Meeting called to order by Council President Houston.

Present: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.

Absent: None.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Pastor Gary Houston, of New Hope Blackwater Baptist Church and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman Henson and unanimously passed by the Council to confirm the agenda with the addition of an Executive Session to discuss the subjects of economic development and potential litigation.

Mayor Bland said he would like to call up Mr. Victor Hubbard, Principal of Meridian High School, to introduce these fine young students that are excelling in their academic studies. Mr. Hubbard had five students he said he would like them to introduce themselves and give their ACT score. The students and their scores: Audra Robinson 30, Silas Clymer 35, Muhammad Javed 31, Alan Sanders 31, and Caleb Harper-Johnson 34. These young students are now members of the 30+ ACT Club created at the high school for students that score 30 or above on their Act Test. Congratulations to them!

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to approve the minutes dated November 15, 2016.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

**ORDER #16242 ORDER DECLARING 1993 E-ONE 95' CUSTOM TRUCK PLATFORM APPARATUS SURPLUS AND NO LONGER NEEDED BY THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND AUTHORIZING SAID VEHICLE TO BE SOLD FOR THE CITY BY BRINDLEE MOUNTAIN FIRE APPARATUS**

And, Councilman Markham seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Resolution:
RESO. #6087  RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE ISSUANCE OF A GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND, SERIES 2017 (THE “CITY BOND”), OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI, IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT TO EXCEED TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS ($20,000,000) (I) TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FUNDS FOR CONSTRUCTION, EQUIPPING, AND FURNISHING THE MISSISSIPPI ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT CENTER, INCLUDING A CONFERENCE CENTER, A PERFORMANCE ARTS THEATER, AND AMPHITHEATER AND AN ARTISTS’ VILLAGE, AS AUTHORIZED BY HOUSE BILL 1770 OF THE 2005 REGULAR SESSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE, SECTIONS 21-33-301 ET. SEQ., AS AMENDED, SECTIONS 31-25-1, ET SEQ., AS AMENDED, AND SECTION 39-25-1, ET SEQ., MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, AS AMENDED, (II) FUND CAPITALIZED INTEREST IF ANY ON THE BANK BONDS; AND (III) TO PAY FOR COSTS OF ISSUANCE FOR THE CITY BOND AND THE BANK BONDS, AS HEREIN DEFINED.

And, Councilman Hammon seconded the motion, whereupon said Resolution was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Resolution:

RESO. #6088  RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SALE OF A GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND, SERIES 2017, OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI (THE “CITY”), TO BE DATED THE DATE OF DELIVERY THEREOF, IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT TO EXCEED TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS ($20,000,000) (THE “CITY BOND”); APPROVING THE FORM OF AND EXECUTION OF A CITY BOND PURCHASE AGREEMENT FOR THE SALE OF THE CITY BOND, AND A MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT BANK BOND PURCHASE AGREEMENT FOR THE SALE OF THE NOT TO EXCEED $20,000,000 MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT BANK SPECIAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES 2017 (MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT CENTER GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND PROJECT) (THE “BANK BONDS”); AND APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE FORM OF, EXECUTION OF AND DISTRIBUTION OF A PRELIMINARY OFFICIAL STATEMENT AND OFFICIAL STATEMENT PERTAINING TO THE BANK BONDS; APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE FORM OF AND THE EXECUTION OF A MISSISSIPPI ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT CENTER PROJECT COOPERATION AGREEMENT; AND APPROVING
AND AUTHORIZING THE FORM OF THE INDENTURE OF TRUST.

And, Councilman Markham seconded the motion, whereupon said Resolution was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16243 ORDER GRANTING APPROVAL FOR PLACEMENT OF MALL SIGNAGE INSIDE THE RIGHT-OF-WAY OF BONITA LAKES DRIVE AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF AN INDEMNIFICATION AND RELEASE AGREEMENT FOR SAME

And, Councilman Markham seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Houston.
Nay: Henson, Hammon.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16244 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AMENDMENT TO PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND THOMPSON ENGINEERING (DOWNTOWN DRAINAGE AND UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS CBDG #R-110-0258-02-GZ)

And, Councilwoman Henson seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Resolution:

