REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, JULY 06, 2017 AT 9:00 A.M.

Meeting called to order by Council President Houston.

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

Absent: None.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Pastor Gary Houston and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilman Lindemann duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to confirm the agenda with amendment to Add executive session concerning personnel matters and a proclamation.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Lindemann and unanimously passed by the Council to approve the minutes dated June 20, 2017.

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


And, Councilman Lindemann 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 Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Ordinance:

ORDI. #4486 ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A PRIVATE FAMILY CEMETERY UPON PETITION OF THE ISLAMIC CENTER OF MISSISSIPPI AND ALABAMA, INC.
And, Councilman Lindemann seconded the motion, whereupon said Ordinance was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

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

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

RESO. #6124   RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SETTLEMENT WITH KIMBERLY HANCOCK D/B/A KREATIVE SWEETS AND KATERING IN LEIU OF CONTINUED LITIGATION IN THE COUNTY COURT OF LAUDERDALE COUNTY

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

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

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

ORDER #16360   ORDER DECLARING VEHICLES SURPLUS AND NO LONGER NEEDED BY THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND AUTHORIZING SAID VEHICLES TO BE SOLD

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

RESO. #6125   RESOLUTION TERMINATING THE CITY OF MERIDIAN’S DEFUNCT MERIDIAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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

Yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: None.
Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16361 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY/MISSISSIPPI OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND RESCINDING ORDER #16282

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

ORDER #16362 IN THE MATTER OF: ACCEPTING THE BID OF VENTURE TECHNOLOGIES, RIDGELAND, MS FOR POLICE CAR COMPUTER MOUNTS

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

ORDER #16363 ORDER RATIFYING THE TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND WILLIAM C. HAMMACK WITH GLOVER, YOUNG, HAMMACK, WALTON & SIMMONS, PLLC TO SERVE AS CITY ATTORNEY

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 Houston offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:
ORDER #16364  ORDER APPOINTING GEORGE M THOMAS AS PRESIDENT OF THE MERIDIAN CITY COUNCIL EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2017

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

ORDER #16365  ORDER APPOINTING FANNIE M. JOHNSON AS VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE MERIDIAN CITY COUNCIL EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2017

And, Councilman Lindemann 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 #16366  ORDER APPOINTING JO ANN CLARK AS CLERK OF COUNCIL EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2017

And, Councilman Thomas 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 F. Johnson duly seconded by Councilman T. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the claims docket dated June 29, 2017 in the amount to $4,555,439.02.

An executive session was requested regarding personnel matters. Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Lindemann 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 Councilwoman F. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to declare an executive session in order to discuss personnel matters. The Council then
went into executive session. Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to go out of executive session. No action was taken. President Houston called the regular meeting back to order.

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

ORDER #16367  IN THE MATTER OF: CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF RICHIE MCALISTER AS CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

And, Councilman Lindemann 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 #16368  IN THE MATTER OF: CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF DAVID C. WHITAKER AS CITY CLERK/DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & RECORDS FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

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 #16369  IN THE MATTER OF: CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF HUGH SMITH AS PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

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.

Councilman T. Johnson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:
ORDER #16370    IN THE MATTER OF: CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT BY
THE MAYOR OF H. C. “BUNKY” PARTRIDGE AS COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

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 #16371    IN THE MATTER OF: CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT
BY THE MAYOR OF BENNY D. DUBOSE, SR. AS POLICE
CHIEF FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

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.

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

ORDER #16372    IN THE MATTER OF: CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT
BY THE MAYOR OF ANTHONY J. CLAYTON AS FIRE CHIEF
FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

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.

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

ORDER #16373    IN THE MATTER OF: CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT
BY THE MAYOR OF KELVIN MCGRUDER AS PARKS AND
RECREATION DIRECTOR FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

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.

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

ORDER #16374 IN THE MATTER OF: CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF BUCK ROBERTS AS PUBLIC SAFETY & TRAINING DIRECTOR FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

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.

President Houston called on Mayor Bland for his report:

Mayor Bland thanked the Council for the approval of all persons he put forward for the department heads positions for his newly re-elected administration. Mayor Bland presented a proclamation to the Parks and Recreation Department declaring that July 2017 is “Parks & Recreation Month”. Shimeka Robinson accepted the proclamation for the Parks & Recreation Department. The Mayor presented Tray Hairston from the office of Butler Snow LLP, to give an update on the Threefoot Building Project. Mr. Hairston said the Development Company is expecting project approval July 12th, they got their approval of the tourism rebate, and they received approval of the Historical Tax Credit. The developer hopes to have permits in place by October 01, 2017. Laura Carmichael, Events Coordinator let everyone know the Mayor’s Prayer Breakfast will be held in the City Hall Auditorium on Friday, July 7, 2017 at 7:00 a.m. and the public is invited.

