that reach between 300 and 399 hours will receive a pin with two green stones; and those that reach over 400 hours will obtain our fourth tier of the Emeritus designation and will receive a pin with three crystal clear stones. We look forward to issuing our first set of these new pins at our fall Municipal Leadership Institute. Please be aware the CMO graduation qualification deadline is July 31. Our team will send out more updates about this endeavor soon.


Alabama has 465 incorporated cities and towns; and of that total, 457 are member municipalities. Your membership provides us with resources to advocate on all of your behalf, whether a town of 100 or a city of 20,000. In addition to providing educational training and legal guidance, we also provide a number of services from financing on equipment and public works projects to community development training. Each of these intentionally developed programs provide value added resources to our municipalities.

The Municipal Worker's Compensation Fund was formed in 1978 to provide workers' compensation coverage for member employees, and the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation is celebrating its 35th year of providing general liability and property insurance coverage to our membership. I want to give a special thank you to the loss control team, a division of MWCF and AMIC, for serving as the League's boots on the ground. They are constantly on the road meeting with our members in every corner of the state. This year,

we added two new employees to this dynamic team. Will Strength is our loss control manager and Deena Pregno is our new Firearms Training System coordinator.

Furthermore, we are very proud of our AMFund program, which provides equipment and project funding, and our Municipal Intercept Services program, which provides municipalities with a process for collecting debts owed to them by individuals. I cannot wait to share the full update about these successful programs in a moment.

Two of our newer programs focus on building strategic economic and community strategies within your municipalities. Bryan Parker, in partnership with Neal Wade, a former state secretary of economic development, the Alabama Community College System and several private sector partners have developed an incredible curriculum for communities to build a strong economic recruitment program to fit their community's needs as part of our Economic Development Academy. The



- Emeritus, Tier 1  
120 – 199 hours and 15 points (existing pin)
- Emeritus, Tier 2  
200 – 299 hours and 20 points (one green stone)
- Emeritus, Tier 3  
300 – 399 hours and 30 points (two green stones)
- Emeritus, Tier 4  
400 + hours and 40 points (three clear stones)

program not only helps communities with individual goals, but it also helps them leverage assets for regional prosperity. A great example of this is in Etowah County. You may have seen in our fall magazine that Gadsden, Rainbow City and Southside are working together to get companies to come to their 1,100-acre Northeast Alabama Regional Megasite. They all participated in EDA and have several great projects taking place to support Etowah County as a whole.

While the Alabama Communities of Excellence program has been around since 2002, the League formally added it to our umbrella of services two years ago. Mary Jackson, who leads the program, has over 45 municipalities working with private sector partners in accessing opportunities within their community to optimize tourism, economic investment and community projects to enhance the quality of life for their citizens. We expect three to four municipalities to begin the process of becoming an ACE community this year.

This is the perfect opportunity to recognize one of our



dual ACE and EDA communities who just won a national award. The historic city of Monroeville, the home of literary giants like Harper Lee and Truman Capote, was selected as a 2024 Great American Main Street Award winner! Monroeville is the first Alabama city to win this award. Congratulations, Mayor Charles Andrews and council! We love seeing the investments taking place in your community.

Now before I wrap up, let me bring my report full circle with you. All the services, resources, and tools we provide our municipalities begin with the recruitment and retention of five-star talent. Kayla and I travel throughout the year attending meetings across our state, the southeast and nation to understand the challenges faced by municipal officials in their communities. This allows us to access and determine how we can collaborate with our officials to provide intentional resources and tools to address those opportunities. We have built a team that ALL other associations in Alabama, the south and nation are envious of!

We have assembled a solid executive leadership team with Kayla Bass as deputy director, Barry Crabb as finance director and Richard Buttenshaw as director of financial services. Their work ethic, integrity and energy keep us focused on the intentional mission of serving our members. While some of our offices are more visible than others, each of them, from member services to our IT team, all contribute to the success of our organization. Their commitment and professionalism are a blessing to our association and membership. Please join me in giving this incredible team a round of applause.

With their help and 89 years of history to rely on, your League is here for you.

As Municipal Government Week winds down, my charge to you is simple, Be Engaged. Be Engaged with your League.

Be Engaged with your Council and Staff. Be Engaged with your Lawmakers and Be Engaged with your Communities!

I've saved the best for last, members of our Board of Directors, past presidents, legislative and standing committees. The bedrock of any association is its voluntary engagement. ALM has a long history of strong voluntary leadership, and our current leadership is no exception. Please stand if you are serving in any leadership capacity of ALM. We thank you for your service!

Members, thank you for allowing me the honor to serve as your executive director. I have nothing but love and respect for your leadership and commitment to your community and our association! May peace be with you. ■





# Thank You, ROCKET CITY!

The Alabama League of Municipalities is grateful for Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle and his team, the Von Braun Center staff, the Huntsville-Madison County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the entire city for working with us to pull off a fantastic 2024 Annual Convention and Expo. This year, we had more than 1,100 municipal leaders, strategic and community partners, sponsors and guests attend the event. We also appreciate our opening ceremony participants: the Brass Band of Huntsville for their rendition of “Rocket Man”; Rev. Dedric Cowser, the senior pastor of Trinity Methodist Church in Huntsville, for the invocation; Huntsville High School’s Space Force JROTC for the presentation of colors; Dr. Jennie Robinson, pro-tem of the Huntsville City Council for leading the Pledge of Allegiance; and Huntsville’s Lee High School’s Euphonic Voices for singing the National Anthem. Additionally, we want to thank the extraordinary, dueling pianists that performed at our cohosted welcome reception in Mars Music Hall. The Rocket City provided a beautiful venue for this year’s festivities, and we cannot wait to make it even better next year! ■





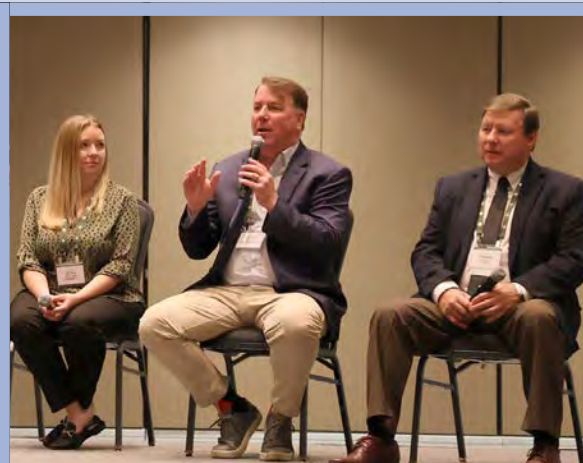
# Convention Attendees Hear from Stellar Slate of Guest Speakers

In accordance with this year's convention theme of **Empowering Engagement**, our team did everything in our **Power** to keep attendees **Engaged** throughout the conference while also giving members the tools and resources to **Empower** them to be **Engaged** in the days, weeks and months following convention.