RESO. #6089 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE OF BLIGHTED REAL PROPERTY PURSUANT TO MISS. CODE ANN. § 21-17-1; APPROVING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING; AND, AUTHORIZING MAYOR TO EXECUTE MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING AND QUITCLAIM DEED

And, Councilwoman Henson seconded the motion, whereupon said Resolution was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Agenda item R-6 “Order authorizing agreement with LPK Architects to develop a Downtown Master Plan” was opened for discussion by Councilman Thomas and seconded by Councilwoman Henson. The matter was duly discussed and a motion was made to Table the item by Councilman Thomas seconded by Councilwoman Henson. The vote was; Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston. Nay: Hammon.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16245 ORDER AUTHORIZING DESIGNATION OF SUBGRANTEE GRANT ADMINISTRATOR (SGA) FOR THE STATE HOMELAND SECURITY PROGRAM

And, Councilwoman Henson seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Markham offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16246 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF SUBRECIPIENT GRANT AWARD LETTER/GRANT RECIPIENT AGREEMENT FROM STATE HOMELAND SECURITY (GRANT NO. 16HS258)

And, Councilwoman Henson seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Hammon offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16247 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF HOMELAND SECURITY COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND THE MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

And, Councilman Markham seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16248 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 BETWEEN APAC-MS, INC. AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (STREET RESURFACING – PHASE I PROJECT)

And, Councilwoman Henson seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Resolution:

RESO. #6090 RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI GRANTING EXEMPTION FROM AD VALOREM TAXES FOR A TEN-YEAR PERIOD TO PEAVEY ELECTRONICS CORPORATION FOR ADDITIONS, EXPANSIONS OR REPLACEMENTS AS AUTHORIZED BY SECTION 27-31-105 ET SEQ., OF THE MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, AS AMENDED

And, Councilman Hammon seconded the motion, whereupon said Resolution was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Hammon.
Nay: Henson, Houston.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER. #16249 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CERTAINTED CEILINGS CORPORATION AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (WASTE TREATMENT BILLING FORMAT)
And, Councilman Hammon seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER # 16250 IN THE MATTER OF: ACCEPTING THE BID OF KIRK CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC., COLLINS, MS. FOR FLOCCULATOR REPAIR-PHASE II AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF CONTRACT FOR SAID WORK

And, Councilman Markham seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16251 IN THE MATTER OF” ACCEPTING THE BID OF STRIBLING EQUIPMENT LLC, MERIDIAN, MS FOR STEEL WHEEL ROLLER IN THE AMOUNT OF $140,153.26

And, Councilwoman Henson seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Hammon offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Resolution:

RESO, #6091 RESOLUTION APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE AMENDED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017, AND DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK IN REFERENCE THERETO

And, Councilwoman Henson seconded the motion, whereupon said Resolution was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Motion was made by Councilman Markham duly seconded by Councilwoman Henson and passed by a majority vote of the Council to approve the claims docket dated December 01, 2016 in the amount of $2,560,638.82. Voting yea: Markham, Henson, Houston. Voting nay: Thomas, Hammon.

President Houston advised of the notification of legal advertisement for the following:
   a) Request for Proposals (RFP) Art Museum roof

President Houston called on Mayor Bland for his report: Mayor Bland presented Laura Carmichael, Events Coordinator. Laura reminded everyone about the Christmas Parade tonight at 5:30. Councilman Thomas said Central United Methodist Church was serving hot chocolate for those wanting to warm up. Laura said the church is always so gracious to do this. Mayor Bland presented City of Meridian retirees a retirement certificate in recognition of their recent retirement from the City. George Ricky Davidson retires with 32 years, Frederick Nicholson 28 years and Charles Dean with 33 years of employment service to the City. Ricky said he came to work every day, gave a good day’s work, he stayed and stayed and before he knew it, it was 32 years later. Frederick said he has enjoyed working for the City. Charles said he has done a whole lot of different jobs in the City and learned a lot, mostly how to be a leader and a good listener. And he has loved every single minute. Hugh Smith, Public Works Director, said these people are the unsung heroes of the City, they are the ones that make sure our roads and water & sewer systems are maintained and operational. This is the knowledge and experience drain that happens with workers retiring, and the daunting task of getting people in with the abilities needed to fill these vacant positions. These retiring employees will be missed. Those retirees not present were David Latting 24 years, Tommy Davidson 40 years and Herman Harris 42 years. Mayor Bland said training must be done to get key people in place to continue the operations needed to maintain the functions of the City when key people leave. And Mayor Bland asked the Council to be patient while the processes of training people for these rolls are being implemented.

