REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, APRIL 04, 2017 AT 9:00 A.M.

Meeting called to order by Council President Houston.

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

Absent: None.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Dr. Dorothy Stamps, of Living Life Transformed Ministries and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Henson duly seconded by Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to confirm the agenda with amendments: Add R-4a Order authorizing execution of contract with MS J&M, Inc. for emergency bridges repair, R-4b Order authorizing execution of agreement with Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc. for engineering services, R-5f adding budget amendment of $75,000.00 for municipal election, and R-5g approving funds for matching grant payment of $416,000 for the IHOP Drainage Collapse Repair.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to approve the minutes dated March 21, 2017.

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

ORDER #16310 ORDER DECLARING VEHICLES SURPLUS AND NO LONGER NEEDED BY THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND AUTHORIZING SAID VEHICLES TO BE SOLD

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 #16311 ORDER DETERMINING THAT CERTAIN POLICE VEHICLES ARE USED FOR CRIME DETECTION AND UNDERCOVER WORK AND SHOULD NOT BE MARKED SO AS TO BE IDENTIFIABLE AS CITY VEHICLES
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 Resolution:

RESO. #6111 RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI (THE “CITY”), APPROVING THE EMPLOYMENT OF PROFESSIONALS IN CONNECTION WITH THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES 2017, OF THE CITY IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT TO EXCEED TWO MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS ($2,500,000) TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FUNDS FOR (I) PURCHASING FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT AND APPARATUS, AND PROVIDING HOUSING FOR SAME, AND PURCHASING LAND THEREOF; (II) CONSTRUCTING, IMPROVING OR PAVING STREETS, SIDEWALKS, DRIVEWAYS, PARKWAYS, WALKWAYS, BRIDGES AND CULVERTS, PUBLIC PARKING FACILITIES, AND PURCHASING LAND THEREFOR; (III) PURCHASING MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING MOTOR VEHICLES WEIGHING NOT LESS THAN TWELVE THOUSAND (12,000) POUNDS, WHICH HAVE AN EXPECTED USEFUL LIFE IN EXCESS OF TEN (10) YEARS WHICH EXPECTED USEFUL LIFE SHALL EXCEED THE LIFE OF THE BONDS AS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTIONS 21-33-301 ET SEQ., MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, AS AMENDED; AND (IV) PAYING THE COST OF ISSUANCE FOR THE BONDS.

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

RESO. #6112 RESOLUTION DECLARING THE INTENTION OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI (THE “CITY”), TO ISSUE GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES 2017 OF SAID CITY, IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT TO EXCEED TWO MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (2,500,000) TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FUNDS FOR (I) PURCHASING FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT AND APPARATUS, AND PROVIDING HOUSING FOR SAME, AND PURCHASING LAND THEREOF; (II) CONSTRUCTING, IMPROVING OR PAVING STREETS, SIDEWALKS, DRIVeways, PARKWAYS, BRIDGES AND CULVERTS, PUBLIC PARKING FACILITIES, AND PURCHASING LAND THEREFOR; (III) PURCHASING MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING MOTOR VEHICLES WEIGHING NOT LESS THAN TWELVE THOUSAND (12,000) POUNDS, WHICH HAVE AN EXPECTED USEFUL LIFE IN EXCESS OF TEN (10) YEARS WHICH EXPECTED USEFUL LIFE SHALL EXCEED THE LIFE OF THE BONDS AS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTIONS 21-33-301 ET SEQ., MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, AS AMENDED; AND (IV) PAYING THE COST OF ISSUANCE FOR THE BONDS; AND DIRECTING PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF SUCH INTENTION

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

ORDER #16312 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF FIREWORKS DISPLAY AGREEMENT BETWEEN PYROTECNICO, NEW CASTLE, PA AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (JULY 4, 2017 FIREWORKS DISPLAY)

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 Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:
ORDER #16313 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF EMERGENCY DRAINAGE STRUCTURE REPAIR CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND MALOUF CONSTRUCTION, LLC (EMERGENCY DRAINAGE STRUCTURE REPAIR ON NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, NOVEMBER 7, 2015 COLLAPSE)

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 Order:

ORDER #16314 ORDER AUTHORIZING EMERGENCY BRIDGE REPAIR CONTRACT FOR BRIDGES OVER GALLAGHER CREEK ON 35TH AVENUE AND ON 40TH STREET IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF § 31-7-13(k)

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 #16315 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT (ENGINEERING SERVICES) BETWEEN BURK-KLEINPETER, INC. AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (PRELIMINARY PLANNING, CONSULTATIONS, BIDDING, ETC.)