The League's 2024 Annual Convention boasted several exciting keynote speakers including Gov. Kay Ivey, who gave an update on the state of Alabama and legislative successes this past session; Peter Kageyama, who shared inexpensive and fun approaches to community building; and Matt Lehrman who got the crowd involved in an interactive survey platform and gave advice on resolving conflicts. Members also had an opportunity to get involved in important discussions during our concurrent sessions that focused on Rural Health Care Challenges and Opportunities; Sweet Trails Alabama; Transforming Alabama's Economy Through Electric Vehicles, Sensory-Inclusive Training for Law Enforcement; Flawless: Training Front Line Workers to Succeed in Customer Service; and How Benefits Can Recruit and Retain High Quality Employees. Thank you to each of the speakers and panelists for making sure our convention was packed with excellent topics and resources. ■



Photo credit: Hal Yeager/Governor's Office



# Minutes of the 2024 Business Session

MAY 17 • HUNTSVILLE

Shawn Cole ■ ALM General Counsel

The annual business session of the convention of the Alabama League of Municipalities was called to order at 4:00 p.m. on May 17, 2024, by President Randy Garrison, mayor of Hartselle, at the Von Braun Center, Huntsville, Alabama. President Garrison welcomed the attendees.

President Garrison called on Greg Cochran, Executive Director of the Alabama League of Municipalities, for his annual remarks. He reviewed the past year and all the successes and challenges that the League and its staff successfully navigated. A full copy of his report can be found on pages 8-11.

Greg Cochran then presented to the membership the video annual reports for the Municipal Workers Compensation Fund, Inc. (MWCF), the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC), the Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation (AMFund) and Municipal Intercept Services (MIS). Transcripts of these reports can be found on pages 20-23.

After the various board reports, Greg Cochran called upon ALM Communications Director Lori Johns to read the list of current and former officials who have died since the 2023 ALM Convention. The complete list can be found on page 38.

President Garrison thanked Greg Cochran for his reports and then called upon Shawn Cole, ALM general counsel, to read the rules for voting during the League's Business Session.

After the reading of the rules, President Garrison informed the membership that the League's Executive Committee had met on May 15, 2024, to prepare a slate of nominees to be presented for consideration. He noted that they had a tough assignment choosing officers for the next year from an abundance of very qualified candidates. He then called on Shawn Cole to read the report on nominations:

## LEADERSHIP

President: Mayor Mark Saliba, Dothan

Vice President: Mayor Sherry Sullivan, Fairhope

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### From the First Congressional District:

- Mayor Jim Staff, Atmore
- Councilmember Katherine Breeden, Loxley
- Councilmember Newton Cromer, Saraland
- Councilmember Ruthie Campbell, Robertsdale
- Mayor Mike McMillan, Spanish Fort

### From the Second Congressional District:

- Councilmember Marché Johnson, Montgomery
- Mayor Gordon Stone, Pike Road
- Mayor Dexter McLendon, Greenville
- Mayor Jason Reeves, Troy
- Mayor Stanley Stallworth, Evergreen

### From the Third Congressional District:

- Mayor Rusty Jessup, Riverside
- Councilmember Billy Pearson, Lincoln
- Mayor Ron Anders, Auburn
- Mayor Scott Reeves, Hokes Bluff
- Councilmember Michael Ellis, LaFayette

### From the Fourth Congressional District:

- Councilmember Jennifer Williams Smith, Jasper
- Mayor Allen Dunavant, Glen Allen
- Mayor Chuck Ables, Geraldine
- Mayor Andrew Betterton, Florence
- Mayor Mike Lockhart, Muscle Shoals

### From the Fifth Congressional District:

- Councilmember Dana Henry, Athens
- Mayor Gary Livingston, Eva
- Mayor Jim McCamy, Scottsboro
- Councilmember Tommy Perry, Priceville
- Councilmember Connie Spears, Madison

### From the Sixth Congressional District:

- Mayor Mike Oakley, Centreville
- Mayor Ashley Curry, Vestavia Hills
- Mayor Bobbie White, Brent
- Councilmember Michael Gay, Millbrook
- Mayor Theangelo Perkins, Harpersville

### From the Seventh Congressional District:

- Mayor James Perkins Jr., Selma
- Mayor Gwendolyn Rogers, Linden
- Mayor Brian Puckett, Helena
- Mayor Sheldon Day, Thomasville
- Mayor Bobby Scott, Center Point



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ex Officio voting members of the Board of Directors (Active Past Presidents)

- Mayor Randy Garrison, Hartselle (2023-2024)
- Mayor Lawrence “Tony” Haygood Jr., Tuskegee (2022-2023)
- Mayor Gary Fuller, Opelika (2021-2022)
- Mayor Leigh Dollar, Guntersville (2020-2021)
- Mayor Ronnie Marks, Athens (2019-2020)
- Mayor Howard Rubenstein, Saraland (2016-2018)
- Mayor Phil Segraves, Guin (2016)
- Councilmember Sadie Britt, Lincoln (2015-2016)
- Mayor Walt Maddox, Tuscaloosa (2013-2014)
- Mayor Charles Murphy, Robertsedale (2013-2014)
- Mayor Lew Watson, Lincoln (2006-2007)
- Councilmember Johnny Ford, Tuskegee (1989-1990)

## STANDING COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

### State and Federal Legislation:

- Chair: Councilmember Charles Black, Priceville
- Vice Chair: Mayor Joe Taylor, Rainbow City

### Committee on Community and Economic Development (CED):

- Chair: Mayor Brian Puckett, Helena
- Vice Chair: Councilmember Newton Cromer, Saraland

### Committee on Energy, Environment and Natural Resources (EENR)

- Chair: Councilmember Ron Mason, Butler
- Vice Chair: Councilmember Willis Thompson, Muscle Shoals

### Committee on Finance, Administration & Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR)

- Chair: Mayor Sheldon Day, Thomasville
- Vice Chair: Councilmember Crystal Smitherman, Birmingham

### Committee on Human Development (HD)

- Chair: Mayor Ron Anders, Auburn
- Vice Chair: Mayor Gayle Robbins, Florida

### Committee on Public Safety (PS)

- Chair: Councilmember Michael Ellis, LaFayette
- Vice Chair: Mayor Joe Taylor, Rainbow City

### Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure and Communication (TIC)

- Chair: Mayor Tab Bowling, Decatur
- Vice Chair: Councilmember Don Mack, Centreville

After the reading of the nominations committee report, President Garrison asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Seeing none, he stated that unless there was an objection, he declared the nominations closed. There were no objections.

