

Good Evening Everyone and Happy February!

Welcome to our first meeting of February and the beginning of Black History Month! Many of the items in today's meeting highlighted the impacts of Black Memphians and cultural institutions that have played a part in Memphis' rich history. There is still progress to be made to make Memphis a better and more equitable city for all citizens, and we are excited to continue to bring forward resolutions that benefit the community.

If you were not able to attend Tuesday's Memphis City Council Meeting, a full review is available [here](#).



Honoring the late Dr. Miriam DeCosta-Willis

The late Dr. Miriam DeCosta-Willis was recognized during the Council meeting by Councilwoman Michalyn Easter-Thomas for her amazing contributions to the Civil Rights Movement, education, and the Memphis community. Dr. DeCosta-Willis was denied entrance into Memphis State University in 1957 and later became its first Black professor in 1966. She donated a collection of historical documents to the Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center and wrote and edited 15 books, including *Notable Black Memphians* and *Black Memphis Landmarks*. Dr. DeCosta-Willis passed away on January 7, 2021, at the age of 86.

Accelerate Memphis

The City Council approved “Accelerate Memphis: Invest in Neighborhoods,” which is a landmark plan to invest in community projects, activate neighborhoods, improve parks, and revitalize city assets. The City of Memphis will take advantage of the drop in debt service payments in 2026 today and make an unprecedented \$200 million investment in catalytic community projects intended to accelerate growth by improving quality of life, driving equity and inclusion, and improving housing and connectivity by making transformative, one-time investments in a variety of capital projects.

Presentation from the Greater Memphis Chamber

President and CEO Beverly Robertson shared a presentation on the Greater Memphis Chamber’s efforts to hear the voices of Memphis activists and community members who have expressed concerns regarding the business climate and wages paid by companies in the Memphis community. The recommendations that the Chamber supports include: performing an annual wage survey for companies, connecting employees and employers to Upskill 901 resources, and diversification of industry presence in the local market. The Chamber is currently in the implementation phase of these recommendations.

Liberty Park Development

The City Council approved a resolution to appropriate \$4,000,000 of G.O. Bonds allocations for the Fairgrounds Redevelopment Phase II. The Memphis Fairgrounds, renamed Liberty Park, will be a multimillion-dollar redevelopment of the area and will include a state-of-the-art youth sportsplex, in addition to retail, hotel and other planned developments on the site.

Collins Chapel Connection Hospital Health Center

A presentation on the Collins Chapel Connection Hospital Health Center was given in the Housing and Community Development committee meeting by Bishop Henry M. Williamson, Sr. and Room in the Inn Executive Director Rev. Lisa Anderson on the redevelopment of this historic property in order to serve our homeless neighbors in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. This redevelopment has been many years in the making and Room in the Inn now has the ability to provide recovery care for the homeless after discharge from area hospitals in addition to

providing shelter rooms for families and a day center for children experiencing homelessness. Collins Chapel Hospital opened in the early 1900s and previously was the only hospital in Memphis that served Black patients and allowed Black doctors and nurses. Though it originally closed in 1980, it now has renewed purpose in serving the citizens of Memphis.

First Transportation Committee Meeting Held

The first Transportation Committee meeting was held today and featured Part 1 of a planned 2-part presentation from MATA CEO Gary Rosenfeld. In the presentation, Mr. Rosenfeld shared the history of MATA, its vision, and the current and historical funding levels and ridership numbers. Mr. Rosenfeld will return to give Part 2 of the presentation during the February 16th committee meeting.



Allocation for MLGW Voter Education Program

A resolution to reallocate \$2,000 of Councilman Ed Ford Sr.'s FY21 City Council Community Grant funding and allocate \$2,000 per year beginning in FY22 to provide voter registration information in MLGW new customer packets for residential account holders was approved in Council meeting. This resolution will help to ensure accurate voter registration information gets to residential customers.

Byhalia Pipeline

A resolution opposing the Byhalia Pipeline was held during the Public Works committee. Speakers in favor of and in opposition to the pipeline were given the opportunity to speak on the item today, however the item was held until the February 16th meeting in order to allow for further discussion and research into the matter.

In conclusion

The Council has taken up many issues of late that citizens have expressed their opinions in favor of or in opposition to in the first few meetings of the year. As we continue to live through the COVID-19 pandemic, we appreciate the passion of our citizens to move the city forward and dedication to causes that they hold dear.

With earnest appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Colvett, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Frank Colvett, Jr.

Chairman, Memphis City Council

District 2