

Good Morning and Happy Wednesday, Memphis!



It is with great enthusiasm and appreciation that I write the first Chair's Recap of the New Year. As the 2021 Chairman of the Memphis City Council, my goal is to continue the great work started by the Council in 2020, while seeking new ways to bring innovative, lasting solutions to the needs of all Memphians in 2021 and beyond.

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With that in mind, yesterday your Memphis City Council met to discuss measures focused on improving the City of Memphis in the areas of public safety, youth literacy, food insecurity, and public transportation. If you were not able to virtually participate in the meeting via live-stream on the Council website, YouTube, or 88.5 FM (WQOX), a full review is provided, [here](#).

Ensuring Safety on City of Memphis Streets:

The Council is concerned with your safety above all else. As such, on Tuesday we took action by addressing speed limits on City streets, specifically in areas where pedestrian traffic and use by bike riders, as well as vulnerable citizens, is highest. Initially, the City of Memphis Code of Ordinances established a default speed limit of 30 miles per hour (mph).

However, in an effort to encourage safer roadways, and thus safer neighborhoods, yesterday, the Council passed an ordinance on third and final reading reducing the default speed limit to 25 mph. The measure still allows the City Engineer to designate zones where greater, or lesser, speeds may be permitted. Nonetheless, unless designated as such, the default limit applies.

Taken together, the Council believes this action moves the needle forward as we work to address road safety for all – in the process contributing to a greater quality of life for every Memphian along City of Memphis streets.

Funding Youth Literacy Initiatives:

Our youth are our future and their literacy skills are key to their success today, tomorrow, and for the rest of their lives. Over the last three years, the City of Memphis' Division of Parks and Neighborhoods has provided recreational programming to reinforce literacy skills through afterschool and summertime activities. In doing so, the Division has the Council's full support as they work to enrich the lives of Memphis youth.

On Tuesday, we approved a resolution accepting grant funds in the amount of \$75,000 from the International Paper Foundation. The monetary amount will be used to support stronger and more robust literacy initiatives in 2021. The Council is excited by the opportunities created by this new funding, which will be available via enhanced resources at community centers across all Memphis City Council districts.

Funding for the City of Memphis' Memfeast:

On the topic of food insecurity, we are also aware of the power of efforts that assist Memphis citizens in need of a warm, hearty meal during the holiday season. Notably, the City of Memphis has held Memfeast as an annual Thanksgiving Day meal giveaway where hundreds are served and provided with care packages to address their personal care needs.

On Tuesday, the Council passed a resolution accepting grant funds in the amount of \$5,000 from the International Paper Foundation. The money will be used to support this invaluable philanthropic endeavor.

Join me in thanking the International Paper Foundation for their generosity to the City of Memphis and its residents!

Funding Memphis Area Transit Authority Capital Improvements:

Our public transportation system is vital and must be maintained. Each year, capital projects are funded for the purpose of providing key infrastructural improvements that will benefit City of Memphis residents in the long-term. Yesterday, the Council approved a resolution to appropriate CIP funds in the amount of \$73,660 for the Memphis Area Transit Authority's new operations and maintenance facility. Specifically, the dollars will be used for architectural and engineering services related to the capital project.

Powering the Division of Fire Services:

The Council values the work of our Division of Fire Services. As such, on Tuesday, we were happy to approve a resolution accepting and appropriating hazard mitigation grant program funds from the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency in the amount of \$238,350. The monetary amount will be used to purchase equipment needed to power the Division in 2021 and beyond.

Memorializing the Lives Lost Due to COVID-19:

On January 21, 2020, the United States confirmed its first detected case of COVID-19. In the 351 days that have elapsed since that time, our nation has experienced over 21,365,183 additional cases. As a result, more than 362,538 American lives have been lost, Memphians included. The Council stands firm in its belief that we will overcome the challenges created by the pandemic – in the process improving life for all. As we do so, it is vital that we remember the men, women, and children who have succumbed to the virus.

With that in mind, yesterday, the Council unanimously approved a resolution that will result in the Hernando De Soto Bridge being illuminated on January 19, 2021, to honor the mothers, fathers, grandparents, siblings, and friends lost to COVID-19 over the last twelve months. The memorial will result in Memphis joining cities and towns across the nation, culminating in the lighting of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool in Washington, D.C. that same day.

Honoring Public Servant, Judge Teresa Jones:

In this same light, the Council also mourns the loss of The Honorable Teresa Jones, who was formally honored with a moment of silence on Tuesday. Judge Jones dedicated her life to serving the City of Memphis by way of the law, and passed away on January 2. As you may know, she was a force of nature as a Shelby County School Board member, Chief Prosecutor, trial attorney, public defender, adjunct professor, and Municipal Court Judge. Though no longer

with us, Judge Jones' spirit of selflessness and love for our community remains to inspire us all; she will be sorely missed.

Upcoming Council Meetings:

The Council hit the ground running on Tuesday, and our pace will be maintained throughout the calendar year. To confirm our regular meeting schedule, an ordinance was approved on third and final reading establishing our 2021 meeting dates (see [here](#)).

Save the Date – January 26, 2021:

As we move ahead, please note that the Council will hold its next meeting on **Tuesday, January 26, 2021**. Otherwise, stay tuned for future Council updates as we keep you informed regarding the exciting activities taking place here at City Hall!

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In closing, I look forward to serving you as Chairman of your Memphis City Council. Over the course of the next twelve months, we *will* highlight aspects of our humanity that unite us, rather than separate us; we *will* support Memphians in need of assistance due to the effects of COVID-19; we *will* overcome our sociopolitical challenges together; and we *will* work tirelessly to lift Memphis to greater heights as a dynamic place to call home for all in this new year.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank Colvett, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Frank Colvett, Jr.
Chairman, Memphis City Council
District 2