Mayor Ronnie Marks, Athens, moved for the adoption of the nominating committee’s report as presented. Mayor Larry Fetner, Ashland, seconded the motion. There being no objection to the motion from the floor, the motion passed unanimously. The president declared all officers elected.

President Garrison congratulated Mayor Saliba and Mayor Sullivan and the other officials elected to serve the League and called upon Mayor Saliba to make remarks to the membership. Mayor Saliba thanked the membership for allowing him the honor of serving as the League’s president. A full copy of Mayor Saliba’s acceptance speech can be found on pages 16-18.

Upon the conclusion of his speech to the membership, President Saliba made a few announcements. He announced the League’s 2025 Convention and Expo will take place in Huntsville on May 13-16, 2025. He then recognized the League’s strategic and community partners and reminded the membership about the President’s Dinner scheduled for 6:30 p.m. in the Saturn Ballroom of the Von Braun Center.

There being no further business, President Saliba officially adjourned the meeting. ■

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Shawn Cole, ALM General Counsel, Acting Secretary



# President's Acceptance Speech: We Are the Champions!

2024 BUSINESS SESSION ■ MAY 17 ■ HUNTSVILLE

Mayor Mark Saliba, Dothan ■ ALM President 2024 - 2025

**G**ood evening! Chances are if you are in the room, you are either an elected official; you have served as one; or you support one that you are close to!

And chances are that you have probably felt like the words in the song that goes like this:

"I've paid my dues  
Time after time  
I've done my sentence  
But committed no crime  
And bad mistakes  
I've made a few  
I've had my share of sand  
Kicked in my face  
But I've come through  
And we mean to go on and on and on and on."  
Because we are the champions!

I want to share with you two quick stories about public servants.

One is about a man out of one of my favorite compilations of books whose name was Joshua. Joshua had followed this man named Moses, who led thousands out of slavery. He watched him part the Red Sea; witnessed him meet and talk with God regularly; and observed him as he served as lawmaker, judge and peacemaker while dealing with a grumbling and complaining community for forty years. Doesn't that sound familiar? And after all of that, Moses took them to the edge of the Promised Land.

Then he turned to Joshua and said, "Now it's your turn to lead!"

Joshua knew what was ahead for him as the leader of this community. He had seen what Moses had done and saw what the daily challenges were when leading a community. He probably felt like he had paid his dues and done his time, or that he had made some mistakes, and I am sure felt like he had sand kicked in his face!

I have no doubt that Joshua was scared and hesitant about his new role as public servant and community leader!

My father was my Moses! To me he was the epitome of a great leader; he was and still is my role model! Alfred Saliba was elected as mayor of Dothan in 1989 and served for eight

years. As a matter of fact, as I go into the city office every day, I can look to my left and see his portrait. Sometimes I see in his eyes, "Hey son, tighten up", and occasionally, I can hear him say "Good job!"

After he had served for a couple of years, he had determined that the city was going to have to increase its sales tax from 7% to 8% in order to continue to be in good financial shape. Of course, it was not a popular decision, but one that was absolutely necessary. The problem is, and you know it, you can't hide in a small town.

Then comes the proverbial sand in your face!

Shortly after this decision, a petition was passed around to have him recalled. I will never forget the petition list being published in the *Dothan Eagle* with names of people that we knew. It was a very difficult time for him and our family.



Scan the QR code to see the full speech on the League's YouTube channel.





Over the next year or so, it was evident that it had been the right decision for our community, and he finished his two terms as a very well thought of public servant.

Now, I am sure that each of you have had a Joshua, or an Alfred Saliba story of your own, and if you haven't, you will!

Public service isn't for the weak hearted!

Do you remember what God said to Joshua before crossing over the Jordan River?

"Be strong and courageous, be very strong and courageous! For you are not alone!"

I hope that being a part of the Alabama League of Municipalities gives you the strength and courage to face whatever comes your way, and certainly you should never feel alone. This is one of the many reasons why I am a part of the League and proud to serve you!

Greg Cochran and the entire staff are professional, courteous, kind, caring, helpful and always ready to serve!

We are in great hands with the team at the Alabama League Municipalities!

Greg leads this association with a close eye on the membership and making sure you are cared for, as well as navigating the wilderness of the legislative cycle, which is done very methodically. Kayla has some of the greatest people skills, a long list of restaurants and resources for every city, and of course, a hidden stash of gummy candy in her purse – like the manna and quail in the Exodus story.

You can ask Bryan about any politician, because he knows them all, and has a great strategy on how to deal with both the state and federal legislators. By the way, just when you think Baker is just a policy wiz, ask him to do his best Kramer impression from Seinfeld, it's hilarious! Of course there is Lori, Barry, Rob, and Debra, and so many more that I can't possibly tell you about in one speech, but the whole staff is wonderful to work with.

Being a member of ALM is like having an extra department to help you run your cities and towns. From legislative advocacy to municipal training and a variety of member programs, the services and activities they provide are impossible to accomplish alone. ALM is a valuable and necessary part of serving in our communities. They bring the best out in us as elected public servants.

Where would you be without the many friendships that you have made in the League family that are only a phone call away when needed. That ability to call a colleague and ask them how they have handled certain situations or opportunities during the daily challenges of running a city, is invaluable.

Now, let us turn to the 2024 Legislative Session, and what a whirlwind it has been! Filled with hundreds of bills covering a myriad of topics, from gambling and



*President Saliba and his wife, Angie.*





a lottery, to SSUT, ad valorem tax caps, school choice, childcare, workforce availability, affordable housing issues and the list goes on!

