

Good Morning and Happy Friday, Memphis!



In his book, *The Light in the Heart*, Roy T. Bennett underscores the importance of remaining steadfast despite challenges that abound. In doing so, the author reminds us to “never lose hope,” noting that “Storms make people stronger, but never last forever.”

To this point, yes, difficulties will undoubtedly arise, *but they also subside*. However, your ability to bring about the latter is dependent upon actions taken in the midst of life’s ebbs and flows.

For the Memphis City Council, the annual budget process presents its own unique challenges. With competing views, robust debate, and historic economic obstacles, difficulties did arise. And yet, by centering our focus upon the best interests of *all* Memphians, those same struggles were met with solutions.

Thus, as I write to you this morning, I am happy to announce that your Memphis City Council passed a balanced budget that will ensure that the City of Memphis continues to operate for the benefit of every citizen across our diverse community.

Furthermore, as our economy steadily improves, the FY22 Operating Budget approved this week will work toward our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, ultimately ensuring that we emerge stronger than before, having *never lost hope*, realizing that difficulties *never last forever*.

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](#).

Approving the City of Memphis' FY22 Operating Budget:

In my April 20 Recap, I provided details on the Council's initial budget discussion with Mayor Jim Strickland. The conversation centered around projected revenue shortfalls created by COVID-19, which would have an impact upon the City of Memphis' FY22 Operating Budget. In all, a loss of \$23,142,078 was experienced, and an operating budget of approximately \$716M was proposed.

Since that time, Memphis was fortunate in that we received approximately \$161,061,490 in stimulus aid via the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), of which \$80,530,745 has been received. However, as we await further guidance related to ARPA spending, those funds will not be used to address the existing revenue shortfall. Instead, the Council approved the budgeted use of the City of Memphis' Assigned Fund Balance to close the gap.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, the Council then approved the City of Memphis' FY22 Operating Budget in the amount of \$715,958,791. In addition to being balanced and fiscally responsible, the action preserves the essential functions of our local government, provides well-deserved pay increases to fire and police personnel, furnishes essential worker premium pay to eligible City employees, *without* a tax increase to City residents, and will be enacted on July 1, 2021.

City Council Grant Funding:

On a related note, the passage of the FY22 Operating Budget *also* includes funding to local non-profits via the City Council Community Grant Program. After receiving and reviewing numerous applications from Memphis-based non-profit agencies, Tuesday, the Council approved the allocation and appropriation of \$2,600,000 in City Council Grant funds to agencies and initiatives working to promote the welfare of Memphis residents in the areas of Crime and Drug Prevention, Youth Empowerment, Economic Development, and Poverty Alleviation. The Council recognizes the selected non-profit agencies as valued partners in the continued effort to improve the lives of Memphians.

Establishing the Certified Tax Rate:

Despite improving economic prospects, the Council is aware that many Memphians are still regaining their financial footing. As such, every dollar counts now more than ever. So, as we find ourselves within a reappraisal period, your local legislative body *does not* wish to place an additional monetary burden upon our hardworking citizens by increasing the property tax rate.

Therefore, on Tuesday, the Council passed a resolution certifying the City of Memphis' tax rate at \$2.713049 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

Supporting the Division of Fire Services:

As part of our effort to consider the everyday needs of Memphis citizens, the Council is also working to address issues affecting City personnel living and working at our local fire houses.

With recent vehicle break-ins occurring while firefighters are on-duty, the Council decided that enough was enough. With the ongoing security issue in mind, a resolution was passed transferring an allocation of \$500,000 from FY21 Fire Station Improvement Cover to Security/Cameras.

Specifically, the funds will be used to install fencing at fire stations across all Council districts to deter further criminal activity from targeting our valued first responders.

Funding Youth Development Initiatives:

Our city's youth are our future. To that point, the Council believes we must invest in their development early and often. Notably, the City of Memphis' Office of Youth Services established MPLOY to provide Memphis youth, ages 14-22, with meaningful summer employment opportunities. However, to date, the demand by Memphis youth seeking to participate in the program has exceeded available program funds.

On Tuesday, the Council worked to support MPLOY's worthy endeavors by passing a resolution to accept \$60,000. Specifically, the funds will ensure that more Memphis youth are able to participate in upcoming summer employment opportunities, i.e., in FY22, FY23, and FY24. Taken together, the measure works to prepare our youngest generation for success within their community and the professional world.

Commemorating Juneteenth 2021:

Finally, on Tuesday, the Council took time to recognize Juneteenth Independence Day.

Since its first observance 155 years ago, Juneteenth has grown to represent freedom, emphasizing the importance of education, innovation, and community improvement, in like manner, underscoring the strength of the American spirit to acknowledge wrong, while also resolving to do what is right.

With **June 19, 2021** being the City of Memphis' *inaugural Juneteenth Independence Day*, the Council commemorated the upcoming date by spotlighting thirteen Memphians whose community-driven actions embody the spirit of the occasion, i.e., the demonstration of courage, perseverance, and dedication to improving the lives of their fellow citizens.

As we mark this historic moment, join me in thanking the following individuals for their positive contributions to the City of Memphis:

Ms. Earnestine Jenkins

Ms. Sara Lewis

Ms. Gretchen Wollert McLennon

Ms. Hazel Moore

Ms. Hester Ola Johnson Moore

Ms. Kathy Yancey-Temple

Ms. Elaine Lee Turner

Ms. Rachel Sumner Haaga

Mr. Torrey Bates

Mr. Fred O. Dorse

Apostle Ricky Floyd

Senior Pastor Rufus Smith

Minister Sukhara A. Yahweh

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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 large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Chairman Frank Colvett, Jr.
Memphis City Council
District 2