

Good Afternoon and Happy Friday Memphis!



As this week comes to an end, and we look to the days ahead, working to address the issues concerning our beloved city, a thought comes to mind: Inevitably, over the course of any community's existence, there comes a time when the grit of its citizens will be tested, a time when the people, organizations, and institutions, alike, will be asked to unite for a common goal, an all-encompassing objective, one that must be achieved for the whole to prosper not only in the near-term, but also in the decades to follow.

Presently, we find ourselves in such a time.

COVID-19 has changed the way governments conduct business, the related health concerns altering the manner families, friends, and colleagues interact in the public space. Though the present-normal may seem *odd*, this moment in history is not one that we should allow to elicit fear. Rather, it is a period from which we should derive renewed strength. For, in the depths of uncertainty exists new found courage.

Please know that we *will* overcome our present obstacles, successfully, together.

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

Resolving to Remain Resilient in the Face of Challenge:

Each April, the Mayor meets with the Council to present the next fiscal year's proposed budget. On Tuesday, Mayor Strickland provided both an update, as well as an estimated forecast, reflecting the serious nature of the time in which we find ourselves. Like many nations, states, and municipalities, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected the City of Memphis' present, and future, financial outlook.

Challenges:

Current FY20 challenges involve revenue losses caused by the virus slowing activity within our local economy. Specifically, drastic reductions in the city's second largest source of revenue, i.e., sales tax revenue, coupled with the loss of Hall income tax revenue, Hotel-Motel tax revenue, and the impact upon the Food and Beverage sector's various tax-and-fee-based revenue, have established a projected shortfall in the current FY20 budget. As a result, the City of Memphis has likely gone from growing by \$10M to experiencing a loss of approximately \$80M out of a \$711M FY20 budget.

Opportunities:

However, some hope exists via federal stimulus aid. For instance, the CARES Act may be a source of funds. Cities must apply, with municipalities over 500,000 in population receiving money directly from the federal government. The good news, provided by Mayor Strickland, is that the City of Memphis has already applied.

Looking forward:

So, what does this mean for the FY21 budget? At present, when accounting for the projected FY20 shortfalls, the proposed FY21 budget presented by the Mayor on Tuesday reflected a lower amount of approximately \$630M, again, approximately \$80M less than the FY20 budget. Though, opportunities exist in the form of federal stimulus aid, the proposed FY21 budget of \$630M as outlined by the Mayor does not include funds related to federal stimulus dollars, and will not do so until certainty exists as to (1) How much aid the City of Memphis will receive, (2) When the aid will arrive, and (3) How the aid may be utilized.

In the meantime, the Council and Administration remain committed to seeking all available solutions to ensure we are able to provide the best service possible to the citizens of our great city. Stay tuned for updates. Be assured, we will overcome our present challenges. Join us in resolving to remain resilient as we do so.

Accepting Grant Funds to Improve our Parks and Programming:

Despite present circumstances, it is vital that the Council maintain its commitment to the long-term improvement of our valued parks and programming within these outdoor spaces. On Tuesday, we accepted grant funds in the amount of \$1,500.00 from the Memphis Medical District Collaborative for specialty programming at Morris Park. Additionally, the Council accepted grant funds in the amount of \$10,000.00 from the Nike Foundation via the Charities Aid Foundation for supplies related to youth sports camps. Finally, your Memphis City Council accepted grand funds in the amount of \$150,000.00 from the Tennessee Department of Health for physical activity improvements at Chandler, Southside, and Gaston Parks. In all, the actions ensure that Memphis citizens will have safe, updated, and interactive parks to enjoy for the betterment of their health and quality of life.

Equipping the Division of Fire Services with Upgraded Technology:

On Tuesday, we approved a financing agreement over five (5) years at zero (0) percent interest for the purchase of audio-visual equipment in the amount of \$1,117,510.20 to be used by the Division of Fire Services. In all, the technological improvements will allow MFD to work more efficiently, on your behalf.

Mark Your Calendar: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

On Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. the Memphis City Council will reconvene to discuss the following agenda items: (1) A resolution to create and fund a Council Emergency Relief Program, (2) A resolution of the Memphis City Council strongly encouraging all businesses to require their employees to wear non-medical facial coverings while at work at the expense of the employer, and (3) A resolution requesting the approval for the sale in the amount of \$811,000.00 of City owned property located at 2998 Tillman Cove in Memphis, Tennessee, further described as Parcel ID # 044009 00017. The meeting will be live-streamed via the Memphis City Council website, at the link below:

<https://www.memphistn.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalID=11150816&pageID=15334953>

Seeking Assistance During COVID-19:

Each week, I will continue to emphasize that it is normal for adults, children, and families, alike, to experience feelings of fear and anxiety about COVID-19. As we work toward resolving our current challenges, please seek appropriate medical and mental support if you, or a loved one, are experiencing fear and anxiety that is negatively affecting your daily life.

If you require assistance, but do not know where to go when seeking professional care, call **2-1-1**, or visit the link below:

<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. Always remember, there is no shame in seeking help!

Moving Forward Together:

As we strive 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,



Patrice Jordan Robinson
Chairwoman, Memphis City Council
District 3