It can often get a bit chaotic trying to stay up-to-date with all of that and on top of the daily municipal challenges of infrastructure, water, sewer, roads, and the task of searching for the funding needed to maintain them. Then there is the difficulty of hiring and maintaining emergency responders like police, fire, EMTs and dispatchers, plus planning, zoning and building issues! Not to mention economic development recruitment, finding the industrial sites to just get you in the running for those prospects, building up your retail and food establishments and more! Let alone trying to have a personal life! Spending time with your spouse, children and grandchildren, maybe even some occasional time off is the sacrifice we often make.

**My fellow municipal leaders, be strong and courageous, you are not alone! ALM is here for you, and I am committed to working alongside you.**

Out of all those challenges, the greatest concern I have today is the erosion of, and attack on the ability for municipalities to raise and protect our revenues. Citizens depend on their mayors and councilmembers to provide services, meet infrastructure needs and attend to quality-of-life issues.

Let us use our time before the next legislative session in proactive and intentional meetings, face to face time with our legislators, leadership and collaborative partners to position ourselves for the greatest success.

Speaking of partners, in my eyes a mayor is a mayor, and a councilmember is a councilmember, working in unity to serve the public's interest, no matter the size of the city, or even if they serve in the county. There is no reason why we at the League, the Big Ten Mayors and the county association cannot forge a stronger relationship that is based on the one thing we all have in common, our friends, neighbors and families that live, work and play in our towns, cities and rural areas.

Moving in one direction and harnessing the resources of all communities, members of the Alabama League of Municipalities can set the example in our state on how to collaborate, communicate, and bring win-win efforts and solutions to the table for everyone.

We are the champions, the champions for our whole state!

One year ago, when standing up here to accept the vice president position, I jokingly mentioned the crazy resemblance of our incoming president, Mayor Randy Garrison, to good ole Saint Nick. But what I have learned throughout this year, is that it is his character and personality that most reflects good ole Santa.

I have found Randy to not only to be jolly all the time, but thoughtful, caring and considerate, giving, encouraging

and a true public servant. I have enjoyed serving and getting to know both he and Mrs. Santa, Lynn, this year.

Randy, we are grateful to you for your time and continued service to the League!

I want to say how honored I am to serve you as the next president of the Alabama League of Municipalities! Thank you for trusting in me to represent you, and I promise to work hard for us all this next year.

I would like to thank our Dothan City Commission, our city staff, and the people of Dothan, for their support and allowing me to continue to spend time with ALM and giving back to our cities throughout our state.

I am also appreciative to my construction and real estate company at home and all of them there who keep everything on track and running smooth!

I am especially grateful to my wife, Angie, and my family! I am a blessed man with two adult families with five grandchildren, and our youngest Eli who is starting his second year at Bama.

Thank you all! ■





# The League Welcomes New Vice President!

2024 BUSINESS SESSION ■ MAY 17 ■ HUNTSVILLE

Mayor Sherry Sullivan, Fairhope ■ ALM Vice President 2024 - 2025

Sherry Sullivan, mayor of Fairhope, was elected in 2020 and is serving her first term. Prior to running for mayor, she worked for the city of Fairhope for almost 17 years and worked for Riviera Utilities as director of governmental affairs and economic development.

Vice President Sullivan was awarded the designation as a Certified Municipal Official by the Alabama League of Municipalities in 2022. She is also a member of the American Public Power Association Policy Makers Council; a member of the Policy Board for the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization; a member of the Electric Cities of Alabama Executive Committee; a past member of the Alabama League of Municipalities' Committee on State and Federal Legislation; a board member of the Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation (AMFund); a member of the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce Leaders Council; a member of the Baldwin County Mayor's Association; a member of the Kiwanis Club of Fairhope; and a member of Fairhope Christian Church.



Since taking office Vice President Sullivan, along with the city council and city staff, has completed or are currently managing approximately \$60 million in utility upgrades and quality of life projects.

Vice President Sullivan has one daughter, Abby, who is married and lives in Fairhope with her husband, Steve May. Steve and Abby have three children and one grandchild. ■

## Make plans to join the League for training in 2024!

- **June/July: CMO Regional Trainings**  
(Two Dates Remaining! June 20 - Vestavia Hills; July 18 - Hartselle)
- **August: ALM In-State Congressional Luncheons** (locations and dates TBD)
- **October 30 - November 1: Municipal Leadership Institute and League Graduation Ceremonies**, Orange Beach
- **November 13 - 16: NLC City Summit**, Tampa, FL ([www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org))
- **January - December: Anytime Training**  
([www.almonline.org/AnytimeTraining](http://www.almonline.org/AnytimeTraining))
- ★ **The final deadline for submitting eligible CMO credits for 2024 CMO graduation is July 31, 2024!**



Visit [www.almonline.org/UpcomingTraining](http://www.almonline.org/UpcomingTraining) for training and registration information.

# MWCF Board Report • 2024 Business Session • Huntsville

The Municipal Workers Compensation Fund is a program of the Alabama League of Municipalities that was formed **BY** Alabama's municipalities **FOR** Alabama's cities and towns.

Founded in 1976, MWCF is the second oldest League insurance pool in the nation and was created at a time when national insurance carriers were *abandoning* Alabama and her communities.



MWCF understands your needs because we are *your* Alabama neighbor.

MWCF is led by a board of five veteran elected officials made up of mayors and councilmembers from municipalities large and small. Under the board's leadership, MWCF strives to not only provide workers comp insurance but to promote *safe* workplaces that ensure employees return home healthy and well after serving their communities.

MWCF Members receive access to invaluable resources including a dedicated Loss Control team that provides risk management and safety services such as specialty training and seminars, free access to online training through LocalGovU, a FATS firearm training simulator and real-time, behind-the-wheel training through a state-of-the-art SKIDCAR system.

Today, we are pleased to bring you the annual report on the activities of your Municipal Workers Compensation Fund.

- MWCF currently has more than 721 members.
- Membership renewals have remained steady year over year.
- Net premiums for the 2023 fund year were approximately \$31 million.
- During the October 2023 Board Meeting, the board of directors approved a distribution of \$4 million to be given as a renewal dividend to eligible members toward their 2024 premiums.
- Total dividends for all fund years are now in excess of \$85 million.
- Unaudited financial statements show total assets of approximately \$200 million as of January 31, 2024.
- MWCF remains financially very strong.

Because MWCF is an Alabama company representing Alabama communities with Alabama professionals, we remain connected to your *unique* needs.

The MWCF Board of Directors thanks you for your membership and continued support.

MWCF prides itself in achieving common goals through uncommon service.

