

Good Morning and Happy Wednesday Memphis!



As I contemplate the various health issues affecting our city, state, nation, and world related to Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), I am reminded of the importance of **community**. In working to slow the spread of COVID-19, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends gatherings no larger than ten. To that end, social distancing is now common practice in our personal and professional lives. As a result, to the untrained eye, we appear to move farther apart as we strive to move further ahead. However, that supposition is incorrect, and misinterprets the spirit of our recovery efforts. In fact, upon closer look, you realize that now, more than ever, is the time to act with the collective community in-mind. Doing so will allow us to mount a stronger front in the fight to protect our health and that of our loved ones, the lives of the most vulnerable among us, as well as to prevent overburdening our hospital and emergency response infrastructure.

So, as we follow the directives established by federal officials, the State of Tennessee, and [our own Memphis Mayor](#), make a point to take the steps necessary to keeping yourself and others safe, all the while checking-in on friends, family members, neighbors, and colleagues in need of assistance.

Together, we will overcome our present challenge. Our commitment will see us through.

Yesterday, the Memphis City Council convened remotely to discuss ways to move Memphis forward. The meeting was broadcast via live-stream, as well as via 88.5 FM (WQOX). If you did not listen to Tuesday's Council meeting, a full review can be found, [here](#).

Equipping our First-Class Fire and Police Departments:

First-class cities require fully-equipped first responders. On Tuesday, your Memphis City Council continued its support of the Divisions of Fire and Police Services by transferring an allocation and appropriation of funds in the amount of \$21,663.00 from FY19 EMA Sirens Project to FY20 EMA Sirens Project in support of the Memphis Fire Department. Furthermore, \$5,000,000.00 was appropriated to upgrade the Memphis Police Department's radio system. The actions will provide our city's first responders with the tools and resources needed to ensure safety for all Memphis citizens.

Weatherizing Memphis Homes for Year-Round Savings:

Did you know the average U.S. household pays 3-5 percent of their gross income on energy bills? How about the fact that in Memphis, our low-income citizens spend, on average, 13-26 percent of their gross income on energy bills? Bottom line: Money does not grow on trees. Therefore, it is imperative that we locate methods for savings. Yesterday, the Council accomplished that goal by accepting and appropriating expenditures and revenues for the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) grant in the amount of \$200,000.00. WAP improves the energy efficiency of homes of low-income families, providing an economic benefit to those most in need via weekly, monthly, and year-round savings. If we can locate ways to keep more money in the pockets of more Memphians, our city will be on the path to reaching its full economic potential.

Funding Memphis Public Libraries:

Numbers don't lie: [Memphis public libraries are invaluable resources](#) for education and development within our community from Whitehaven to Frayser, and from Downtown to Cordova. In 2019, alone, over 2.5M people visited the Memphis public library system, borrowing over 1.3M items for their personal enrichment. Additionally, for the third year in a row, youth programming at Memphis public libraries increased, improving attendance from just over 50,000 adolescents and young adults in 2017 to reaching nearly 100,000 in attendance at various Memphis library events in 2019. With goals

to enhance equitable access to books, champion literacy for all ages, promote workforce development, and to advance the role of the library as a community anchor, the Council believes dedicated financial support is required to benefit our citizens, present and future. With that in mind, on Tuesday, we appropriated \$5,875,000.00 to improve our Memphis public libraries, with funding going to the Frayser, Raleigh, and Cossitt library branches.

Improving Our Public Infrastructure:

The Council is also dedicated to improving our city's public infrastructure because we view our streets, sanitary sewers, storm drains, bridges, and flood control maintenance as vital to protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of all Memphians. Yesterday, the Council transferred and appropriated \$4,000,000.00 for improvement projects across the City of Memphis. The action will ensure that we maintain our local public works infrastructure in a responsible manner for years to come.

With you in mind:

In conclusion, I want to revisit my initial discussion of COVID-19, albeit with a focus on feelings of stress that you may be experiencing. Please understand, though completely normal, fear and anxiety about the virus can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults, children, and families, alike. Everyone reacts differently to difficult situations and can become more distressed if you see repeated images or hear repeated reports about the outbreak in the media.

Reactions during an infectious disease pandemic can include:

1. Anxiety,
2. Stress,
3. Fear of losing loved ones, and
4. Various personal health issues that may be induced, or made worse, as a result of anxiety, stress, or fear

If you experience the above personal and mental health issues, please seek medical and mental support and attention. If you require assistance, but do not know where to go when seeking professional care, call **2-1-1**, or visit <http://tn211.mycommunitypt.com/>.

2-1-1 is Tennessee's community services help line. When you call **2-1-1**, you'll get a real person, one who is trained to help you sort out your needs, and then give you phone numbers and addresses of the closest places where

you can get help within the Greater Memphis Area. Please take care of yourself. There is no shame in seeking help!

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 style with a large initial "P" and "R".

Patrice Jordan Robinson
Chairwoman, Memphis City Council
District 3