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.
Nay: Hammon.

At this time the Council discussed requests for amendments to the FY 2017 budget as follows:
a) Motion was made by Councilman Thomas and duly seconded by Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to approve and combine a & b for one total amount of $122,000 to (144-40600 Public Works Professional Services) from (144-40400 Public Works Personnel Services).

b) Motion was made by Councilman Thomas and duly seconded by Councilman Markham and passed by a majority vote of the Council to approve the $175,000 to (144-40460 Public Works Personnel Services) from (144-40900 Transfer & Other Charges) and voting yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston; voting nay: Hammon.

c) Motion was made by Councilman Markham and duly seconded by Councilman Thomas and unanimously passed by the Council to approve the $91,585 to (144-40600 Public Works Professional Services) from (141-40600 Public Works Professional Services).

d) Motion was made by Councilman Thomas and duly seconded by Councilman Hammon and unanimously passed by the Council to approve the $75,000 to (111-40940 Finance & Records Special Projects) from (102-40940 Legislative Special Projects).

e) Motion was made by Councilman Thomas and duly seconded by Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to approve funds for the matching grant payment of $416,000 for the IHOP Drainage Collapse Repair from (102-40940 Legislative Special Projects).

Councilman Markham offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Resolution which include the approved changes in Item R-5:

RESO. #6113 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, Councilman Thomas 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 Councilman Hammon and passed by a majority vote of the Council to approve the claims docket dated March 30, 2017 in the amount to $2,115,951.86. Voting yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston. Voting nay: Hammon.

President Houston advised of the notification of legal advertisement for the following:

a) Downtown Paving Phase II
President Houston called on Mayor Bland for his report:

Mayor Bland said we have a lot of projects going on in the city and the employees are all working hard to get things done. Mr. McAlister said that LPK Architects is working to set up focus groups, by setting up meetings to speak with the downtown businesses, Council Members and Administration, the Arts and Entertainment Group, Mississippi State, etc., getting the input needed to create the downtown master plan. Mayor Bland said the paving is moving along in the most sensible way possible. Some people are a little inconvenienced, but with growth and progress there will be some inconveniences for a while. The Mayor thanked the Council for approving the sidewalk program; it will really improve the lives of the people in this area. Mayor Bland said we also want to thank you for the Velma Young Project, which should be completed late spring or early summer. A lot has been said about public safety, and thanks to the Council we have increased the pay for police officers and we are getting great response to those job openings, we received up to 70 applicants for the last 15 police jobs posted. We want to thank you for this opportunity that gives Police Chief Dubose, the opportunity to do some of the things he wants to do to make improvements. The replacement lighting on Highway 39 should be complete within the next two weeks. This LED lighting improvement program is going on in different areas throughout the City. Mayor Bland called Ms. Sabrina Wilson to the podium to present a proclamation to the Foster Grandparents Organization and RSVP. Mayor Bland said he wants to thank the retired senior volunteers of RSVP and the Foster Grandparents Organization that are here today. They do a lot of work in the community, they do great work with our children in our public school systems - We just want to honor them for all the work they do in this city and for our community. Fire Chief Anthony Clayton said he has some good news for the citizens of Meridian. He said the Mississippi State Rating Bureau has rated the City of Meridian with a Class -4 Rating. The rating bureau comes around every four to five years. And with the Fire Station #2 built by the time of the next inspection, we are in a good position to get a Class – 3 Rating.

President Houston called for citizens comments.

a) Allen Shute – spoke
b) Donna Breaizel - spoke

President Houston called for Council comments:

Councilman Hammon said regardless of what we think is working well in the city, most of our citizens are still concerned, and they want a safe clean environment. Councilman Hammon read a passage, ‘Being a positive person is a wonderful thing, but sometimes that positive nature causes us to see only what we choose to see, while ignoring the wrong going on around us.’ You won’t be one of the popular people by stating the truth, but you will be trusted and respected by those who see it in your life. I see the other side, the harm we are doing to our
kids by the lack of discipline. I know the good things we have done, the roads, the infrastructure, and more, but we as a city can do better. Meridian could be so much better than it is.

Councilwoman Henson said good things are happening in Meridian. We are having a remodel ribbon cutting at Comfort Inn - Bonita Lakes at 10:00 on April 11th and if you have that time free come by for the unveiling. One thing I have been looking forward to for a long time is the Walmart Neighborhood Market; they will be having their ribbon cutting the next day, April 12th at 7:15 a.m. So, these are good things that you can go and be a part of, and those of you in the green shirts, (the Foster Grandparents in the audience) you really look beautiful in those green shirts.