MWCF is **YOUR** local workers comp provider.

[www.almwcf.org](http://www.almwcf.org)



# AMIC Board Report • 2024 Business Session • Huntsville

The Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation is a not-for-profit mutual insurance company that is wholly owned and controlled by its member cities and towns. Five mayors from throughout the state of Alabama sit on the Board of Directors and take an active role in keeping AMIC focused on its original goals.

AMIC was formed in 1989 and received \$6 million in capital contributions from 233 municipalities, in the years that followed, to get off the ground. Today, AMIC is the premier provider of property and casualty insurance for public entities in Alabama and its capitalized members have now received more than \$18 million in dividends!



Speaking of numbers:

- AMIC has paid out more than \$620 million in claims since 1989.
- AMIC insures approximately 95% of all public entities in Alabama and has 584 members.
- AMIC retains over 95% of its business annually.
- Assets exceed \$151 million.
- Current premiums exceed \$61 million.
- And total surplus is over \$58 million.
- AMIC also insures more than \$11.7 billion in property values, 20,000 vehicles and nearly 5,000 police officers.

AMIC provides your cities and towns with 43 dedicated in-house staff members and services that range from:

- 24/7 claims handling
- A team of 12 sales and underwriting staff that make sure your policies are correct and delivered on time
- A dedicated loss control team that provides a range of services and programs from general and police loss control audits to services such as the SKIDCAR, FATS system, LocalGovU library, as well as onsite training and seminars

The Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation realizes that its member cities and towns provide essential public services with the most exposure to risk and the least amount of money. AMIC works diligently every day to protect you and your ability to continue to deliver those essential services without fear of financial ruin.

From the board of directors and everyone at AMIC, thank you for what you do and for your continued support.

We are here to insure the future of **YOUR** local government!

[www.amicentral.org](http://www.amicentral.org)

The Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation was formed in 2006 by the Alabama League of Municipalities to assist Alabama's cities and towns in funding local projects, equipment purchases and refinancing existing debt.

The purpose of AMFund is to provide timely, low-cost, direct bank debt financing to fund almost any size municipal project.

AMFund is managed by a board of directors composed of five municipal elected officials and works with financial advisor Louis Cardinal with Thornton Farish and Leo Lawrenson as pool administrator to take advantage of economies of scale allowing municipalities to:

- Receive competitive, fixed rate debt financing.
- Significantly reduce borrowers' transaction costs.
- Minimize staff time by using straightforward, direct bank debt loan documentation.

AMFund partners with national banking institutions to provide our members competitive fixed rate financing on general obligation and revenue borrowing needs for:

- Infrastructure
- Capital improvement projects
- Equipment purchases
- Refinancing of existing loans

AMFund received several funding requests during the past calendar year and has assisted several applicants in obtaining fixed rate financing for the purchase of equipment and capital improvement projects.

**Since its inception in January 2006, AMFund has commissioned 79 loans in excess of \$153 million with no borrower defaults.**

We encourage you to consider AMFund as an option for your refinancing, general obligation, revenue and equipment leasing needs.

*We look forward to serving you in the future.*



[www.amfund.com](http://www.amfund.com)



# MIS Board Report • 2024 Business Session • Huntsville

Does your town or city have debts you just can't seem to collect regardless of your efforts? Well, Municipal Intercept Services may be able to help at no charge to your municipality!

In 2014, the Alabama State Legislature enacted an amendment allowing municipalities and counties to attempt to recover delinquent debts owed to them by collecting this debt from the individual's state tax refund.

In 2015, the Alabama League of Municipalities formed Municipal Intercept Services as its clearinghouse entity to act as a conduit between participating Alabama municipalities and the Alabama Department of Revenue.



**FREE** to eligible participating members, MIS is **NOT** a debt collection agency or service. Instead, MIS is a **UNIQUE** way to attempt to recover money owed to your municipality by “intercepting” an individual's Alabama State tax refund. Debt collection agencies **CANNOT** offer you this service.

*Any* municipal debt that is considered final; is still within its statute of limitations; and is more than 60 days old can be submitted to MIS.

Examples include:

- Municipal Court Fees and Fines
- Judgments
- Library Fees
- Medical, EMS and Hospital Bills
- Ordinance Violations
- Traffic Light Violations
- Parking Fees
- Rental or Lease Agreements
- Returned Checks
- Sanitation and Garbage Fees
- Utility Bills

MIS is Alabama's **ONLY** state tax refund municipal debt recovery program!

As of December 31, 2023, MIS had:

- More than 257 active participants
- Over 339,000 debts in the system valued at more than \$474 million
- More than 194,000 intercepts with over \$26.1 million disbursed since inception

*We are thrilled to report this was a record setting year for MIS for the number of intercepts made and member disbursements! We are proud to provide this service to Alabama's cities and towns!*

[www.alintercept.org](http://www.alintercept.org)

# Ask Your Attorney

2024 GENERAL SESSION ■ MAY 17 ■ HUNTSVILLE

ALM Legal Department

The “Ask Your Attorney” session is always popular at convention and gives everyone in attendance a sampling of the types of questions we answer day in and day out in the League’s Legal Department. Below are some of the questions answered during the “Ask Your Attorney” session at the 2024 convention. The League’s Legal Department is available during regular business hours to answer your questions and provide you with legal guidance.

## Why is my municipal election in 2025? Why am I serving an extra year in this current term?

A legislative act in 2021 changed Section 11-46-21 of the Alabama Code, which sets the time of elections for most municipalities. Act 2021-157 moved the year of Alabama’s municipal elections so they “shall be held on the fourth Tuesday in August 2025 and quadrennially thereafter, ...”

While a few municipalities follow a local act that sets their elections at a time different time, most municipalities in Alabama follow Section 11-46-21.

This means for most municipalities, the next municipal general election will take place on August 26, 2025. Runoff elections, if necessary, will take place on September 23, 2025. Municipal officials who are elected will take municipal office on November 1, 2025.

After the 2025 elections, municipal elections will take place every four years.

The League’s Legal Department is currently working on an elections manual to assist municipalities in the 2025 municipal elections. More information will be shared in a few months.

## Can you explain the process for “suspending the rules”?

Section 11-45-2 says the council cannot vote on ordinances in the same meeting they are first introduced unless the council votes unanimously to consider it in the same meeting.

