



MARTAVIUS D. JONES
CHAIRMAN
MEMPHIS CITY COUNCIL

Honoring heroes, hearing the public

Greetings, Memphis. At our meeting on Tuesday, February 21, your Memphis City Council continued the work of advancing the proposed Police Reform ordinances put forth at our last meeting on February 7. We also continued our work of mediating agreements between organizations that will help shape the future of the City for years to come.

First, however, I would like to send the Council's sincerest condolences to the family of Memphis Police Officer Geoffrey Redd. Officer Redd was shot while responding to a call at the Poplar-White Station Library on February 2; he died from his wound on Saturday, February 18. No words can adequately repay the debt of gratitude we owe to this officer (and his family) who ultimately sacrificed his life to protect others. Accordingly, the Council observed a Moment of Silence in his honor at the Feb. 21 meeting.

Also at that meeting, the Council honored by Resolution Memphis Police Department Officer Tina Shaw. A Memphis native and 15-year veteran of the Force, on February 2 Officer Shaw responded to a call for a suicidal person on the I-40 Hernando De Soto Bridge over the Mississippi River. Upon arrival, she found a distraught 17-year-old who was literally on the verge of jumping off the bridge. Using her seven years of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training and her innate compassion and empathy, Officer Shaw talked the teen back onto the bridge. Her act, which was captured in body camera footage and posted online, went viral and has drawn national and even international attention.

I cannot help but note that I believe the valor displayed by officers Redd and Shaw is characteristic of many of our men and women in blue, and that they represent the standard of conduct for those who wear the badge.

The Council also passed a Resolution honoring Raymond and Desiree Robinson, owners of Memphis' own Cozy Corner restaurant. From its humble origins in 1977 at the corner of Manassas and North Parkway, Cozy Corner has gone on to attain national acclaim for the flavor and variety of its barbecue items. The restaurant has been featured in *Southern Living* magazine and named one of the "Five Best Dinner Spots in Memphis" by Re/Max Realty. In 2020, Desiree became the first African American woman to be inducted into the Barbecue Hall of Fame. The Council was proud to honor the Robinsons' achievements, as well as their ethic of hard work, loyalty to family and commitment to excellence.



Memphis Police Officer Tina Shaw listens as Councilwoman Cheyenne Johnson and Council Chairman Martavius Jones read the Resolution honoring her.

Council at Work

Hearing the Voice of the Public – The six Public Safety-related Ordinances brought to Council at our Feb. 7 meeting passed their second of three required public readings at the February 21 meeting. In a departure from standard practice, the Council received further input from the public on the Second Reading. With these comments and those from the First Reading in mind, the Council is scheduled to hear the Third and Final Reading of the Ordinances at our March 7 meeting. We thank those members of the public who have called, e-mailed, and even come out in person to let us know their feelings on these items; and want them to know that we do take these into serious and thoughtful consideration as we deliberate on our decisions.

Update on failing MLGW meters, billing backlog – In our Memphis Light, Gas & Water Committee, the Council heard an update on a billing problem a small number of the utility's customers are experiencing. MLGW Vice President of Customer Experience and Energy Services Timothy Davis said in December, at the same time they were dealing with freezing, bursting pipes and their first-ever rolling blackouts, MLGW officials began noticing a higher-than-usual number of bill delays. After research by a specially formed team, the utility discovered measuring components on some customers' meters are failing. This means, while the customer is still using gas and/or water, their meters are no longer measuring consumption.

Ultimately, the team found the problem affected about 19,000 meters – some 2 percent of the approximately 1 million meters on the system. Among these customers, the bills have been delayed between one and three months. Working extra hours, the MLGW team assigned to deal with this issue has mailed about 7,400 bills – or 39 percent of the total backlog. MLGW leaders also immediately changed the practice of holding bills until an accurate reading is obtained, opting instead to send an estimated bill (marked as such) based on past usage, to keep customers' owed balance from racking up. To customers who need assistance paying their past-due bills, the utility offers payment plans. For more information, visit <https://www.mlgw.com/>.

Memphis in May almost sealed – Last – but certainly not least in terms of its impact on the City – the Council continued to encourage the signing of an agreement between Memphis in May International Festival and Memphis River Parks Partnership for the use of Tom Lee Park. Until construction work forced a change of venue last year, MIM has used the park for its Beale Street Music Festival and the World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest – two of the largest tourist-related economic events in the city each year. Officials with MIM and MRPP have been negotiating the lease of the currently under-renovation park for months. At the February 21 meeting, leaders of each organization told the Council they are very close to an agreement. The Council already has agreed to fund \$500,000 toward restoration of any damages caused to the park by the two events. The Council sincerely hopes the two parties will be able to present a signed agreement before our March 7 meeting, and Memphis in May can proceed to a successful event in a beautifully transformed park this year.

The Bottom Line

I am honored by the opportunity to work with my fellow Council Members to enhance this city we call home. 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 and view our [Council Meetings](#) here.



For Memphis,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martavius D. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Martavius D. Jones,
Chairman, Memphis City Council