

## *Working toward a better future*



As I begin this Recap, I must with incredible sadness note that Council Members' hearts go out to the families of the 19 students and 2 adults lost in the May 24 shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. We received news of the tragedy at the beginning of our meeting, and at the request of Councilman Ford Canale, observed a moment of silence in remembrance of the victims and in prayer for their families.

Whatever one's political affiliation or views, I believe we all must recommit ourselves to working in our own ways

toward the day in which senseless occurrences like these no longer fill our nation's headlines.

At its Tuesday, May 24 meeting, your Memphis City Council heard from a group of young people who indeed are working toward just that end. The Council received the presentation of the 2021-22 Memphis Youth City Council. This group of young leaders, elected by peers from their respective schools, focused on four-star programming of Leadership Development, Community Service, Team Building and Council/Government Connections. This year, they also focused on a program to emphasize to community leaders, including their adult City Council counterparts, the importance of having mental health resources available in schools.

### **Memphis Youth City Council Co-Chair Talisa Elliott addresses the adult City Council**

The members of the 2021-22 Youth City Council are: Talisa Elliott, Cohort Chair (White Station High School); Sasha Penn, Co-Chair (Collierville High School); Jonathan Robinson (Middle College High School), Jada Carter (Cordova High School), Robert Washington and Makayah Brown (both at the Expanded Educational Services Academy), Amane' Glenn and Anahis Luna (both at East High School), Jazmine Allen (Overton High School), and Zurich McGhee and Nathan Transou (both at Whitehaven High School); Nina Colleymore (Alumni Representative, graduated from Middle College High school) and Briana Massey (Alumni Representative, graduated from White Station High School).

Ms. Elliott, Ms. Penn, Mr. Robinson, Ms. Colleymore and Ms. Massey all spoke before the Memphis City Council at the May 24 meeting, recapping some of their work on the Youth City Council and emphasizing the importance of adults listening to youth – who are, after all, our future.

### **Keeping you informed**

After the Youth City Council presentation, the adult City Council went to work to consider various resolutions and ordinances aimed at bettering the future by addressing needs or making improvements in our City.

Among these were a Joint Ordinance of the City of Memphis and Shelby County to establish a South Memphis/ Soulsville Trust Fund. The Fund will take in proceeds from the previously established South Memphis/ Soulsville Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, and use them to implement the recently approved South Memphis/ Soulsville Community Redevelopment Plan.

The Council also approved a Resolution to appropriate \$500,000 for engineering and design work on the planned expansion of the Harbor Docks. Along with Beale Street Landing, these docks on the Mississippi River side of Mud Island need to be larger to accommodate the riverboats that are making overnight, round-trip cruises from Memphis to New Orleans. The project is slated for funding with assistance from Federal and State sources, including money that Gov. Bill Lee put into the State's Budget for that purpose.

And the Council approved a Resolution making Juneteenth a paid City holiday. The June 19 observance commemorates the date in 1865 when Union Soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas and informed African American slaves the Emancipation Proclamation had freed them more than two years earlier.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to note that in the Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee held earlier in the day, the Council heard a presentation from Memphis Police Chief Cerelyn "C.J." Davis on her first year in the MPD's top position. Chief Davis noted that over the year, Memphis saw a decrease of four percent in Part 1 crimes (a grouping of the more serious crimes that includes all violent and major property crime), while most cities ended their year with double-digit increases.

Among the innovations the Chief cited were the creation and utilization of various task forces such as the SCORPION (Street Crimes Operation to Restore Peace in Our Neighborhoods) Unit, reallocation of officers for increased coverage and use of technology to help refine policing strategies.

On the horizon, she said, are the introduction of a dedicated Traffic Division commander (with the addition of 10 new officers, including six motorcycle units, for the Division); a restructuring of the MPD's ranking system, and enhanced incentives to help recruit and retain more police officers.

Along with the rest of the Council, I look forward to continuing to work with Chief Davis to make our City a safer, more law-abiding place in which to live.

***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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jamita E. Swearengen'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jamita Swearengen  
Chairwoman, Memphis City Council  
District 4