Since the amended ordinance will be introduced for the first time at the special-called meeting, the minutes must show a unanimous consent of the council to “suspend the rules” and consider the new ordinance. This would allow the council to consider/vote on the new, amended ordinance in the same meeting it is introduced. If the council votes unanimously, then the council can vote on the amended ordinance in the same meeting.

As such, the council would need to vote on two things: (1) vote to “suspend the rules” to consider/vote on the newly introduced ordinance. If there is unanimous consent, then (2) the council could vote on the new ordinance.

If there is not unanimous consent of the council, it could not vote on the new ordinance in that same meeting. The council would have to wait for the next meeting to vote.

## Can any municipality enforce speed limits on the interstate?

No. Section 32-5a-171(8) of the Alabama Code prohibits a municipality with a population less than 19,000, according to the most recent federal decennial census, from enforcing speed limits on the interstate highway.

*Pictured: Joseph Holley, ALM associate counsel; Kaleb Beck, ALM league counsel; Eddie Blair, assistant city attorney, Huntsville, and AAMA president; Rob Johnston, ALM director of legal services; and Shawn Cole, ALM general counsel.*





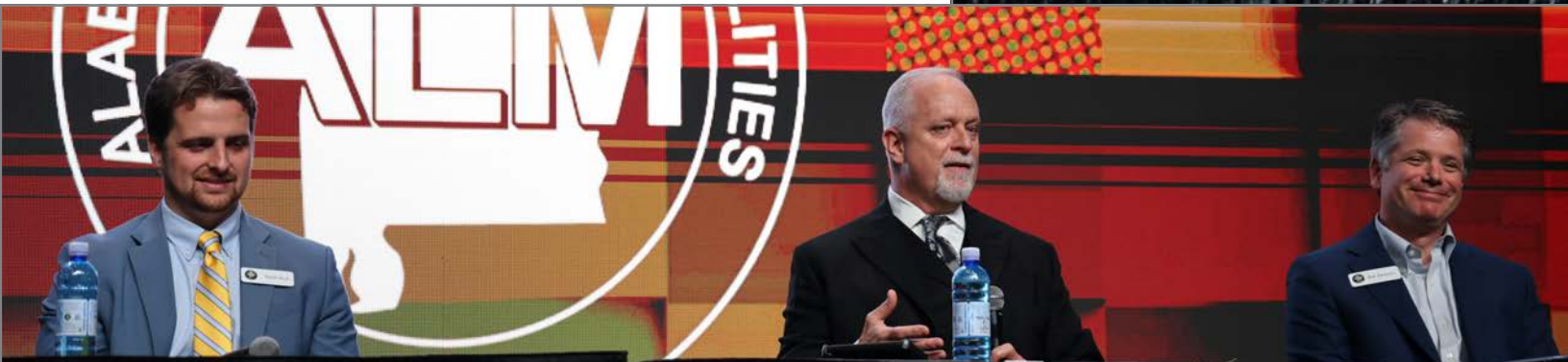
## What are the requirements of the Alabama Municipal Official Training Act?

Act 2024-194 requires that all mayors and councilmembers complete 10 hours of training annually during their first term in office beginning after January 1, 2025. Each mayor and councilmember who has successfully completed and received their basic Certified Municipal Official (CMO) certification from the Alabama League of Municipalities is exempt from the 10-hour annual requirement. However, they still must complete five hours of training annually. Additionally, all elected local officials who have completed the 40-hour training requirement in their first term, are required to complete five hours of training annually each year thereafter. In general, 40 hours of training total is required in a local official's first term beginning after January 1, 2025, and if they are so lucky and have the stomach for any subsequent terms, only 20 hours of training total per term is required.

Examples of courses to be covered in the training include: the general powers of municipalities; duties of the mayor and council; ethics; annexations; authority to expend municipal funds; parliamentary procedure; conflicts of interests; legislative advocacy; liability; public records; police and planning jurisdiction; public works bidding; revenue sources; the competitive bid law; budgeting; audit requirements; the public purpose doctrine; the Open Meetings Act; municipal boards and zoning. The act further requires that any training provided shall be developed in consultation with the Alabama Ethics Commission, the attorney general's office, and the Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts. The act also requires that the municipality reimburse any mayor or councilmember for any reasonable expenses incurred as a result of receiving the required training.

## What is the new ad valorem tax law?

Act 2024-344 places a 7% cap on annual real property valuations (residential and commercial) by counties and municipalities. The act is subject to the sunset law and includes multiple exceptions: real property never previously assessed, new construction (including additions and improvements), changes in ownership (not to include family transfers or redemptions from foreclosures and tax sales), and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. As introduced, House Bill 73 purported to limit those valuations to 3% for residential properties and 5% for commercial. However, the League's advocacy team partnered with other associations to raise the cap for our local governments.



## Can a municipality serve food at a meeting?

Attorney general's opinions have established that food and beverages can be served when they are incidental to the meeting. Food and beverages cannot be the reason for the meeting.

Public funds may be used to pay for meals and/or refreshments served at business meetings when the meals are directly related to the business of the entity, and the meals and refreshments are incidental to the meeting. In order for meals to be an incidental part of the meeting, the primary purpose of the gathering must be to have an official meeting at which business is conducted, not a social gathering at which food is provided. Refreshments may not be provided at a break during a meeting that does not extend through lunch or a mealtime. AGO 2010-076

## What does the Recently Passed Public Records law require?

The primary intent of Act 2024-278 is to provide timelines for responding to public records requests. The act categorizes requests into two different types of requests. First, the act defines a standard request as any request that will take less than eight hours to process and fulfill. On the other hand, a time-intensive request is defined as any request that will take more than eight hours to process and fulfill. Generally, the same rules apply to each type of request; except, the primary difference is the required time to respond. For standard requests the city has 10 days from the receipt of the request to provide an acknowledgement of receipt to the requestor. The act does not specify the form in which the acknowledgment must be provided. Once a standard request has been acknowledged the city has 15 days to provide a substantive response to the requestor. A substantive response can take many forms such as providing the documents with or without certain contingencies or denying the request for a recognized reason. For example, a substantive response can be a statement that the city is prepared to provide the requested public records to the requester upon payment of a reasonable fee or that the request is denied because the documents sought do not exist or are confidential and not subject to public disclosure. The form of the substantive response will be highly dependent on the substance of the request and circumstances surrounding the request. For standard requests, the city can extend the time to respond in 15-day increments upon proper notice to the requestor. That does not mean the request can be extended in perpetuity, because after the earlier of 30 business days or 60 calendar days, following either the city's acknowledgement of the request or the payment of the estimated fees, a rebuttable presumption that the request has been denied is triggered. Generally, once a request is considered denied the requestor can sue challenging the legitimacy of the denial.