Councilman Markham said, I want to thank everybody for being at the Council meeting and watching the meetings. It’s always good to know that the Council asks the questions, so you will know how your money is being spent. I want to commend the people responsible for organizing the Threefoot Arts Festival held on the City Hall lawn, Saturday April 1st, Laura Carmichael-Community Development, Kelvin McGruder-Parks & Recreation, Hugh Smith-Public Works, Benny Dubose-Police Department, and all the staff of these departments did a tremendous job. The event was very diverse and well represented by the Arts and Entertainment, Children’s Museum, Children’s Auxiliary, and a lot of performers; it was a very positive downtown event. I also want to thank Hugh Smith for the up to date reports on the paving program, and to ask that he also inform the media to keep the citizens abreast.

Councilman Thomas said when you as a citizen see potholes, lights out, streets that need to be paved, etc.; you need to notify the city so we can have a record of it. It helps if the public will do those things. City Council meetings are City Council meetings, we on the council sets policies and budgets, that is our role, and once we set those policies we try to assist the administration in trying to carry out those policies. We want to have discussion, that’s why there are five people up here. If you only wanted one voice you would only have one person up here. There will always be dissent, the way to do things and the way not to do things. That’s why we have a government like we have, to speak up, have discussions, and make comments. Sometimes we like it, sometimes we don’t, but that’s all a part of it. We have open meetings and discussions so the public can hear what is going on. We have problems, of course we do, but the only way we can fix problems is to find out what the problems are, discuss them and try to fix them. That’s the whole purpose of the meetings, to have people know what we are doing with the taxes you are paying. So the citizens have a responsibility to let us know whether we are spending the taxes in the proper places or not. Several good things are going on, the Museum’s arts program- go by there, they would love to see you come in, adults and children. MCC provided space for a blood drive this past week and the turnout was tremendous, they had over 150 people show up and 115 units of blood donated. Some say people aren’t involved, but when you have that many people show up to give their blood to support this community, that’s extremely important. We also have a group of businesses in this community that supported the Army Field Band at the Temple Theatre. If you missed that, you missed a treat; it was open to
the public. If you wanted to hear patriotic music, feel chill bumps, and feel good, and if you
missed this concert you missed a treat, it was there, open to the public, and free! So there are
some good things that go on and some not so good things. The only way to deal with it is to
identify the problem and try to work through it. If we just sat up here and said yes, yes, yes or
no, no, no to everything, we don’t need to be here. This type of government is set up for people
to give input, to find the best solutions to the problems.

President Houston said we thank everyone for coming out. Get in contact with you City
Councilperson. Part of our job is to be a contact between you and the administration to get
things done. If you see lights out let us know, we have to pay for those lights 1-800-ITS-DARK,
call that number or call your Councilperson. I want to thank everyone for coming out to Bethel
Baptist Church for the Community Meeting, and I want to thank the administration for
addressing those issues the citizens had in that area, they wanted me to make sure I let you
know that they appreciate you taking care of the issues brought forward. We will be having
another Community Meeting coming up pretty soon; I will keep you posted as we get more
information. I want to ask Aleasha Jordan, Parks & Recreation Activities Director, to come
forward and tell us about the City of Meridian’s opportunity to receive a $20,000 grant for
playgrounds, and the help we need from everyone to make sure Meridian is the chosen city. This
would help to improve all the parks in our city. And I want to ask every person sitting here,
what are we doing as individuals to make a positive impact on our city? People make up a city,
people commit crimes, and people do things that fall short, what are we doing as individuals?
Because I believe if we change what goes on in our house, we can change our neighborhood, and if
we change our neighborhood, we change our community. And when we change our community we
change the city, state and the nation. But it begins at home! The Police Chief can’t police
everything; neither can the hundred or so officers, somethings you just can’t police. But we can
police what we do as individuals. I show up, I work with kids, I do things, and I have a mentoring
program. Those are things I do as an individual that I don’t get paid for, but as an individual I’m
connected, I’m in the community. So I challenge individuals to do what we can to help the Chief
do his job. Help the Mayor; help us Council folks do what we need to do to impact our city in a
positive way. Ms. Jordan, please tell us about the $20,000 grant. Ms. Jordan said, we are
working on several grants but this is the ‘Meet Me at the Park’ grant, we are asking people to
go out to the parks and take a picture on your cell phone and send it to the web site
[NRPA.org/BeInspired] to nominate Meridian. President Houston said, thank you Ms. Jordan.
Again, we thank you all for coming out this morning, get in touch with us and your
administration, hold us accountable. God bless you.

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