

Looking toward 2023 – Fiscally speaking

In addition to being Autism Awareness Month (as noted in the last meeting's Recap), April contains National Blue & Green Day, an occasion aimed at raising awareness of organ and tissue donation and encouraging citizens to register as donors. More than 106,000 Americans, including 4,000 in the Mid-South, are on the national transplant waiting list – with another added every 10 minutes. For some of those on the list, the wait is literally a matter of life and death.

At its April 19th meeting, the Memphis City Council heard a presentation from the Mid-South Transplant Foundation on the importance of registering as an organ/tissue donor. The Council also passed a resolution designating April 22, 2022 as “Blue & Green Day Mid-South.”

Keeping you informed



April is also the time of year when the Mayor traditionally presents his proposed Budget to the City Council; and on Tuesday, the Council received Mayor Jim Strickland's proposal for Fiscal Year 2023. Titled “**A Budget of Renewal**,” the approximately \$750 million proposal includes raises for City employees and increases to funding for city assets, road paving and efforts to combat illegal dumping.

Highlights of the FY23 Budget include:

- A 3 percent raise for firefighters, completing the 6 percent raise announced last year; a 5 percent raise for police officers, with another planned for next year for a total of 10 percent; a 2 percent increase for general city employees, and a 1 percent Cost of Living raise for city retirees.
- A revised retention strategy for Public Safety employees that offers police officers and firefighters a 9 percent annual bonus payment for each year they choose to stay with the City, up to five years.
- Funding for a dedicated unit of 17 staff members and equipment for the Environmental Enforcement Department of the Public Works Division. This will allow the City to focus on the longstanding problem of illegal dumping, without pulling staff away from the regular garbage collection efforts of Solid Waste Division employees.
- Establishment of a dedicated funding stream – for the first time in the City’s history – for the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA). Proposed for allocation from expiring Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOT) programs, the dedicated stream would add a permanent net increase to MATA’s Operating Budget of \$4 million in FY23, growing to nearly \$11 million by FY2030. In addition, the Mayor’s proposed Capital Improvement Program (see below) includes the required local matching funds for MATA’s planned “Innovation Corridor” Bus Rapid Transit program between Downtown and the University of Memphis.
- Around \$95 million in Capital Improvement funds for projects comprising road paving and Accelerate Memphis initiatives including a new Lester Community Center, renovations to Audubon Golf Course and a new Mt. Moriah Police Precinct.
- \$26 million in one-time greater-than-anticipated FY21 revenues for the Harbor Docks project (\$10 million), cost escalation for Accelerate Memphis projects (\$10 million), an additional neighborhood splash pad and transforming the former Davy Crockett Golf Course into the City’s first outdoor adventure park (\$3.4 million), and \$2.6 million for immediate capital improvements across City libraries, parks, and community centers, as directed by the Council.

Your City Council plans to begin its Budget hearings on May 4, running through May 19 and wrapping up with hearings on the Council Community Grants for a planned final approval of the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget at the Tuesday, June 7 Council meeting.



One community improvement that is already in the works is the planned sports and events complex at Liberty Park. At the April 19 meeting, the Council approved a 20-year lease of the facility to Eastern Sports Management (ESM Memphis, LLC). This regional company has a 17-year track record of developing and managing sports facilities. In addition to the events, ESM plans to work with local leagues and organizations to provide sports opportunities for Memphians of all ages. The facility also will include a walking trail, exercise amenities and outdoor playing courts.

While under the terms of the lease, the City will receive 40 percent of the net operating income of the facility, the greater value will come from the sales taxes generated from the estimated 2 million visitors per year by year 5 of the facility's operation. The 227,000-square-foot complex is more than 50 percent complete and is scheduled to open in November 2022.

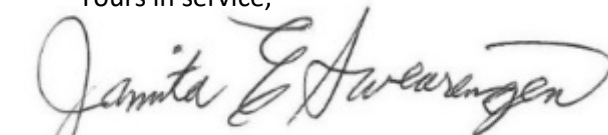
Finally, in its Housing and Community Development Committee, the Council received an update from HCD Division Director Ashley Cash on the \$5 million the Council allocated last year for the American Rescue Plan Act Home Repair Program. Working with several community partners, the HCD Division will assist eligible homeowners with specified repairs on their homes. The Division so far has received 131 applications and is in the process of verifying the applications to see if they qualify. To apply for assistance, citizens may call 211 or visit www.home901.org.

A moment of gratitude:

I am fortunate to serve you each day along with my colleagues working to advance our great city. Stay tuned for future Council updates as we keep you informed regarding the activities taking place here at City Hall. As always, for an archive of meeting recordings, you may visit <https://www.memphistn.gov/government/watch-public-meetings-online/>.



Yours in service,


Jamita Swearengen
Chairwoman, Memphis City Council
District 4