

**Good Afternoon and Happy Thursday Memphis.**



**Say his name: George Floyd.**

Though it took only 8 minutes and 46 seconds to extinguish the life of a human being on the side of a Minneapolis street, one thing remains clear: George Floyd’s death will not be in vain. To the contrary, the events of May 25 represent a watershed in the growing call for reform as it pertains to the intersection of African Americans and the criminal justice system.

In this instance, an innocent life was lost at the hands of unchecked police cruelty, period.

As our city, nation, and world mourn during this solemn moment in time, the Memphis City Council joins you.

However, as we commemorate George Floyd’s life, we ask that all citizens do so in a manner that avoids bringing harm to yourself, and others. Exercise your constitutional rights in a way that begets unity, and not violence. Therefore, if you are drawn to join your fellow Memphians at a protest, wear a mask, maintain adequate distance, and keep the peace.

In the end, your individual actions affect the well-being of our entire community. If we are to honor a life lost, we must ensure that others are not put at risk.

With that said, I would like to share the recent activity at City Hall. If you were not able to view Tuesday's Council meeting, a full review can be found, [here](#).

### **Resolution Condemning the Act of Violence That Resulted in the Death of George Floyd:**

As the Memphis City Council joins citizens in mourning George Floyd, we also condemn the act of violence that resulted in his death. On Tuesday, the entire thirteen-member Council sponsored and passed a resolution recognizing the unfathomable loss of life, denouncing the betrayal of public trust caused by the act of violence, and most importantly, extending sympathy to the family of the late-Mr. George Floyd. The resolution will be delivered to the family.

### **Approving the City of Memphis' FY21 Operating Budget:**

In my April 21 Recap, I provided details on the Council's initial budget discussion with Mayor Jim Strickland. The conversation centered around projected revenue shortfalls of approximately \$82M created by COVID-19, which would have a drastic impact upon the City of Memphis' FY21 Operating Budget. Since that time, Memphis was fortunate in that we received approximately \$113.6M in stimulus aid via the federal CARES Act. However, even with those funds available, additional action was still required.

To that point, on May 5, the Mayor proposed a FY21 Operating Budget that looked to preserve most of the essential functions of local government, *with* limitations on new hires and *with* deliberate reductions, but *without* layoffs to City Employees and *without* a tax increase to City residents.

Taken together, the Mayor's proposal utilized \$2.7M worth of net expense reductions, plus \$79.7M worth of new revenue allocations, to assemble a \$708,823,908 Proposed FY21 Operating Budget, bridging what was once an \$82M total revenue gap, and still, working to preserve the City's ability to provide core services to its citizens over the next fiscal year.

Since that time, the Council met with each Division within the City of Memphis and reviewed their proposed FY21 expenditures and total division reductions while also considering the needs of local non-profits. Budget Chairman Jones proposed reducing the FY21 operating budget by \$1,858,288 and the Council was able to allocate \$1,275,000 to various City of Memphis departments and non-profit agencies. These allocations were made to ensure that City Agencies

were able to remain on a 14-day grass cutting schedule, expand tire-pick up within our City, increase resources for our homeless population, and support our youth. The actions of this Council resulted in a \$583,288 transfer to the unassigned fund balance as the Council prepares for future budget uncertainty.

In doing so, I am happy to announce that the Memphis City Council has approved a balanced and fiscally responsible FY21 Operating Budget to be enacted July 1, 2020.

**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, on May 5, 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 also requested 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.

On Tuesday, the Council followed through on its May 5 action, amending the Fiscal Year 2020 operating budget by appropriating the expenditures and revenues for the CARES Act Provider Relief funds in the amount of \$453,410.38. The funds will be used for prevention, preparation, and response to the coronavirus, and will be used to ensure that no citizen will have to pay out of pocket for COVID-19-based ambulatory transfers and services.

**Addressing costs related to the Division of Police Services during the Fight Against COVID-19:**

The Council also recognizes the work of the Division of Police Services during the coronavirus health crisis. On Tuesday, the Council took action to enhance local law enforcement response to the COVID-19 environment. Specifically, the Fiscal Year 2020 operating budget was amended by appropriating the expenditures and revenues for the Federal FY2020 Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding (CESF) Program in the amount of \$2,523,880.00. The funds will be used to pay for Police Services-based overtime, equipment, PPE, and training software.

## **Maintaining Memphis Streets:**

The Council remains committed to maintaining our local public works infrastructure for the benefit of all citizens. To that end, on Tuesday, the Council approved the appropriation of additional construction funds in the amount of \$45,000 for street repaving. The action is related to existing resurfacing efforts of certain City of Memphis streets whereby 80-percent of project dollars are provided via federal funding, with a 20-percent match from the City of Memphis. As street repaving continues, Tuesday's appropriation will specifically allow for the application of reflective markings and reflective surfaces to provide higher visibility to drivers at night. The upkeep of our extensive public works framework is vital and will continue as required.

## **Encouraging Paid Sick Leave for All:**

Did you know less than 50-percent of Hispanic workers, nationally, have access to paid sick leave?

How about the fact that only 60-percent of African American workers, nationally, have access to the same health benefit?

These numbers are problematic, especially during a pandemic. To address this concern, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the CARES Act provide access to paid sick leave for some workers. However, approximately 1.5M workers residing within the State of Tennessee are not covered by the paid leave provisions in the FFCRA and the CARES Act, while hundreds of thousands more may be excluded under new regulations, according to the Center for American Progress.

Furthermore, the Institute for Women's Policy Research estimates that employees without access to paid sick leave are 1.5 times more likely to go to work while they have a contagious illness, and are nearly twice as likely to send a sick child to school or daycare than those with access to this critical protection.

On Tuesday, with these facts in mind, the Council approved a resolution during Executive Session encouraging private employers of all sizes operating within the City of Memphis to provide paid sick leave to their employees. The resolution also urges Tennessee Governor Bill Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly to repeal Tenn. Code Ann. § 7-51-1802, which prevents local bodies, like the Memphis City Council, from requiring private employers to provide paid sick leave to their employees, and instead allow local bodies, such as the Council, to enforce life-saving, paid sick leave policies.

### **Seeking Mental Health Services:**

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing issues involving anger, anxiety, or stress related to the death of George Floyd, and would benefit from speaking with a trained mental health professional, but do not know where to go when seeking professional care, call **2-1-1**, or visit <http://tn211.mycommunitypt.com/>.

Additionally, if you, or someone you know, is struggling with fear and anxiety related to COVID-19, I also encourage you to contact **2-1-1**, or visit <http://tn211.mycommunitypt.com/>.

Presently, it is important to seek assistance to properly address your personal challenges. I am steadfast in my belief that we will overcome this difficult time together. However, to be of benefit to others, we must first strive to be healthy individuals.

As a reminder, **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. 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, flowing style.

Patrice Jordan Robinson  
Chairwoman, Memphis City Council  
District 3