

Good Evening and Happy Friday Memphis!



Today's recap is especially action-packed, as various measures were taken to move our city forward with one goal in mind: Successfully overcoming the economic and public health challenges of COVID-19. So, let's jump right in.

As always, if you were not able to listen to Tuesday's Council meeting, a full review can be found, [here](#).

Presentation of an Update on the Proposed FY21 Operating Budget:

The last time Mayor Jim Strickland spoke to the Council regarding the proposed FY21 operating budget, there was discussion of revenue shortfalls created by COVID-19, i.e., revenue shortfalls that would potentially result in the need to (1) drastically reduce the City of Memphis' core services, or (2) decimate the City of Memphis' unassigned fund balance in the process. Since that time, Memphis was fortunate in that we received approximately \$113.6M in stimulus aid via the federal CARES Act. With those funds available, research was then conducted to determine their applicable uses going forward.

As a result of that work, on Tuesday, the Mayor presented an update on the proposed FY21 Operating Budget - one that he believes will balance the challenges we all face in what still remains an uncertain year. One of those uncertainties being the extent to which our revenues will be negatively affected, given our current economic landscape. For instance, at present, federal CARES Act aid cannot be used to replace expected, substantial losses

in revenue. As an aside, hope still remains as Congress could (a) issue new guidance allowing municipalities, like Memphis, to use current CARES Act stimulus money to replace lost revenues, or (b) pass yet another stimulus bill with additional funds included to alleviate the shortfalls experienced by thousands of local governments across the nation.

Nonetheless, despite those challenges, action is still required.

To that point, on Tuesday, the Mayor proposed a FY21 Operating Budget that preserves most of the essential functions of local government, *with* limitations on new hires outside of public safety, *with* reductions in expenditures related to materials and supplies, *with* no layoffs, *with* no raises, and *with* no tax increases, all the while, *not counting* on federal assistance to address lost revenues.

Taken together, the Mayor's proposal utilizes \$2.7M worth of net expense reductions, plus \$79.7M worth of new revenue allocations, to assemble a **\$708,823,909 Proposed FY21 Operating Budget**. The proposal bridges what was an \$82M total revenue gap, while still working to preserve the City's ability to provide core services to its citizens over the next fiscal year.

Stay tuned for ongoing updates as we keep you informed on the FY21 Budget process!

A resolution to apply for the Governor's Local Government Support Grant:

As previously mentioned, despite the difficult economic environment within which we find ourselves, your Council is working to approve a budget with our City and its citizens' best interests in mind. For now, the reality is that the City of Memphis is experiencing revenue shortfalls that historically fund our operating budget. With that in mind, it is vital that new revenue sources be identified and pursued to continue closing the gap.

On Tuesday, the Council took action to meet that end by passing a resolution approving the City of Memphis to apply for the Governor's Local Government Support Grant for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. The \$200M grant program was established in response to Tennessee-based county and city government needs related to the impact of COVID-19 for one-time, local expenses in FY21 operating budgets to meet infrastructure and safety needs. By applying, the City of Memphis will likely receive \$14,388,140 for use in improving core services within our community.

Addressing the cost of City of Memphis EMS Services for COVID-19 related ambulatory transfers and services:

The Council realizes that COVID-19 affects individuals without concern for their financial well-being, or ability to pay for related health services. Therefore, in considering ways to alleviate the cost burden on citizens dealing with the virus, your Memphis City Council passed a resolution to suspend the City of Memphis EMS Services balance billing charged to citizens for COVID-19 related ambulatory transports and services. In doing so, the Council requests that the Administration research the feasibility of covering the costs incurred by the city through grant awards or funds from any agency including our local, state, and federal governments and present a plan to the Council regarding implementation and funding for this measure. The action was unanimously supported by the Council, and will go a long way toward assisting citizens in obtaining quality care during the COVID-19 crisis, specifically ensuring that no citizen will receive a bill from the City of Memphis for COVID-19-based ambulatory transfers and services.

City of Memphis Received National Award for Best Comprehensive Plan of 2020 for Memphis 3.0 Plan:

"Accept the challenges, so that you can feel the exhilaration of victory."
- General George S. Patton

The Comprehensive Plan established by Memphis 3.0, and approved by the Council in December 2019, represents the City of Memphis' first comprehensive plan for growth since 1981, nearly forty years ago. From the outset, the massive undertaking presented challenges. And yet, we persisted, bringing its development and implementation to fruition.

As a result of its innovative plans, Memphis 3.0 was honored by the American Planning Association with the prestigious Daniel Burnham Award as the nation's best Comprehensive Plan for 2020. The announcement was made on Sunday, April 26. On Tuesday, the Council made a formal announcement recognizing the honor. Join me in congratulating the various citizens, employees, and volunteers who contributed their time to bringing this victory home to the Bluff City!

Ordinance Requiring Facial Coverings While in Public Places within the City of Memphis during Public Health Emergencies:

Bottom line: As a Council, we believe your safety is of utmost importance. Period. With that in mind, on Tuesday, an ordinance was introduced requiring individuals to wear facial coverings or masks while in public places within the

City of Memphis during public health emergencies. A brief analysis of the proposed ordinance language is provided below.

Permitted Materials

As presently written, the ordinance would permit the use of non-medical facial coverings, to include those made of cloth, fabric, or other materials that cover the nose and mouth to impede the spread of saliva or other fluids while speaking, coughing, and sneezing. Furthermore, the coverings may be factory-manufactured, or homemade from scarves, bandanas, sweatshirts, towels, etc.

Scope of Required Use

Regarding scope, the coverings would be required in public places - other than an individual's residence, private property, or personal vehicle - in which an individual interacts with persons other than members of his or her household, **during public health emergencies**. Generally, citizens would not be required to wear the coverings during outdoor exercise, but would be required to wear the coverings when encountering others while taking part in said activities.

Businesses, Employers, and Employees

As presently written, business owners, managers and supervisors shall ensure that employees, customers, clients, and/or visitors observe the requirements for facial coverings while at their place of business.

Exceptions

Finally, children under the age of two (2) would not be required to wear facial coverings under the proposed ordinance, nor would citizens in situations in which wearing coverings poses a greater mental or physical health, safety, or security risk.

In all, the ordinance will require three readings to become law within the City of Memphis. On Tuesday, the Council approved the measure on first reading. The second reading will take place on May 19.

Stay tuned for updates in the weeks ahead!

Accepting Grant Funds to Improve Parks Within the City of Memphis:

Despite present challenges, it is vital that the Council maintain its commitment to the maintenance of the valued parks within our City. On Tuesday, we accepted grant funds in the amount of \$9,000 from the Tennessee Department

of Forestry for the removal of invasive species at Spanish War Memorial Park and Lichterman Nature Center. The funding will work to protect the natural environments within each park for years to come. Furthermore, the action ensures that Memphis citizens will have well-protected outdoor spaces to enjoy for the betterment of their health and quality of life.

Equipping the Division of Fire Services with Improved Infrastructure:

On Tuesday, we approved a resolution to appropriate funds in the amount of \$193,000 for the improvement of EMS Administrative Offices related to use by the Division of Fire Services. Furthermore, the Council approved a resolution to appropriate \$1,000,000 for the improvement of Fire Station 5. In all, the infrastructural improvements will allow our MFD and EMS teams to work more efficiently on your behalf.

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:

<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!

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 style with a large initial "P" and a distinct "J" before the last name.

Patrice Jordan Robinson
Chairwoman, Memphis City Council
District 3