EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. COVID-19 (4)

CITY OF MERIDIAN

WHEREAS, on March 18, pursuant to Section §33-15-17(d), Mississippi Code of 1972, I issued a Proclamation declaring that a State of Emergency exists in the City of Meridian as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the extraordinary threat posed by COVID-19 has caused critical shortages of health care equipment, personal protective equipment, and possible shortages in hospital beds throughout the state including in The City of Meridian which has the primary medical centers for East Mississippi and West Alabama;

WHEREAS, without additional measures to slow the spread of COVID-19, health care facilities in The City of Meridian are at significant risk of being overwhelmed;

WHEREAS, based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and after extensive consultation with the State Health Officer, additional measures are necessary to protect the health and safety of the public, to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, and to disrupt the spread of the virus;

WHEREAS, §21-19-2 gives municipalities the authority to make regulations to prevent the spreading of contagious or infectious diseases and to make quarantine laws for that purpose; and

WHEREAS, the uninterrupted delivery of essential services and functions is vital to infrastructure viability, critical to maintain continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security, and is crucial to community resilience, continuity of essential functions and to promote the security and safety of Meridian residents even as the nation limits human interaction and engages in social distancing; and

WHEREAS, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) that has spread across this nation is a worldwide pandemic and as of April 15, 2020, the Mississippi Department of Health has reported 3,360 positive confirmed cases and 122 deaths in Mississippi, 12 of which was in Lauderdale County; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Percy Bland, Mayor of the City of Meridian, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and law of the State of Mississippi, do hereby order and direct as follows in the City of Meridian, to be implemented no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 2020, and will be enforced until 8 a.m. on April 27, 2020, unless extended:

- All employees of essential businesses and all employees of nonessential businesses that are open to maintain minimal operations are strongly recommended to wear a mask
when working in or moving about the same workspace as other employees or working in or moving about the same room as the public. For the purposes of this executive order, “mask” shall be defined as any face covering; including but not limited to fabric masks, homemade linen or cloth masks, household dust masks, handkerchief, scarf, surgical mask or N95 mask.

- Nothing in this order shall prevent a business from implementing a more restrictive policy in terms of masks or other measures to contain and prevent the transmission of COVID-19.
- All social distancing requirements and limits on gatherings of more than 10 people from previous mayoral Executive Orders as well as Governor Reeves’ Executive Orders 1463 and 1466 shall remain in effect.
- Nonessential retail stores. (sporting goods, clothing stores, florists, furniture stores, auto dealers, book stores and jewelry stores) shall limit access to their stores to either curbside service, pickup sales or by appointment only. Gyms and dance studios may only sell products from their business by curbside service or pickup sales.
- Day Care Services. Day care services are allowed to be open and must stay within state, federal, and CDC guidelines.
- Evictions Suspended. Evictions within The City of Meridian are suspended until April 30, and all state, county and local law enforcement officers in The City of Meridian are directed to cease enforcement of orders of eviction for residential premises. No provision contained within this Order shall be construed as relieving any individual of the obligation to pay rent, to make mortgage payments, or to comply with any other obligation that an individual may have under tenancy or mortgage.
- Walking Trails/Parks. Bonita Lakes will be open for walking trails and fishing only. Sammie Davidson Complex, Northeast Park and other City parks will open for walking only.
- Religious Services. Places of worship are encouraged to limit attendees to ten (10) persons or less. All persons present are encouraged to wear masks. Curbside services where attendees remain in their vehicles are encouraged along with live-stream, online broadcast or other social media platforms for viewing services.

This Executive Order shall be in effect in and for The City of Meridian, Mississippi, from April 17, 2020 at 5 p.m. until April 27, 2020, at 8:00 a.m. or until this Executive Order is rescinded by further order or by operation of law. This provision may be extended beyond April 17, 2020 by further order.

PERCY BLAND, III, MAYOR CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

ATTEST:

BRANDYE LATIMER, CITY CLERK