

## ***Hooray for Hollywood – and Memphis***

On Tuesday, June 7, your Memphis City Council approved the Fiscal Year 2023 City Tax Rate. Before it did so, however, the Council took one of the last steps toward finishing its month-long efforts to ensure the money brought in by the tax rate will best be spent for the benefit of those who call our city home.

Before I dive into that, I would like to take a moment to honor one of those who call Memphis home. Cohen James Cooper is a rising sixth grader at Circles of Success Learning Academy, a school directed by his mother, Sheri Catron Cooper. He is also an aspiring actor – but one who has translated his aspiration into action.



Cohen has roles in several large-scale productions to his credit, most recently with a cameo in the Memphis-filmed “Jookin’.” He was in country music artist Kane Brown’s video “Worldwide Beautiful,” and has appeared in television series including “Ordinary Joe” and “Selma: The Untold Story Miniseries” and movies including “The Last Job” and “Rear.”

In addition to his work in the world of film, Cohen works in his own community of North Memphis, where his father Colley Cooper is Pastor of Hope City Church. Cohen is active in Oasis of Hope and The Brotherhood, a teen group aimed at encouraging young boys to achieve in their personal lives and bring about positive change in their communities. At its June 7 meeting, the City Council passed a resolution sponsored by me honoring young Cohen and wishing him well in his future endeavors.

### **Keeping you informed**

The tax rate approved by the Council at the June 7 meeting is \$2.70 per \$100 of a property's assessed value. That is down slightly from last year's \$2.71 rate, a result of that year's property reappraisal. The ordinance fixing the rate was one of a group of legislative actions paving the way for final approval of the City's \$751 million Budget at the Council's next meeting on June 21. Watch for the Recap of that meeting for a deeper look at the Budget and some of the ways in which it will benefit Memphians.

I can't resist one spoiler here, though: At the June 7 meeting the Council approved a resolution brought by Councilwoman Cheyenne Johnson to increase the amount of funding for the Council Community Grant program by \$650,000. This will give each Council member an additional \$50,000, meaning each has \$250,000 to allocate as they see fit among non-profits qualifying for the Grant. The Members currently are reviewing the list of qualified organizations and deciding how to allocate their shares of the fund.

Speaking of grants, recently the City received a grant of \$104,000 from the Tennessee Department of Health's Project Diabetes program. The initiative aims to encourage and assist community partners such as local governments to combat overweight and obesity as risk factors for the development of Type 2 diabetes.

The state grant's current funding cycle focuses on the first two goals set forth in the National Academy of Medicine's report, "Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation." The first of those goals is to "make physical activity an integral and routine part of life." The recently received funding, for Year 1 of the three-year program, will be used by the City to implement a Health & Wellness Manager/Park Program Specialist, and for health promotion efforts throughout the Memphis area. At the June 7 meeting, the Council voted to appropriate the funds for those initiatives.

The Council also voted to approve a Resolution affirming the intent to establish a Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency (C-PACER) program within the City. Created by an Act of the Tennessee General Assembly last year, the C-PACER program allows local governments to offer certain economic development incentives to projects that promote environmental sustainability and disaster resiliency. The program aims to incentivize projects that will increase economic development, lower disaster and emergency response and aid costs, promote energy efficiency and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; and promote efficient use of water resources, including the Memphis Sand Aquifer.

Finally, back to the world of Hollywood, that world came to Memphis over the weekend with the promotional screening at Graceland of the new Warner Brothers film, "Elvis." Director Baz Luhrmann and some of the movie's stars, as well as representatives of press organizations from around the world, will be at Graceland for the screenings.

While, unfortunately, the movie was filmed in Australia, it is of course set right here in Memphis, where The King grew up and lived. We are confident this major motion picture once again will put a spotlight on Memphis as the cradle of Rock n' Roll. In fact, Memphis Tourism has created a website, <https://www.memphistravel.com/ElvisMovie>, to showcase some of the Memphis landmarks featured in the movie. The site's slogan "See the Film, Live the Legacy" beckons Elvis fans to explore the City that he called home.

***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**