

BLM SUCCESSFULLY HELD 18TH ANNUAL WARD COMMITTEES' CONFERENCE

Blouberg Local Municipality Mayor, His Worship Cllr Maseka Pheedi said the municipality is hailed champions of public participation throughout the country because of, amongst other things; the effectiveness of the ward committee's system. Blouberg Local Municipality has always regarded its ward committees as the important mobilizing agent in ensuring that communities take part in municipal programmes. This was Mayor Maseka Pheedi's heartfelt farewell messages of the concluding annual ward committees' conference under 2016-2021 Council coming to end on 27 October 2021

The municipality clustered the 2021 conference in order to comply with the lockdown regulations around gatherings. The mini 4-day conferences were held from 2-7 June 2021 at Inveraan, Langlaagte, Raweshi and Alldays town wherein the 22 wards of the municipality were divided into groups of four.

Last year also the municipality could not hold the forum as large gatherings were mostly prohibited throughout the year.

"The very same Coronavirus has robbed us of a great opportunity to engage with you in the previous year. The restrictions imposed on gatherings also impacted negatively on this type of gatherings as we could not hold a single conference as per the norm."

Mayor Pheedi commended the ward committees for their team spirit and dedication to serve their communities throughout the years.

"This gathering marks our final year in the 2016-2021 Council. As the Council of Blouberg Local Municipality, we are appreciative of the team work in the past five years wherein we tackled service delivery challenges head-on and serve our respective communities with distinction."

This critical municipal stakeholder was established in terms of the Local Government Municipal Structure's Act. It all started in 2003 with 16 wards and to date the municipality boasts 22 wards. Each ward is manned by 10 committee members and are allocated various services delivery portfolios most relevant to the key performance of the municipality and the government in general. The areas include services such as electricity, roads, housing, water and sanitation, stormwater and drainage, waste and environment and social services including health and security among others. For the previous 17 years, the municipality successfully convened the conference affording them the opportunity to share their day-to-day challenges and success stories they come across as foot soldiers and a liaison between the Council and the community. Their role is to ensure the smooth interaction between the municipality and the community, attend matters that affect their respective communities and mobilize them to take part in municipal programs.

The Speaker, Cllr Maria Thamaga and Chief Whip Cllr Bill Choshi paid tribute to the outgoing, ward committee members for their hard work and dedication throughout the years in ensuring that community members are informed of what's happening in their wards and take part in municipal programmes.

The 2021 conference is held under the theme: "The year of Charlotte Maxeke: Ensuring efficient delivery of services and community safety against the backdrop of gender-based violence and the COVID-19 pandemic."

Mayor Pheedi indicated that the municipality will continue to put needs of the community first, he condemned gender-based violence and call for total adherence to COVID-19 regulations.

"President Cyril Ramaphosa has called on all spheres of government, to move with speed in attending community challenges and delivering services to the people and the fight by all of us to end gender – based violence and femicide. We all have a crucial role to play in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic by adhering to public health protocols in order to curb the spread and avert the third wave".