

Good Afternoon and Happy Friday Memphis!



This is my first recap for the month of August. As we move through what has already been an eventful year, I am proud of the progress we have made as a city despite the challenges we have encountered from a public health, economic, and social perspective over the last 219 days. As we continue to work on behalf of *all* Memphians, one thing is clear: **the best is yet to come!**

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With that in mind, this week your Memphis City Council met to discuss measures focused on moving Memphis forward. If you were not able to participate in the meeting via live-stream on the Council website, via YouTube, or via 88.5 FM (WQOX), a full review is provided, [here](#).

Removing the Question of Residency from the November 2020 Ballot:

The Council is passionate about the well-being of Memphis citizens, period. Thus, we are actively working to build a future that champions safety for all, while also developing healthier relationships between residents and public safety employees. Additionally, we want to develop job opportunities that recruit local talent, and build upon our local tax base. On Tuesday, the Council

took action to address all of the above by approving an ordinance that removed the question of residency from the November 2020 ballot. Specifically, the approved ordinance rescinds Referendum Ordinance No. 5744, which might have allowed specified personnel employed within the Divisions of Police and Fire Services to reside 50 miles *outside* of the City of Memphis.

In short, the Council believes that individuals protecting our diverse neighborhoods should also call these places home, *fulltime*. At present, we support current residency requirements allowing public safety employees to live within Shelby County, and no further. However, the possibility of specified personnel within the Divisions of Police and Fire Services living in Arkansas or Mississippi does not align with our long-term goals, namely working to reform public safety policies to help achieve improved outcomes, and relationships, between public safety employees and our local citizenry, many of whom have lost public trust in our public safety institutions.

Furthermore, the move will refocus the conversation on the issue of recruitment, rather than retention. The Council deeply values the work of our Divisions of Police and Fire Services, so much so that we want to recruit locally to fill their ranks with hardworking Memphians willing and able to serve. In doing so, we believe we may put additional Memphians to work in worthwhile pursuits, while also building upon our local tax base. When coupled with our aim to reform community-level relations with public safety employees, the Council believes Tuesday's action is both necessary and beneficial for the City of Memphis.

Appointing Memphians to the City Council Renaming Commission:

On July 21, inspired by the work of equity-minded leaders like the late U.S. Rep. John Lewis and the late Rev. C.T. Vivian, the Council established the City Council Renaming Commission. The advisory body was created to address sociopolitical-based issues such as the historic exclusion of certain Memphis citizens within the decision-making processes used to officially name streets, parks, and public places within our various neighborhoods.

On Tuesday, the Council approved by resolution fifteen (15) appointees to the City Council Renaming Commission. All members are residents of the City of Memphis. Specifically, the citizens were chosen because they possess a demonstrable record of experience within education, civil rights, law, business, non-profit, *or* faith-based organizations. Additionally, the individuals

were approved because they exhibit an evident record of scholarship, either formal or informal, regarding the history and geography of the City of Memphis, especially in relation to historically underrepresented, and underserved, communities.

The Commission will operate under the oversight of the Council, ultimately producing recommendations as to public street, park, and place names. Their work will be invaluable as we collectively re-evaluate public streets, parks, and places whose titles represent actions that should be condemned and removed from prominence within our revered public spaces, places, and venues.

In all, the Council looks forward to the Commission's work to begin, as this measure provides an opportunity to achieve community-driven outcomes sought by citizens across our diverse City for so long.

Funding for the Division of Fire Services:

On Tuesday, the Council approved a resolution to accept grant funding in the amount of \$6,118.27 from the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund through the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The funds will be used by the Division of Fire Services in their efforts to prevent, prepare, and respond to the challenges posed by the coronavirus within the City of Memphis.

Improving our Local Library System:

The Council remains committed to our local library system, as it plays a critical role within the lives of Memphians from an education and empowerment standpoint. With that in mind, on Tuesday, two separate resolutions were approved to provide a total of \$531,180 for the construction of the new Raleigh Springs Branch Library. Once complete, the facility will be an added jewel within our City's renowned library system, which recently saw improvements to the Cornelia Crenshaw and Frayser Branches.

Maintaining Memphis Traffic Signal Infrastructure:

Furthermore, the Council also approved a resolution appropriating \$450,000 for the improvement of traffic signals, fixtures, and related equipment across the City of Memphis. In all, the action helps to ensure that our extensive engineering infrastructure is maintained for the benefit of all Memphians.

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Why I Chose Blue:

“I chose to be a PST and a career in law enforcement to help protect people and to expand my knowledge of the laws for my community. I didn’t always want to be a police officer but as I got older a lot of things changed with my mindset and my outlook on the world.”

-Christopher Jones

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#ChooseBlue for a Rewarding Career in Law Enforcement:

The Memphis Police Department plays a vital role in maintaining a safe City of Memphis. Recruitment is key to the Division of Police Services’ ability to function on behalf of Memphis residents. Therefore, I challenge you all to share the hashtag **#ChooseBlue** over the next few days to encourage our talented, high school-aged men and women to consider a career in law enforcement, serving a City that needs their skillsets for our long-term improvement.

Visit <https://www.joinmpd.com/pst/bluepath/> for more information on MPD’s Blue Path program, and how interested individuals may apply during their senior year in high school.

Looking Forward:

As we move ahead, I am and will always be honored to serve you each day as part of a thirteen-councilmember team working to transform our great city into a place of opportunity for all. Stay tuned for future Council updates as we keep you informed regarding the activities taking place here at City Hall.

With earnest appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrice J. Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "P" and "R".

Patrice Jordan Robinson
Chairwoman, Memphis City Council
District 3