REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2017 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 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 Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to confirm the agenda with removal of R-7’ Order authorizing a donation of 50,000 into the Community Foundation Fund for the upgrade of Planet Playground’ and the possibility of an Executive Session for economic development, potential litigation with possible action to follow.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to approve the minutes dated January 03, 2017.

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

ORDER #16270 ORDER DECLARING WEAPON SURPLUS AND TO BE SOLD TO RETIRED INVESTIGATOR JAMES GREG CRAIN 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.

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

Order #16271 IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE RE-APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF CATHERINE JONES TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION

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 #16272 IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE RE-APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF GEORGE CULPEPPER TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION

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 #16273 IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE RE-APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF RICK ENTREKIN TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION

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 #16274 IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE RE-APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF MARY WILSON TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION

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 Resolution:
RESO. #6092  RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING FORMATION OF A CITY OF MERIDIAN EMPLOYEE COUNCIL

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.

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

ORDER #16275  ORDER ACCEPTING OFFICIAL BY-LAWS OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN EMPLOYEE COUNCIL

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 #16276  ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING FACILITY AND THE 186TH AIR REFUELING WING (ARW)

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

ORDER #16277  IN THE MATTER OF: PURCHASE OF BULLDOZER FROM PUCKETT MACHINERY COMPANY, MERIDIAN MS, IN THE AMOUNT OF $129,827.00

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 #16278 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF SECOND AMENDED MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND LAUDERDALE COUNTY REGARDING THE COUNTY’S E-911 SYSTEM

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 January 12, 2017 in the amount of $2,628,373.06. Voting yea: Thomas, Markham, Henson, Houston. Voting nay: Hammon.

President Houston advised of the notification of legal advertisement for the following:
 a) Street Resurfacing-Phase II

President Houston called on Mayor Bland for his report: Mayor Bland was not at the council meeting, CAO Richie McAlister, said the Mayor was in Washington, DC checking on additional funding for the streets and paving in the city. Mr. McAlister said that LPK is meeting with the stakeholders and getting input to incorporate the things we need in the Master Plan. We know we have traffic concerns, infrastructure concerns and money concerns, but we feel we have a good team in place to address these problems. We had a great celebration this weekend for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and we want to thank everyone that came out to honor the things Dr. King stood for. The revenue report from the 2% special tax for the Arts and Entertainment Center has been even better than expected and this shows the strength of our local economy. Archie McDonald of Citizens National Bank said that people are shopping and investing in Meridian. The Parks & Recreation Director Kelvin McGruder is doing a great job with the parks, new scoreboards at Phil Hardin and 95% of the equipment installed at James Chaney Park. The Fire Department had an open house Saturday, showing the citizens what they do and the equipment used to keep the citizens and the city safe, in the event of fires and emergencies. It was a good and informative event. This also let the young people know that this may be a career choice for them to think about. We thank the Fire Chief, Anthony Clayton, Chief Ricky Leister, Fire Marshall Jason Collier and the entire Department for making it such a success. I appreciate everything the Council approved and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak.

Councilman Thomas commented on concerns Mr. McAlister mentioned on the infrastructure. Councilman
Thomas said the infrastructure is one of the major focuses of the Mississippi Municipal League. The State Legislature is considering infrastructure funding. And the League is making a big push for the state legislature to direct more of the money back to the cities and counties and not just for state highways. So any citizen contacting your state legislature please let them know of your support for this measure to direct more funding back to the cities and counties.

President Houston called for citizens comments.

a) Allen Shute - spoke
b) Wade Demers – did not appear
c) Rod Brown - cancelled

President Houston called for Council comments:

Councilman Hammon said, ‘it seems that it’s left to me to answer some of the things that come up during the meeting, but I have no problem with that. While working at Peavey we had equipment worth millions of dollars, and some people can’t begin to understand what is needed to maintain a lot of equipment like this. I have full confidence that Public Works Director Hugh Smith, who has a chemical engineering degree, knows what he needs to do the job. And we are doing the job. This is the first time in twenty to twenty-five years that we have had a road program, the first time in years we have spent money on our infrastructure, so as far as I’m concerned the money is going where it’s supposed to go. And I think the taxpayers know that. They also know when somebody doesn’t have enough evidence or facts to deal with the facts. I’ll leave it at that.’

Councilman Markham said he wants to thank everybody that came out to the MLK Day of Service at the Velma Young Park yesterday. We had over twenty Mississippi Power volunteers and several members from the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. I want to give special thanks to Mr. Eddie Kelly of Mississippi Power and Ms. Annie McMillan they worked with me to help make the event possible. And I thank Kelvin McGruder for making the center accessible; it was a very good time for all. So thank you all very much.

President Houston said we are so glad to have everybody come out tonight. I want to give Kudos to the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority tonight. They are one of the greatest sororities throughout all the land. We have a special group of young people here tonight that I just want to recognize, we have six of our Delta Gems, and these debutantes are impacting the community in strong and mighty ways. These are our future leaders of Meridian, and we are delighted to have them here. Councilwoman Houston asked, Ms. Wright or Ms. Hickman (members of the sorority) do you have anything to say? And the comment was “Thank you for having us.”

Councilwoman Houston said at this time we will determine whether we will go into executive session concerning economic development, potential litigation with possible action to follow.

An executive session was requested regarding economic development, potential litigation with possible action to follow. Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to close the meeting to determine whether to declare an executive session. (Councilman
Hammon left before the session started.) 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, potential litigation with possible action to follow. The Council then went into executive session. (Councilman Markham left the executive session prior to discussion on one of the issues put forth, because of a potential conflict of interest. He returned to the meeting after the potential conflict issue was concluded.) Motion was made by Councilman Thomas 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.

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

b) Repair of Virginia Drive Drainage Collapse

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

ORDER #16279  ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF TAKEOVER AGREEMENT BETWEEN U.S. SPECIALTY INSURANCE COMPANY AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

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.
Nay: None.
Absent: Hammon.

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