

We Came Together, Memphis!

As I write my recap for the February 15th meeting, I think about how friends, churches, families, and neighbors have come together to lend helping hands across our great city as Winter Storm Landon recovery efforts continue. As many of you, your Memphis City Council sprang into action by listening to constituents and working within our districts to get power restored as quickly as possible. According to Memphis, Light, Gas and Water (MLGW), Winter Storm Landon was the 4th devastating weather event, only behind hurricane Elvis in 2003, the Ice Storm of 1994 and the Tom Lee storm of 2001, but through it all ***“We came together, Memphis!”*** Last Thursday, I had the honor to meet with so many families in South Memphis for a meal distribution event sponsored by the Tennessee Valley Authority. The gratitude by the families who lost power was an inspiration to us all as ‘Tha Chicken Mane’ catered delicious meals.



Many of you have expressed your sincere concerns with candid feedback on actions my colleagues and I can take to lessen the occurrence of such widespread power outages in the future. In partnership with agencies across our great city—we hear you! We will continue to have discussions directly with you and MLGW and the Shelby County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency.

Here are some forthcoming initiatives:

- 1) March 2022, MLGW will be launching an “Outage Improvement Advisory Team”, an advisory committee tasked with formulating ideas to improve our infrastructure. The infrastructure improvement plans may underground power lines, accelerating power pole replacements, and tree trimming services. I will appoint a member of the Memphis City Council to serve as liaison to this advisory team.
- 2) MLGW has suspended utility disconnects for non-payment of customers for a specified period and has expanded their mobile food pantries. The actions are wholeheartedly supported by the City Council and will help Memphians to recover from the recent winter storm.

Your Memphis City Council is committed to holding local leaders accountable and acting to ensure communities across Memphis continue to flourish for the greater good. If you have any feedback or ideas, please call the Memphis City Council office at (901) 636-6786.

The Young Actors Guild Theatre and Dance Company

As we continue to commemorate Black History Month, we were delighted to have the “Young Actors Guild Theatre and Dance Company” to open Tuesday’s meeting. An amazing song and dance were performed by the Young Actors Guild Theatre and Dance Company, a non-profit 501-c3 organization based in District 4 and founded 30 years ago by Memphian Chrysti Chandler. Ms. Chandler’s vision to impact youth through the arts has helped over 30,000 youth in the Bluff City. Many of the company’s actors and dancers have performed on Broadway, American Idol, So You Think You Can Dance and at the Apollo Theatre. The company has a 98% college graduation rate and continues to provide a positive outlet for youth in the City of Memphis. The dance company is truly a hidden jewel we have here in Memphis.



Keeping you informed

My colleagues and I were pleased to welcome Mayor Jim Strickland to the Personnel Committee on Tuesday to provide a Legislative Update of bills he supports within the Tennessee General Assembly. You may recall in 2002, the State of Tennessee increased the amount of an individual sale item (subject to the sales tax) from \$1,600 to \$3,200, to address budget shortfalls.

Currently, both state and local governments across Tennessee collect tax on the first \$1,600 of purchase price of an item. However, the state retains 100% of both state and local taxes on sale items with a cost greater than \$1,600. If the sales tax revenues were returned to local governments, it would add almost \$4 million to our cities annual budget.

Mayor Strickland and your Memphis City Council are advocating to state legislators on your behalf to allocate 100% of the local sales tax to local municipalities like Memphis. Stay tuned for future updates from me and my colleagues.

Our best in blue, the Memphis Police Department presented its most recent crime data by promoting and maintaining public safety to be the focus of the Council. The MPD reported a 3% reduction in serious crimes from 2020 to 2021 and a reduction of 5% in January 2022 compared to 2021. However, we know Memphians still fall victim to violent crimes and keeping Memphis safe is a collaborative effort my colleagues and I will continue to support.

On Tuesday we heard MATA's most recent monthly update. In December 2021 and January 2022 combined, MATA provided over 356,000 rides to passengers by way of the motorbus service with Route 36 (Lamar Avenue) having the greatest amount of ridership. The rider efficiency and safety continue to be top priorities for both your Memphis City Council and MATA. MATA is currently offering \$2,000 and \$3,000 recruitment bonuses to prospective eligible team members to further advance rider efficiency. To learn more about current career opportunities and how you can be a part of the hardworking team at MATA, visit: <https://www.matatransit.com/careers/>.

Based on community feedback, the Memphis City Council approved an ordinance to expand payment options accepted by car towing companies. The expanded payment options include major credit cards, PayPal, CashApp as well as other resources for payment. These alternative payment options will require towing companies to accept alternative methods to allow Memphians to quickly possess their vehicles to get back to work and back to their families.

A moment of gratitude:

I am fortunate to serve you on the Council along with my colleagues. We are truly working to advance our great city. I urge you to stay tuned for future Council updates as we keep you informed from City Hall.

As always, to view the meeting, you may visit:

<https://www.memphistn.gov/government/watch-public-meetings-online/>.



Yours in service,

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