REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2016 AT 5:00 P.M.

Meeting called to order by Council President Houston.

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

Absent: None.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Pastor Odell Hopkins, of West Mt. Moriah 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 R-9 ‘Order authorizing partial land lease assignment to the Mississippi Children’s Museum-Meridian’ be considered as the first item on the routine agenda.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to approve the minutes dated November 01, 2016.

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

ORDER #16230 ORDER ACCEPTING DONATION FROM MISSISSIPPI INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND OF A SECRETARIAL CHAIR FOR THE MERIDIAN WATER BILLING DIVISION

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 #16231 ORDER DESIGNATING BATH FITTER AS THE SOLE SOURCE PROVIDER/INSTALLER OF FOUR (4) SHOWER STALLS FOR THE MERIDIAN FIRE DEPARTMENT

And, Councilman Markham seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:
Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16232 ORDER DECLARING WEAPON SURPLUS AND TO BE SOLD TO RETIRED SERGEANT DAVID LATTING AS ALLOWED BY STATE LAW 45-9-131

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 #16233 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF PARTIAL ASSIGNMENT OF LEASEHOLD INTEREST, ASSUMPTION OF LEASE AGREEMENT OBLIGATIONS, AND GROUND LESSOR’S CONSENT TO ASSIGNMENT (MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN’S MUSEUM-MERIDIAN, LLC)

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 #16234 ORDER TO AMEND ORDER #15912 GRANTING EXEMPTION FROM MUNICIPAL AD VALOREM TAXES (EXCEPT SCHOOL DISTRICT TAXES) FOR SEVEN YEARS TO JTM HOSPITALITY, LLC ON IMPROVEMENTS TO PROPERTY LOCATED AT 901 1ST AVENUE EAST, MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI (EXEMPTION BEGINS WITH THE 2016 TAX YEAR)
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.

Councilwoman Henson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16235 ORDER AUTHORIZING AMENDMENT OF ORDER #16197: THE APPOINTMENT OF ROBERT J. BRESNAHAN AS MUNICIPAL JUDGE PRO TEM FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN FOR THE TERM OF THE MAYOR OR UNTIL HIS SUCCESSOR IS SELECTED

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.

Councilwoman Henson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16236 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF FY 2018 GRANT APPLICATION TO THE OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY, DIVISION OF PUBLIC SAFETY PLANNING (POLICE TRAFFIC SERVICES)

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.

Councilwoman Henson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16237 ORDER ACCEPTING GRANT AWARD FROM GAMETIME FOR PLAYGROUND REHABILITATION
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.

Councilwoman Henson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16238 ORDER AUTHORIZING AN EXPENDITURE OF $575,000 FOR A 2016 PIERCE ARROW XY (STOCK) APPARATUS FIRE TRUCK

And, Councilman Thomas 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 #16239 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 BETWEEN H. E. MOSLEY, INC. AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (FAIRFIELD INN ACCESS DRIVE)

And, Councilman Thomas 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.

Councilwoman Henson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16240 ORDER ACCEPTING VEHICLE LEASE PURCHASE FINANCING PROPOSAL FROM CITIZENS NATIONAL BANK OF MERIDIAN WITH A QUOTED RATE OF 1.42%

And, Councilman Markham seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:
Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Ordinance:

ORDI. #4478  ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN TO: ALLOW PAWN SHOPS AND FEED STORES IN THE B-3 GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT BY SPECIAL USE PERMIT

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

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

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

ORDER # 16241  ORDER AUTHORIZING PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF BIDS FOR MUNICIPAL DEPOSITORIES

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.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Henson duly seconded by Councilman Markham and passed by a majority vote of the Council to approve the claims docket dated November 10, 2016 in the amount of $3,805,363.82. 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) Disposal of biosolids

President Houston called on Mayor Bland for his report: Mayor Bland said he would like to call on Laura Carmichael, Events Coordinator and Odell Hopkins, Contract Compliance Officer to report on the holiday activities and the fall trash pickup season. Mayor Bland said he wants to thank the Council again for the approval of raises for police officers; they have
received 70 new applications for employment from new and experienced officers. He believes those applications can be looked at and personnel selected by the beginning of the year. Mayor Bland hopes this will make a huge impact on public safety. Laura Carmichael announced this weekend will kick off the Merry Meridian Market Event at the MSU Riley Center from 9:00 to 4:00 p.m. with more than 50 vendors signed up to participate. Additionally the Trees of Christmas at Merrehope will be opening on November 20, with a reception. The City of Meridian’s Christmas Tree Lighting will be Tuesday, November 29th on the lawn of city hall. December 2\textsuperscript{nd} we have the Holiday Express Train at Union Station at 4:00 p.m. Our Christmas Parade will be downtown on December 3\textsuperscript{rd} at 5:00 p.m. All of these events are listed on our website and face book pages. Plus, there are more holiday events I may not have mentioned on the website. Everyone, please come out and enjoy these festivities. Odell Hopkins declared that fall is here and the leaves are falling. Beginning Monday morning the Waste Pro vacuum trucks will be on the streets picking up the piles of leaves that have fallen thus far. I just want to remind everyone to separate the limbs from the leaves at the curb, this means leaves in one pile and limbs in another; we don’t want to hamper the vacuum truck’s operation by clogging the vacuum with limbs. Waste Pro is putting forth an aggressive schedule trying to pick up as soon as the leaves hit the curbside. We know this will be an awesome task to stay ahead of the job but we are going to do our best. If there are problems in your area, don’t hesitate to call me and we will take care of it. With the citizens help we can get it done. The regular garbage services will not be affected by the leaf pick up program. Thank you.