For time-intensive requests the city has 10 days from the receipt of the request to provide an acknowledgement to the requester that the request has been received. After acknowledgment the city has 15 days to notify the requester that the request has been classified as a time-intensive request. If the requester elects to proceed with a time-intensive request, the city has 45 days to provide a substantive response to the requester. For time-intensive requests, the city can extend the time to respond in 45-day increments upon proper notice to the requester. However, after the earlier of 180 business days or 270 calendar days following the requester's election to proceed with a time-intensive request a rebuttable presumption that the request has been denied is triggered. The act also provides that the rebuttable presumption of denial is not triggered for both types of requests in the following scenarios:

- The request is not proper or the public officer is not obligated or required to respond;
- The public officer has responded in part;
- The public officer and requester have reached an agreement regarding the time or substance, or both, of the response;
- Negotiations are ongoing between the public officer and the requester;
- The public officer has reasonably communicated the status of the request to the requester.

The city also may require the requester to pay a reasonable fee before providing a substantive response to the requester.

The city is required to maintain a log for keeping track of currently pending time-intensive requests. For each such currently pending request, the log shall identify the name of the requester and the date of acknowledgment. The log shall be a confidential document that is not subject to a public records request.

Something the act does not do is modify the definition of a public record despite the act changing the term "public writing" to "public record." The Alabama Supreme Court has determined that the term public writing is synonymous with the term public record. *See Health Care Auth. for Baptist Health v. Cent. Alabama Radiation Oncology, LLC*, 292 So. 3d 623, 628 (Ala. 2019). Therefore, prior attorney general opinions and Alabama Supreme Court decisions interpreting the term public writing are still applicable. The act also clarifies that the city is not required to create a new public record that did not previously exist to respond to a records request and that a request can be denied for being vague, ambiguous, overly broad, or unreasonable in scope. Finally, the bill provides permissible written procedures municipalities can adopt to help facilitate the new public record request requirements. ■





*League past presidents and President Mark Suliba gathered for a group photo at the convention's closing reception on May 17, 2024.*

*Pictured: Former ALM Executive Director Ken Smith and his wife, Brenda.*





# 2024 Distinguished Service Awards

2024 OPENING SESSION ■ MAY 15 ■ HUNTSVILLE

For many years, the Alabama League of Municipalities has presented the Distinguished Service Awards to mayors and councilmembers to recognize 20, 30, 40 and 50 years of service milestones. The League was thrilled to continue that tradition and honor 15 municipal leaders on their accomplishments during the opening session of convention on May 15, 2024.

*Not present: 40 Years: Mayor Jimmy Madison, Berry; 30 Years: Mayor David Wilson, Summerdale; 20 Years: Mayor Brandy Pierce, Leesburg.*

**Mayor Lew Watson**  
40 Years - Lincoln



**Mayor Tony Craig**  
30 Years - Owens Crossroads



**Mayor Johnny Smith**  
30 Years - Jacksonville



**Councilmember Sadie Britt**  
30 Years - Lincoln



**Councilmember Bill Kling Jr.**  
30 Years - Huntsville



**Councilmember Terry Adams**  
20 Years - Midfield



**Councilmember Janice Anderson**  
20 Years - Midfield



**Mayor Larry Fetner**  
20 Years - Ashland



**Councilmember Larry Furlough**  
20 Years - Owens Crossroads



**Councilmember Velma Johnson**  
20 Years - Midfield



**Mayor Craig Patterson**  
20 Years - Gordo



**Mayor Gary Richardson**  
20 Years - Midfield









# 2023 Municipal Clerk of the Year

Congratulations to Linda Ferguson for winning the Alabama Association of Municipal Clerks and Administrators' 2023 Municipal Clerk of the Year Award!

Linda serves as the town clerk for the town of Millport, where she was recognized as the Citizen of the Year in 2015. She is the current president of the Alabama Municipal Clerks and Administrators Association. She also has served as the treasurer and vice-president as well as a member of the education committee.

Additionally, Linda is active in the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, where she served on the membership committee in 2021 and 2022. She completed the Master Municipal Clerk Academy through the University of Alabama and went on to achieve the status of Master Municipal Clerk from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks. She serves as municipal clerk, treasurer, bookkeeper, human resources facilitator, purchasing agent and event coordinator for her municipality.



Linda has been a tremendous asset to clerks throughout the state and is very deserving of this honor! ■

## Loss Control Division SUMMER SEMINARS 2024

All AMIC and MWCF members are encouraged to increase their understanding of the scope of risk management practices for public entities by attending one of our Loss Control Seminars this summer.

To register for the Summer Seminars, **scan the QR codes** below. The cost for the seminar is \$30 per person. Lunch will be provided. **Deadline to register is one week prior to each event.**

**BAY MINETTE**  
August 13, 2024



**MONTGOMERY**  
August 14, 2024



**MADISON**  
August 20, 2024



**TUSCALOOSA**  
August 21, 2024



**AGENDA**



**CMO Credit Hours:** This session is approved for four (4) credit hours in the Basic, Advanced and Emeritus Programs. Only municipal elected officials receive credit hours in the CMO Program.









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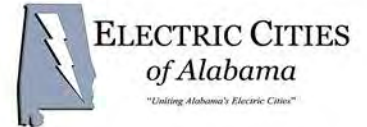


