REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, AUGUST 01, 2017 AT 9:00 A.M.

Meeting called to order by Council President Thomas.

Present: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.

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 Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilman T. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to confirm the agenda with amendments to: Add Order authorizing acceptance of grant from Miss Department of Agriculture for Earth’s Bounty and Farmers Market; Remove R-2 Order authorizing re-appoint of Brad Sykes to the Electrical Examining Board; Remove R-4 Order authorizing billet for a Community Advocate (Liaison) position.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilman T. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to approve the minutes dated July 18, 2017.

Councilman T. Johnson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16392 IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE RE-APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF MYLES FRANK TO THE MERIDIAN AIRPORT AUTHORITY

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

Yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: None.

Councilman T. Johnson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16393 ORDER AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE –
EARTH’S BOUNTY FARMERS MARKET SPECIALTY
CROP GRANT

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

Yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: None.

Councilwoman F. Johnson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16394 IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE RE-APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF TIM HOGAN TO THE ELECTRICAL EXAMINING BOARD

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

Yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: None.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilman T. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the claims docket dated July 27, 2017 in the amount to $3,066,155.71.

President Thomas called on Mayor Bland for his report:

Mayor Bland said he wanted to discuss some of our student athletes in baseball and football today. I want to recognize our 10 year old all-stars, they won the state baseball tournament, and of course they have a big partnership with Parks and Recreation and the Meridian Youth Baseball Association. Our 11-12 year olds stayed number one in the state and they also competed locally and in the regional and lost by one or two runs. And our 13-15 year olds won the state and they went on to win the regional tournament. The team is here today and they are going up to play in the World Series to represent the City of Meridian in Tennessee. So, I would like to recognize these young players today, these are awesome teams and coaches and we are very proud of all of them! Laura Carmichael, Events Coordinator said we have been trying for over two years to promote good health and wellness in the community and we received the Blue Cross Blue Shield “2017 Healthy Hometown Award” at the Mississippi Municipal League Conference last week. This is a $25,000.00 award to be used for our parks and
Bonita Lakes to encourage good health and wellness. We will be doing a kickoff at a later date to accept the check. Mayor Bland said we want to thank Laura Carmichael and Terrence Davis for their efforts to make this award happen. Members of the Meridian High School Football Team came before the Council to thank the citizens for the support of the team and to ask for support through a sponsorship from the city, because there will be a lot of traveling for away games this season, and any help will be appreciated. They also invited everyone to come out Saturday, August 05, 2017 to the fund raising events at Meridian High School. 5K run, meet the Wildcats, and other activities. For those who would like to pre-register for the 5K run the fee is $25.00 and the web address is meridianfb5k.com. The Mayor also said the grand opening for the completion of the 5th Street Paving Project was held on Monday, July 31, 2017, Transportation Commissioner, Dick Hall was present and everyone was pleased by the looks of the project. Mayor Bland announced a “Back to School Bash” on Saturday, August 12, 2017, to be held at Highland Park from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. There will be food, games, and fun, the splash pad will be open. Dr. Thomas asked when the Council will receive the proposed budget and David Whitaker, CFO replied, at the end of the week, this Friday.

President Thomas called for citizens comments.

a) Allen Shute – spoke on city issues

President Thomas called for Council comments:

Councilwoman Houston said good morning everybody. I just wanted to thank you for sending us to Biloxi last week for the Mississippi Municipal League Annual Conference. As always it was very informative, we learned about the wonderful bottled water we pay $1.29 for in the stores, that most of it comes from municipalities, so they are encouraging us to drink and use our local water. Looking at community and economic development, the 5th Street Paving Project we are glad it is completed and closed. Mayor Bland, I hope we are looking at possibly having 5th Street festivals and events, things of that nature that will attract people into our communities as a source of revenue; we need our citizens to become partners and owners and take their rightful place in our cities. A lot of people look to us, but it’s truly the citizens who can help us and this entire community to be all that it can be. The Adopt-A-Lot Program is still being talked about and I know we are working diligently on possibly having something for our citizens who would like to own properties that are next to them that are vacant or overgrown. And of course Laura “Healthy Hometown” we finally got it done, $25,000.00 is coming to the city to help our healthy initiatives. Councilwoman Johnson may talk about it more, but on August 17th, we are looking to have a joint community gathering of Wards 3 & 4, I know Ward 3 hasn’t had this for a little while. But we are looking at doing a joint venture, girl power. We are planning on having it at the Boys & Girls Club on August 17, 2017. So, Mayor and your team we would love to have you all participate in that at 6:00 p.m. We will try to confirm that location hopefully this week. But we want to keep you all informed and connected to us as we strive to serve you better.
Councilwoman Johnson said I am looking forward to the community meeting with Kim, to talk about the work orders and different issues that are going on. I look forward to seeing you all there. And thank you everybody for coming and I hope you come back next time.

Councilman Johnson said good morning everyone. I want to congratulate the baseball teams on their success. Tomorrow, Fannie and I will have surgery and we ask for your prayers for a speedy recovery. August 19th in Ward 2 we will have a volunteer community clean-up of the Edgewood Cemetery. Everyone is invited and all help is welcome, please spread the word so we can try to clean up that cemetery. It hasn’t been cleaned in a couple of years and it is in dire need of a cleaning. We have a lot of World War I Soldiers buried there, and me being a military man myself, I take it personally and feel strongly that the cemetery needs to be cleaned. So, I ask for your help and support to come out August 19th at 10:00 a.m. at the intersection of 10th Avenue and 24th Street. Bring gloves, trash bags, bottled water, etc. anything you can think of to make this a successful endeavor. After the work is done we want to come up with some plans to prevent this from becoming an issue in the future. Ward 2 Velma Young Center is approaching completion and I think it will be a good thing for the kids. It’s a beautiful place, Mr. McGruder gave me a tour of the building yesterday and I was very surprised and impressed, it is very unique. I encourage you to go and take a look at it to see the direction that Ward 2 is going. The morale of the community is lifting; people are excited about the vision of a new direction. I encourage everyone to get involved in the activities that Ward 2 has going on. Thank you all for coming this morning.

President Thomas said it’s good to see J. Crain bought those two cemeteries. You see the volunteerism, people helping with these ball teams, people coming out to help with the cemeteries, and you see a lot of people in this community taking the concerns of the city to heart. I think it’s inspiring for everyone to see people going out doing this, cleaning up things that have been ignored for years and years. Some by fraud and some by just neglect, but I’m glad people are doing these cleanings; it is great for the community. I was just amazed to see the number of people that came out to the cemetery this past week; they worked in the rain, the heat, and everything else. There are a lot of cemeteries around this town; a lot of them may be family cemeteries. Opp, Alabama established a program where they can help clean some of their cemeteries and I’m hoping the County and the City can get together to look at what they did over there and see if there is a way that we can help. But, at the present time these are privately owned cemeteries and the city cannot do this. I was also glad to see out in front of Walmart and Lowes that they are finally putting some asphalt in some holes out there, I know the tire companies will hate it, but the rest of us that drive out there are thankful. I thank the citizens for contacting those businesses out there and voicing their concerns about the road. We will start on the budget next Tuesday to get an overview and we will set dates and times to meet with the department heads. Hopefully we can have the budget approved by the Council by the end of August.

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