President Houston called for citizens comments. The citizens listed below spoke.
   a) Allen Shute
   b) Edgar Faulkner

President Houston called for Council comments:

Councilman Hammon said while talking with the young men in the jail system one of the most common threads in their stories is their wish that someone in their young lives would have given them some discipline. A whole generation has been allowed to do exactly what they wanted to do with no discipline. With no discipline and no direction our kids get into things such as gangs and criminal behavior, and they get access to weapons. We don’t enforce our ordinances and curfews and young people get into things that escalate for the worse, which harms themselves and others. We have a problem with discipline in this community.

Councilwoman Henson said she wanted to thank Bunky Partridge’s department for putting the old burned out house on the tear down list. And she also needed someone from the City to ride with her through Druid Hills to get something done about the potholes in the streets, a lot of people live there and they need some consideration with this situation.
Councilman Markham said he wanted to thank everybody that came to the meeting today and he wanted to address the safety of our citizens. Safety is a key issue; there is a need to be effective for our citizen’s safety. We smile tell everyone to have a great holiday, but we don’t address the needs of our citizens for safety. Councilman Markham also wanted to commend the retirees for all the hard work they have done, for those that are here today and for those that are not here. Councilman Markham announced the celebration of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity’s Founder’s Day Celebration, Sunday, December 11, 2016. This was the 1st African American Men’s Fraternity, founded on December 04, 1906. This fraternity’s membership is graced by many distinguished alumni, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, Cornell West, Duke Ellington and others.

Councilman Thomas said we all have a lot of concerns, and we can never know what will happen in the future. But 75 years ago today, Pearl Harbor was bombed and we lost about 2500 people. You never know what is going to happen, so you have to plan to do the best you can with what you have. There are a lot of people doing good things in this community. The religious community is doing a lot. The Evangel Temple is putting on a program called ‘Choices’. This program was put on for all the students in this county. It talks about choices we make, good and bad choices. I talked to some of the students that saw this production and they told me it was one of the most profound things they had ever seen. We all make choices and we hope they will turn out good, but we just never know what consequences tomorrow will bring. So during this holiday season think about giving to help one of these charitable organizations that help the children. We’ve talked about needs and crime. Let’s think about giving, a lot of children in this community need help, it doesn’t take much to provide that help to some of these youngsters. Again, you never know what’s going to happen tomorrow, but we can do a lot to help some of these youngsters today!

President Houston said it’s Christmas Time in the City! I want to encourage you to shop local, instead of going on the internet go into the local stores. I’ve seen some of the new signs for the mall and they look great. We want to keep those tax dollars local and keep our businesses here. I want to thank Dr. Thomas for bringing up the Evangel Temple production and the fact that it was for the students in the entire county. And I also want to thank Dr. Carter for thinking outside the box and giving that exposure to our students. Support Meridian Public Schools, volunteer, show up when you can, send supplies, send uniforms, we don’t necessarily need to wait until Christmas time to do good. Let’s do good all the time and we will see our city move in a different direction. I want to thank all the Department Heads, the Mayor, our Council Members, all the people sitting in these positions. It is not easy making the hard decisions every day. As a community let’s try to pull together, be one voice, and do what we can to make our city great. If everybody would be a little positive, I think we will see a lot of good changes, even more than we are having now.

An executive session was requested regarding economic development and potential litigation. Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman Henson and unanimously passed by the Council to close the meeting to determine whether to declare an executive session. Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to declare an executive session in order to discuss economic development and potential litigation. The Council then went into executive session. Councilman Thomas and Councilman Hammon left during the executive session. Motion was made by Councilman Markham duly seconded by Councilwoman Henson and unanimously passed by the Council to go out of executive session.

President Houston called the regular meeting back to order.
There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, the meeting was adjourned. Sine die.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Clark, Clerk of Council