

Good Afternoon and Happy Wednesday, Memphis!



On the topic of progress, Winston Churchill noted that the secret to success is perseverance, i.e., the ability to *keep going no matter what*.

Churchill was keenly aware that there is no shortcut to long-term prosperity. Reaching your goal, no matter the end, demands dedication.

As individuals, this may mean early mornings or late nights working to learn a skill. As a community, this may equate to a commitment to improvements not realized in the immediate future. Either way, the key to achieving your all-important aim rests with a willingness to persist for a specific and valued purpose.

As Chairman of your Memphis City Council, I am honored to serve as part of a thirteen-Councilmember team willing to *keep going no matter what*, on your behalf. Your well-being drives our actions, and will continue to inform our efforts each day.

With this in mind, yesterday the Council met to discuss measures focused on moving Memphis forward in the areas of public safety, public health, and socioeducational equity. 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](#).

Improving our Public Recreational Spaces:

The Council understands that quality recreational spaces are key to ensuring a healthy City of Memphis. However, cultivating active communities requires planning and support. As such, yesterday the Council was thrilled to further the renovation of the Leftwich Tennis Center. Specifically, at the request of Mayor Jim Strickland and University of Memphis President Dr. M. David Rudd,

the Council authorized a loan of \$10M to the University of Memphis Foundation.

The dollars will be allocated and appropriated to provide pre-funding for the tennis center's improvements, which will include, but are not limited to (1) a 300% increase in court availability for use by *all* Memphians, (2) establishing a new home for Tennis Memphis, Inc., the non-profit youth development and outreach organization tasked with operating and managing the City of Memphis' public tennis facilities, and (3) securing a competition and practice home for the University of Memphis' tennis teams.

Taken together, the measure works to provide quality recreational spaces for Memphis citizens ranging in age from youth to seniors, while moving our City ahead in our effort be active.

On a related note, yesterday the Council also approved resolutions accepting grant funds from the Tennessee Department of Health, and Nike, in the combined amount of \$100,000. The funds will be used to support City of Memphis Community Center summer camps, and to provide improvements to Davy Crockett Park.

Supporting the Division of Police Services:

As the Council considers public health, we also aim to keep public safety in the forefront of our work. In doing so, yesterday we passed a series of resolutions supporting the Division of Police Services. In total, \$11,824 was received from the 100 Club of Memphis, the Tennessee Valley Regional Communications System City of Chattanooga, and CSX Transportation. Specifically, the dollars will be used to fund the Division of Police Services' operational activities as our officers work tirelessly each day to protect Memphis residents.

Supporting the Division of Fire Services:

Similarly, the Council also approved a resolution to further the ongoing efforts of the Division of Fire Services. To this end, we approved a measure accepting and appropriating a donation from ADT in the amount of \$10,000. The funds will be used to purchase smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Along these same lines, I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to publicly express my appreciation for the commitment shown by our City's fire department personnel. In my opening, I noted that the secret to success is perseverance, i.e., the ability to *keep going no matter what*.

Over the last twelve months, our City owes much of its success to the Division of Fire Services, which has *persevered* on our behalf. Led by Director Gina Y. Sweat, the division repeatedly answered the call *no matter* the challenge. Most recently, our valued Division of Fire Services reflected the qualities and capabilities that earned them a superior Class One ISO rating, and rank within the top 1% of departments across the nation, when they expanded their public safety role to include COVID-19 response and vaccination distribution efforts. In doing so, these public safety officers saved countless lives within the City of Memphis and beyond.

With this in mind, the Memphis City Council is a strong believer that we should always recognize the willingness to go above and beyond for the public good. As such, yesterday, the Council passed a resolution approving the recommendation of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Impasse Committee that the last best offer of the IAFF be approved and added to the FY22 Operating Budget. As a result, Division of Fire Services employees represented by the IAFF will receive a 3% wage increase during FY22.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Council, as well as within the Administration, to bring this pay increase to fruition ahead of our June 1 vote on the FY22 Operating Budget.

Opposing Tennessee House Bill 580/Senate Bill 623:

Finally, there comes a time when the Council must voice its stance as it relates to activities on the state level. In this instance, yesterday we did so by approving a resolution opposing Tennessee House Bill 580/Senate Bill 623. In a nutshell, the state bill, recently passed by the Tennessee General Assembly, seeks to ban critical race theory within public school classrooms. Moreover, the action aims to withhold funding from Tennessee public schools that violate the measure.

To be clear: Critical Race Theory is a vehicle for individuals to better understand the role of race, as well as racism, within society. Although these topics have a complicated history within our city, state, and nation, they should not be avoided. Thus, the saying goes, if we are not willing to study history, we are bound to repeat it in a detrimental manner.

Therefore, it is crucial that the youngest among us are provided opportunities to participate in classroom dialogue free of restrictions that would otherwise prevent them from learning from the past for the purpose of improving our collective future.

In closing, The Memphis City Council is a diverse legislative body that finds strength in robust conversations on topics that reflect our individual, as well as shared experiences. We encourage the Tennessee General Assembly to do the same, and recommend that Governor Bill Lee veto House Bill 580/Senate Bill 623.

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Looking Forward:

As we move ahead, I am honored to serve you each day as part of a thirteen-Councilmember team working to transform our 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.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Colvett, Jr.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chairman Frank Colvett, Jr.
Memphis City Council
District 2