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- Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries
- Alabama Department of Archives and History
- Alabama Dept. of Environmental Management (ADEM)
- Alabama Department of Revenue
- Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
- Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA)
- Alabama Forestry Commission
- Alabama Industries for the Blind
- Alabama Manufactured Housing Association
- Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association
- Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation (AMFund)
- Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC)
- Alabama Municipal Revenue Officers Association
- Alabama Power
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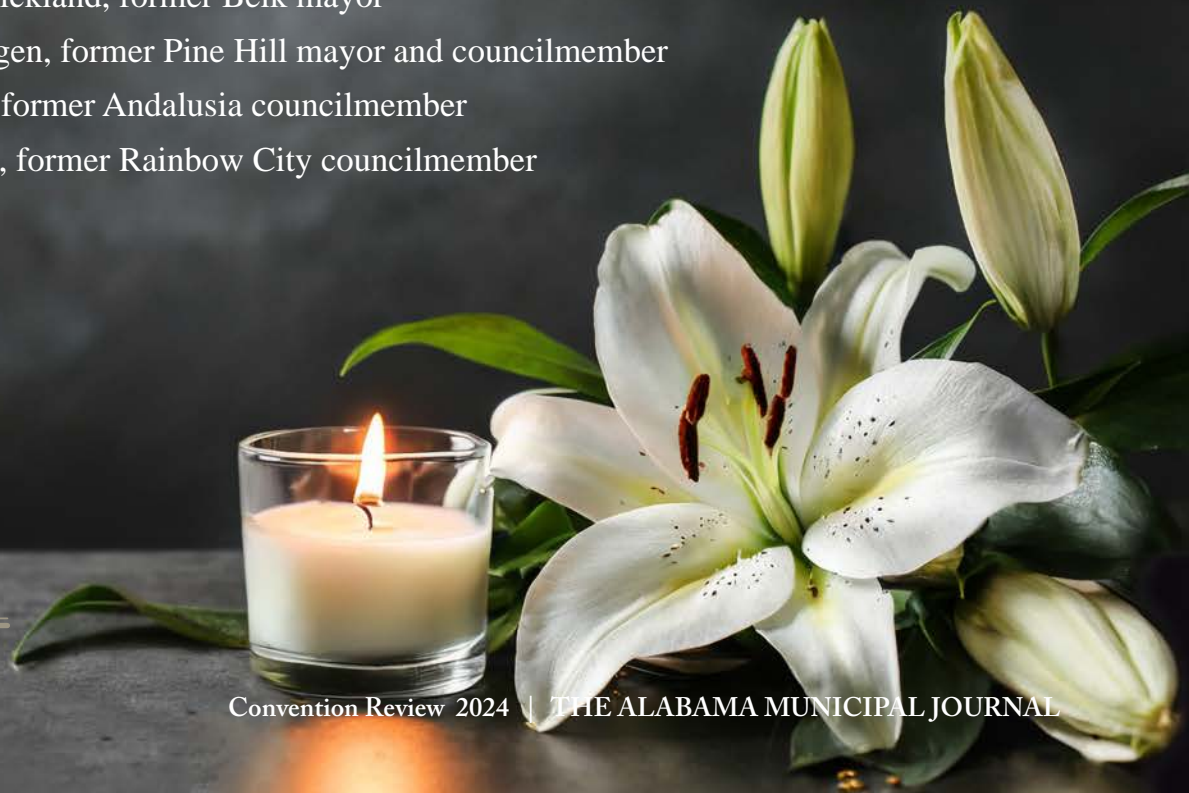
# *In Memory*

**The League memorializes the following officials who have died in office since its last convention:**

- Clarence Young, Bakerhill mayor

**The League memorializes the following former officials who have died since its last convention:**

- Dicey Childers, former Blountsville councilmember
- Catherine Coleman, former Bakerhill councilmember
- Sue Glidewell, former Rainbow City mayor and city clerk
- Lorenzo Hale Grant, former Alexander City councilmember
- Donald E. Green, former Cullman mayor and councilmember
- Jeanette Griffin, former Jackson's Gap councilmember
- Grover "Eddie" Hedgspeth, former Southside mayor
- Clifton "Clif" P. Knight, former Hartselle mayor
- John Eldon Koniar, former Foley mayor
- James R. Peacock, former New Brockton councilmember
- William Rayfield, former Harpersville councilmember
- Sherry Ellison Simpson, former Alexander City councilmember
- Mary Kate Stovall-Tapley, former Hurtsboro mayor
- Karen Diane Strickland, former Belk mayor
- Harold Swearingen, former Pine Hill mayor and councilmember
- Ralph C. Wells, former Andalusia councilmember
- Brenda Wimpee, former Rainbow City councilmember







## Sue Glidewell

August 14, 1931 - January 26, 2024

**Mayor, Rainbow City 1980 - 2004**

**League President 1994 - 1995**

League past President Sue L. Glidewell passed away on January 26, 2024, at the age of 92. During her influential tenure as the League's second female president from 1994 to 1995, Mayor Glidewell served the state of Alabama and each municipality, including her hometown of Rainbow City, with kindness, devotion and impeccable leadership.

Her career as a public servant began in 1950 when she became an employee of the city of Gadsden's water department. In 1967, she accepted the role as Rainbow City's municipal clerk. Thirteen years later, she was elected mayor.

During her 24-year stint as mayor, she had a profound impact on Rainbow City, which included assisting in the development of Alabama Highway 77 and expanding the city's economy and political stature in the state.

Additionally, Mayor Glidewell was an extremely active member of the League before and after her presidency, serving on the executive committee as well as the committee on state and federal legislation. She also served on the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation's (AMIC) Board of Directors as the first female board member from 1992 to 2004, spending eight years as chairperson during this time. Furthermore, she served on the National League of Cities' Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

There are not enough words to describe the amazing, trailblazing life of Mayor Glidewell, but we are proud of the life she lived and grateful for the time she dedicated to our membership.



## Harold Swearingen

July 26, 1926 - May 1, 2024

**Mayor, Pine Hill 1964 - 1990, 2020 - 2023**

**Councilmember, Pine Hill 2012 - 2020**

**League President 1985 - 1986**

League past President Harold Swearingen passed away on May 1, 2024, at the age of 97. His remarkable public service career began when he was elected mayor of Pine Hill in 1964. He would go on to achieve an extraordinary accomplishment that no other League member can ever attain; he is the only municipal official to have worked with every executive director of the League.

Mayor Swearingen was also a successful insurance professional and worked closely with ALM's leadership to develop the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC). In 1990, he was elected to lead AMIC and resigned as mayor of Pine Hill after 26 dedicated years of service.

In 2000, he retired from a profound tenure leading AMIC and returned to Pine Hill to serve in local government once again. He became a councilmember and was elected mayor for a second time.

Mayor Swearingen was recognized at ALM's 2021 Annual Convention for 50 remarkable years of municipal service. His devotion to the welfare of Alabama's cities and towns, as well as the development of AMIC, has left a lasting impact on the League and the state.

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### Who is eligible to use the MIS system?

Only municipal entities within Alabama are eligible to use the MIS system. This includes cities, towns, certain utility boards, housing authorities and hospitals. For more information, visit: [www.alintercept.org](http://www.alintercept.org).

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