

## **Good Afternoon and Happy Friday Memphis!**

January has proven to be an eventful month here at City Hall. From the inaugural swearing-in ceremony on the first day of the year, to honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. this week during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Luminary Awards, and most recently, with the Council's decision regarding MLGW electric rates, our actions have been guided by an unwavering commitment to move the City forward, together, for the benefit of every citizen.

If you were not able to attend Tuesday's Memphis City Council meeting, a full review is provided, [here](#).



### **Commemorating Dr. King's Legacy by Honoring Seven Memphians at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Luminary Awards:**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. lost his life championing the call for social change. As a result, he is the first private modern citizen to be honored with a federal holiday. Although, Dr. King was successful in ushering in a new paradigm from which we now judge the existence of freedom and equality, his transformative acts, and overarching philosophy, must be regularly promoted to ensure they are maintained in the years ahead. On Monday, Mayor Jim Strickland and the City of Memphis commemorated Dr. King's legacy by recognizing seven

individuals whose contributions reflect the values of the late-civil rights icon. Seven attorneys, Walter Bailey Jr., Michael Cody, Bernice Donald, Bruce McMullen, Charles Newman, Commissioner Van Turner, Jr., and Allan Wade, were presented with the City's highest honor: **The Luminary Award**. Each recipient has worked tirelessly over the course of their careers to improve the quality of life for Memphians. Please join me in commending this year's 2020 Luminary recipients for their selfless, civic efforts!

### **Providing First-Class Emergency Responses to Memphians:**

The Council recognizes that an efficient emergency response operation is key to a municipality declaring itself a top-tier city. We are happy to announce that Memphis possesses a first-class Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and 9-1-1 Dispatch Center. On Tuesday, the Council visited OEM and the 9-1-1 Dispatch Center, located at the corner of Avery Avenue and Flicker Street. Memphis Fire Director Gina Sweat and Emergency Communications Administrator Michael Spencer led a tour, emphasizing the City's improved 9-1-1 response time, which is currently **13 seconds** faster than the national average! As a result of key departmental improvements funded by state dollars, the average citizen call for emergency response services is now answered in **less than 7 seconds**, with a new record average of **5.82 seconds** set in February 2019. We are proud of these First-Class services being available to all Memphians when they need them most.

### **Bringing a State-of-the-Art Fire Department Headquarters to Memphis:**

As our emergency response operations continue to exceed national standards, we must contemporaneously support the totality of Memphis' public safety services, namely the Memphis Fire Department (MFD), which continues to be one of the finest in the country. The main priorities of MFD are to provide fire suppression, rescue services, environmental and hazardous materials response, emergency medical response, emergency pre-hospital services, fire code enforcement, fire investigation, disaster preparedness training, and fire safety education. However, a modern space that is conducive to long-term growth is required to bring MFD's enduring success to fruition. With that aim in mind, on Tuesday, the Council allocated \$6MM for the construction of a new MFD Headquarters. The new, state-of-the-art facilities will exist to benefit all Memphians, current and future.

### **Improving MLGW Infrastructure for Memphians:**

For the last several years, MLGW has requested a rate increase – most of which would go toward upgrading aging utility infrastructure. Always mindful

of doing everything possible before we collect more money from Memphians, the 2019 Council rejected MLGW's request for an electric rate increase until a better proposal could be presented.

On Tuesday, the issue was revisited.

After two years of debate, three different Council iterations, a myriad of revised resolutions, inclusive discussions, and careful consideration of possible alternatives, the Memphis City Council voted 11-1-1 approving an electric rate increase of **7.2 percent over a gradual, three-year period**, with a **3.0 percent increase occurring in July 2020**.

Notwithstanding, conditions apply.

Before the electric rate increase can take effect, MLGW must provide the Council with reports in February, March, April, and May of this year, detailing the utility provider's specific efforts to reduce costs. Additionally, MLGW must provide a legal opinion regarding bond issuances due in May. If the conditions are satisfied, the gradual electric rate increase will commence.

Absent unforeseen occurrences, the MLGW utility-rate discussion is now resolved. Through it all, the Council has been clear: we are keenly aware of the situations many Memphians find themselves within as rate increases take place. We also understand that money does not grow on trees.

However, as we balance our interest in sustaining an environment of affordable rates, we have an equally important duty to safeguard our citizenry against utility system failures that will take place if we do not provide funding to partially cover the \$1B infrastructural improvements needed over the next five years. By approving a gradual electric rate increase over a three-year period, the Council is addressing Memphians' demands for fewer power outages – shorter recovery from storm-related outages and less outages not related to the weather.

Thank you for your patience as we worked with MLGW to secure the needed upgrades in the most efficient and fair manner for all stakeholders.

### **Staffing City Divisions with Quality Executive Appointments:**

Competent leadership is necessary for any organization to reach and exceed its full potential. The City of Memphis' various divisions are no different. Earlier this month, Mayor Jim Strickland identified experienced and capable individuals to serve as the Chiefs and Directors of the City's administrative divisions for the next four years. Council members then met with the proposed appointees. On Tuesday, fifteen of the Mayor's Director and Chief candidates

were approved to continue their service on behalf of the citizens of Memphis. We are excited to continue working as a team, fulfilling the Mayor's goal of being "brilliant at the basics," while also striving for new heights in 2020 and beyond.

**In other news:**

**Honoring a Memphis Legend and Ambassador – Larry Dodson, Sr.:**

When exceptional circumstances arise, the Council sees fit to honor Memphis citizens with streets, roads, and avenues named in their honor. After graduating from Carver High School, Larry Dodson, Sr. quickly began a career fueled by his desire to take Memphis music to the world! Now, with five gold albums, one platinum album, more than twenty top-ten singles, and 47 years of entertainment experience to his name, Mr. Dodson is a music legend and Memphis cultural ambassador. This week, by Council decree, Marlin Road, which connects East Raines Road to Faronia Road, was honorarily dedicated as "**Larry Dodson, Sr. Road.**" Join me in celebrating the music career and contributions of Larry Dodson, Sr.

**Honoring a Stalwart Local Leader – Christine Anderson Grandberry:**

Additionally, the Council took time to highlight the indelible impact of Frayser's de facto "Mayor," the late-Christine Anderson Grandberry. A graduate of Manassas High School, Ms. Grandberry shared her gifts by faithfully serving on the board of the Frayser Community Development Corporation. Described as a "world-changer," Ms. Grandberry exhibited "love for community" that was evident in the manner she provided unflinching support to neighbors, family, and friends throughout the course of her life. In all, Frayser is a better place because of her spirited leadership. This week, by Council decree, North Trezevant Street between Frayser Blvd. and Point Church Avenue was honorarily dedicated as "**Christine Anderson Grandberry Street.**" Join me in celebrating the contributions of Christine Anderson Grandberry.

***Looking Forward:***

As we move ahead, I am excited by the new opportunities that exist on the horizon for our great city, and its hardworking residents. 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 prominent initial "P".

Patrice Jordan Robinson  
Chairwoman, Memphis City Council  
District 3