President Houston called for citizens comments.

a) Allen Shute – spoke on city issues

President Houston called for Council comments:

Councilman Lindemann said I want to begin by thanking the people of Ward 5 for electing me as councilman to serve for the next four years. I appreciate this opportunity and I look forward to getting a lot done. We are always going to work with the Mayor to get things done to make positive things happen in Meridian, that’s what we are here for. It’s also important to remind each other that there is no White Meridian or Black Meridian; no Democrat Meridian or Republican Meridian, it’s just One Meridian and the onus is on all of us to make sure this place is better when we leave, than it was when we arrived. One of the priorities I have is to look at economic development. We want to bring in good paying jobs to people of Meridian who desperately need them. We have a lot of people struggling with poverty, so it’s on us as business leaders in the community to see what we can make happen within a short period of time, to get the ball rolling on economic development. It’s also very important that we deal with our reduced revenue stream which doesn’t appear to be growing. So we
have to show from a council’s perspective by demonstrating our commitment to increasing revenue long term; which means we’ve got to show that we are willing to invest in economic development. I just want to remind people to be mindful that when we use words like achieved, success and improvement, that we are not really using meaningful language unless we are actually committed to do something. So looking at the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., which said, “Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable… Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals”. So I was thinking that when you have dedicated individuals in place from the department heads to the city employees to us five council members and when you are walking on the right path and you are willing to keep walking eventually you are going to find progress. I think that is where we are today.

President Houston said good afternoon, it has been a very long meeting, but the first meeting typically is, thank you all for coming out. I am back in my Ward 4 seat, as we have turned the helm over to Dr. Thomas to hold rank as Council President. I do want to say I appreciate all the support I received as Council President. It has certainly been rewarding and I think we were able to get a lot accomplished. And I know we will continue that, with the leadership of Dr. Thomas and Vice-President Fannie Johnson. We just look forward to serving this community even more now that the Department Heads are in their respective places. None of us are perfect, from the Department Heads, the Mayor and the five Councilmembers, but it is important that we all work together. We all have expectations, but let’s not make them so far out where they are unachievable, but let’s look at who we are as Meridian. To see what we can do to continue to move forward together. We have to just strive for excellence and I believe if we do that we will be able to get a lot of things accomplished. I welcome aboard our new council members and I want to say four years seems like a lifetime, but I have learned a lot as you all will learn as well. It takes three votes to make anything happen, and like I’ve shared with you in private and publicly, if it does not make sense, and it cannot be explained, and it doesn’t affect positively for the citizens and for the City of Meridian, we do not have to support it. This is a great responsibility that we have, we have confirmed the Mayor’s picks for Department Heads, but we too expect things from you all. If we work together and show a level of respect, one for another, I believe we can make things happen. Because divided we will fall, and that’s on any level and in any area. Continue to get involved in our community, continue to volunteer, continue to mentor and everything else that needs to be done. Before I officially pass the gavel, we need one of the new council members to agree to be on the E-911 Commission. We will discuss this more in our work session, so if any one of you would like to serve in that capacity we look forward to you filling that gap. That being said, we thank you all for being there. Go out and give blood this Saturday at Mt. Olive Baptist Church from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30. Save a life if you can by giving blood. Thank you all for baring with me this year.

Councilwoman Johnson said, I would like to thank everyone who had a part in getting me in this seat, you will notice one big change in me; I will be doing more listening than talking. This is a new journey for me. I’ve done a lot things in my past from the military, civil service, security to psychiatric technician, I plan on putting all those skills and experiences together and being one of the best city council members you have ever had. I have learned a lot from Dr. Thomas and Kim already. I am really looking forward to this journey.

Councilman Johnson said, Good evening everyone. I look forward to doing a lot of work with each and every one of you. I have great guides here in Kim and Dr. Thomas on how to be a good Councilperson; I have been a little quite, just observing them both. So, I definitely look forward to working with the Mayor and Department Heads. I have worked with some of the department heads even before I decided to run for council. I’ve seen some of the work they do behind the scenes and I feel they do a great job. Mr. Shute, I thank you for
being an active citizen in this community and voicing your opinion. So, thank you all for what you do and I look forward to being your Ward 2 City Councilman.

Councilman Thomas said, I think we all hear the enthusiasm from the Council, the Mayor and the Department Heads. It’s a new beginning of good things ahead. I want to thank the persons that arranged the 4th of July program out at Bonita, it was a great program. The music appropriate, the band was good, the weather was good, grass was cut, and the crowd was good. It was a great day for those who wanted to participate. On the installation ceremony, I have been through nine of them now and I don’t quite know how to describe it. We left there feeling good; it was a good day for Meridian. You saw some talent that I didn’t know existed in Meridian. It was just a phenomenal day! I had the opportunity to meet the public after that. And again, Barbara Kidd and Laura Carmichael made these arrangements, and I know all the Department Heads had a part in it, because it wouldn’t have been as comfortable or as well organized without that. It shows what the city can do when we want to do it, when we work together things can happen. Like they said, you have five different people and you will probably hear five different opinions. But that’s good, we need those opinions up here, just like you said to the citizens, we need those opinions so speak up and let us know. Kim has done a fantastic job as Council President for the last year; I think she’s done an excellent job in getting more out of use than some think she should have got out of us. She did what she should have done. And thanks to all the city employees for what you do, we look forward to an exciting year. This council will demand a lot, which we always do and I think we demand a lot for the right reasons, we want progress, we want things to happen, and we want things to be better. We can be the safest city in the state, we can have the healthiest city in the state, and we can have the best school system in the state, if we want to. And like you said, it takes more than just ability; it takes a passion to do this. Again thanks to all of you we look forward to a great year!

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