President Houston called for citizens comments. The citizens listed below spoke.

a) Allen Shute
b) Carolyn Smith
c) Duffee Williams
d) Peg Wahrendorff

President Houston called for Council comments:

Councilman Hammon said we need to fix the real problems in Meridian, and number one is crime. I asked the city attorney to pull up statutes from other states to see how they deal with convenience store crimes. I would like an ordinance to come up for vote to allow the convenience store operators to do one of two things; have a bulletproof cage from eight at night to eight in the morning or have a security guard from eight at night to eight in the morning. I think this would promote safety and facilitate a reduction in crime. When we don’t take action and let things grow the problems becomes almost impossible. The thing about the children’s museum is that no one has explained to me yet how they can have operating costs of 700 thousand a year and they will pull in 350 thousand a year, where is the rest of the needed money coming from. We are not thinking things thru and we are making hasty decisions. I’m glad to hear about the good things happening in Meridian, but we need to fix the bad things.

Councilman Markham thanked everyone who came to the meeting. Councilman Markham also said, everyone has an opinion whether you are in support of the children’s museum or not. If you are for or against the current site, I encourage you to look at the last few meetings to
get an idea of all the other sites that were considered. As I have stated before, it is good to be able to communicate our opinion. Mr. Duffee Williams and I have sat on the Salvation Army Board together, and we have talked about the differing opinions as to whether this site is the best choice of location or not. As we know, that is the site chosen by the children’s museum and with a majority vote of the Council they were approved to take the lease on that piece of property. Kappa Alpha Psi is having their 7th Annual Scholarship Ball fundraising dinner on December 03, 2016, at the Northeast Conference Center; they raise money to give a college scholarship to a young man each year. I also had the opportunity to attend the EMBDC Annual Meeting. I want to give credit where credit is due, and it is due Bill Hannah, EMBDC Director and Tom Williams, Airport Director. Bill Hannah has infused the EMBDC with his expertise, hard work, drive and enthusiasm to get Meridian on the radar of companies looking for new locations to do business. Tom Williams has invested in the preparation of a site for more than fifteen years to house a great opportunity for Meridian. We as a community would not have been looked at for consideration by Raytheon, if not for this prepared and ready location nurtured by Tom Williams. So I congratulate these men for getting it done. The possibilities for opportunities should this company locate here, could be tremendous. The Meridian High School Academic Team placed an impressive second place finish in the University of Mississippi’s Brain Brawl Tournament last weekend, congratulations team! The entire school district had a can drive to feed the hungry, which went very well and should be commended as a successful collaborative effort. The Meridian High Wildcats Football Team had a victory last Friday against George County, in George County, and won 33 to 26. The team will play this Friday against Pearl, at Ray Stadium; they beat us 34 to 13 in the last game. And in this game on Friday, the push is to have 10,000 people attending; it will be a blackout, so wear your black. Please continue to support our public school district both athletically and academically.

Councilman Thomas said he wanted let everyone know that Dr. Carter has an email newsletter concerning the school district. And if you are not a part of her email list I encourage you to join to get the updates on the accomplishments of the school system. There were two young ladies who both made the All-State Team in softball, T. Carter and Z. Horn, I think that’s the first time that has ever happened in Meridian. The School Choir was invited up to Starkville to perform. Meridian High School has started a 30 Plus Club, this is for students that make a score of 30 or above on their ACT Test. We had one student make 36 on three parts and 35 on the other, with a composite score of 36, which is the maximum you can accomplish. For those people that say there is no opportunity available in this town, particularly in the public schools, they are wrong. The opportunity is there, we have students winning scholarships from Texas A&M, Notre Dame, Princeton, Stanford, and other colleges, not just for sports, but for all of the sciences. I keep harping on it, but the opportunity is there. The youngsters just need to take advantage of it, they have to come to school, study, and do the work. But it’s there if you want it. It’s all there, academics, drama, music, arts, sports and it’s paid for with your tax dollars. There is no extra tuition; it’s paid for, ready for the taking. Don’t give up on our schools, yes we have crime problems just like everywhere else, but we have a great many good things going for us.

President Houston said I want to thank you all for coming out to the City Council Meeting tonight. I want to thank you for your patience and I want to encourage you to shop local, shop local, shop local! We need your tax dollars to stay in Meridian, Mississippi. Tell your friends to come out and shop in Meridian. We all agree we need to support Meridian Public
School District, and one way to do that is by volunteering. The students need to see us there; they need to see leaders, to see more people there, other than the folks they normally see. So come in and make an impact, if only for one hour a week. I promise you it makes a difference, and we’ve seen it already with the first year of implementation of the 1st grade reading law. The community stepped up and volunteered and it made a tremendous difference. We need that same momentum, we need people to volunteer, and it’s not too late to get involved. Lastly, I want to encourage you to stay connected to local government. Some of the things we discussed here tonight are things we have been discussing for months and months. I don’t know why some of the people seem not to know what’s going on, it appears they are not saying connected to local government. I encourage you to stay connected to local government.

President Houston ended the meeting by saying, ‘God bless you, thank you for coming out tonight, meeting adjourned.’

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