

Good Afternoon and Happy Friday, Memphis!



If you were not able to virtually participate in Tuesday's meeting via live-stream on the Council website, YouTube, or 88.5 FM (WQOX), a full review is provided, [here](#).

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Saying No to Coal Ash Dumping in District 3:

The Memphis City Council takes your health seriously. Not only is this our charge as legislators, but we have a vested interest in protecting the welfare of Memphians, because your community is also ours.

Thus, as your fellow neighbors, colleagues, family, and friends, action was necessary when we learned of the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) proposed plan to relocate coal ash to a landfill within Whitehaven.

You may be asking yourself: What is *coal ash*?

Well, I'll tell you.

Coal ash is the waste product of coal burned at coal-fired electric power plants. Once created, it takes various forms including, but not limited to, *fly ash*, i.e., the fine, powdery particulate carried up smokestacks and captured by pollution control devices, and *bottom ash*, better known as the coarse, angular ash particles too large to be carried upward into smokestacks. As opposed to fly ash, bottom ash proliferates on the floor of coal furnaces.

At this point, you may also be asking yourself: How does this affect *Memphis*?

I'll tell you that, too.

Although the Environmental Protection Agency has not officially classified coal ash as a hazardous material, the regulatory organization *does recognize* the waste product as a contaminant containing arsenic, cadmium, mercury, chromium, and lead, just to name a few. These chemical elements are considered harmful to men, women, children, and wildlife, posing serious environmental and health risks if improperly disposed.

Therefore, the TVA's proposal to dump 3,500,000 cubic yards of coal ash within a Whitehaven landfill *did not* sit well with your Memphis City Council. As such, on Tuesday, in an effort to protect our community at large, a resolution was passed urging TVA to cease any movement of coal ash to District 3, and all other areas within MLGW's service delivery zone. Additionally, the measure requested Mayor Jim Strickland's Administration to withhold applicable permits that may assist TVA's efforts to act in an opposing manner.

Taken together, the Council sees Tuesday's resolution as a necessary effort in our ongoing work to champion improved wellness outcomes for every Memphian.

Opposing Tennessee Executive Order No. 84:

As we work to protect the local environment, the Council is also determined to protect the health of our youngest citizens.

You may have heard that on Monday, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee signed Executive Order No. 84 into law. Notably, the effort takes aim at school districts requiring the use of masks within K-12 spaces. Specifically, Governor Lee's order allows parents or guardians to *opt out* of any requirement "for a student in kindergarten through twelfth grade to wear face coverings at school, on a bus, or at school functions."

Although the Council values personal freedom as a bedrock of American society, we also understand the need for common-sense rules developed to save lives. And as mentioned during my last recap: **Masks are not political statements**; they are effective tools in the fight to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

So, when Shelby County Schools (SCS) established a protocol on July 20, 2021 based upon Shelby County Health Department (SCHD) Order No. 24, requiring masks for all employees, students, and visitors who enter schools, regardless of vaccination status, only to have that same policy counteracted by Governor Lee on Monday, the Council felt compelled to take action on behalf of the District that educates the majority of our youth.

In doing so, on Tuesday the Council passed a resolution opposing Governor Lee's Executive Order No. 84, simultaneously requesting that he rescind the order to

effectively remove any law, rule, or regulation that would otherwise limit Tennessee schools from making *their own decisions* regarding the enforcement of mask requirements.

To be clear, I understand this is a sensitive subject. So, I recognize that we may differ on the topic of masks within schools. However, one thing is certain: As our children remain vulnerable to this deadly virus, and **over fifty percent** of these same students are currently ineligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, it is incumbent upon us to support every effort capable of improving their health and safety within in-person learning environments, rather than adopt measures that diminish our ability to ensure their well-being.

Taken together, Tuesday's resolution opposing Governor Lee's Executive Order No. 84 underscores the Council's belief in the importance of supporting our partners at SCS, while also working to preserve local control regarding our community's stance vis-à-vis SCHED Order No. 24 on school-based mask requirements.

Update on American Rescue Plan Act Funding:

Related to the topic of pursuing what is best for our local community, two weeks ago, Mayor Jim Strickland's Administration presented a welcomed update regarding stimulus aid received by the City of Memphis via the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). As noted, we were fortunate in that we received a total of \$161,061,490 to cover costs incurred through December 2024 on actions that respond to, mitigate, or address the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Specifically, on August 3, 2021, I highlighted that the Administration's ARPA funding recommendations included *but were not limited to*:

1. Expanding Memphis' local broadband infrastructure,
2. Partnering with SCS to increase access to after-school programming,
3. Funding City of Memphis Mortgage Assistance to offer aid to Memphis residents at risk of foreclosure, and
4. Investing in Public Safety to (a.) reduce crime, (b.) increase recruitment, and (c.) improve interactions between public safety officers and residents.

However, ARPA funding eligibility is also expanded to boost efforts that provide a public benefit. With that in mind, on Tuesday the Council passed a series of resolutions that addressed this category.

Specifically, a resolution was approved to appropriate \$2,000,000 in ARPA aid to fund improvements to the Regional One Health Medical Center. To date, the Center has taken on the herculean task of caring for patients suffering from COVID-19, while also continuing its work as a local, state, and national leader in trauma care. Of note, the monetary amount will allow the hospital to quickly re-open beds for thirteen weeks by increasing staff, reduce inordinately high trauma diversions, and reduce ambulance offload times, while increasing EMS service availability overall.

Additionally, a second resolution was passed to appropriate \$1,000,000 in ARPA aid. These funds will be used to further the renovation of the historic Collins Chapel Connectional Hospital, which has positioned itself as the first recuperative care center within the City of Memphis for individuals experiencing housing insecurity. The undertaking is unique because the institution fills an existing health gap for homeless men and women who have been discharged from area hospitals but lack a clean, safe place to stay while they recover from an illness or surgery.

Taken together, these measures represent innovative uses of ARPA stimulus aid that will ensure that the City of Memphis, our partners in service, and diverse citizenry thrive in the years ahead.

Maintaining our City's Vital Public Works Framework:

Keeping in line with the need to make improvements across our community, the Council is also dedicated to maintaining our expansive public works framework.

To that end, on Tuesday we approved a resolution transferring and appropriating construction funds in the amount of \$425,545.

Specifically, the dollars will be used to fund the construction of sidewalks, curbs, gutters, pavement, and related landscaping projects.

Supporting the Division of Police Services:

In like manner, the Council also values opportunities to work toward the enhancement of infrastructure utilized by the Division of Police Services.

As such, on Tuesday the Council passed a resolution to appropriate \$1,312,000, funded by G.O. Bonds. Specifically, the monies will be utilized to renovate the Memphis Police Department's Radio Maintenance facility located on Flicker Street.

Funding the Division of Fire Services:

Furthermore, as we support our public safety officers, we must ensure that their training needs are met.

With this in mind, on Tuesday we approved a resolution to accept and appropriate grant program funds from the USDOT-Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration in the amount of \$120,000 with a City of Memphis match in the amount of \$30,000.

Specifically, the funds will be used to bolster the training and preparation efforts of our valued first responders within the Division of Fire Services.

Spread the Word – The Memphis City Council is Hiring:

Finally, share this news with any qualified candidates: The Memphis City Council's Office seeks to hire staff for the position of (1) Executive Assistant, and (2) Legislative Analyst.

For more information, and to apply, visit the links below:

Executive Assistant ([click here](#))

Legislative Analyst ([click here](#))

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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