REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 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 Beverly Henson, of Life 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 amendment to Add executive session concerning personnel matters.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to approve the minutes dated June 06, 2017.

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

ORDER #16352 ORDER DESIGNATING OVIVO USA, LLC AS THE SOLE SOURCE SUPPLIER FOR COLUMN SUPPORTED THICKENER FOR THE MERIDIAN PUBLIC WORKS WATER TREATMENT PLANT

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 #16353 ORDER RESCINDING ORDER NO. 16351 ENTITLED “ORDER AUTHORIZING CHANGE OF DATE FOR THE JULY 04, 2017 REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING TO JULY 05, 2017”
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.

At this time a Rezoning Appeal of 328 North Hills Street Resolution #6118 was scheduled to commence. But the City’s Attorney, Ronnie Walton announced that the Meridian Community Development Planning Division received a letter today from the attorney of the applicant requesting the appeal. The attorney’s letter stated the appealing applicant was withdrawing her request to appeal the 328 North Hills Street Rezoning.
Mr. Walton stated that no hearing will be conducted, because the appeal was withdrawn.

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

ORDER #16354 IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE RE-APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF ALEX WEDDINGTON TO THE MERIDIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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 #16355 ORDER AUTHORIZING CHANGE OF DATE FOR THE JULY 04, 2017 REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING TO JULY 06, 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, Markham, Henson, Houston, Hammon.
Nay: None.

Councilman Markham offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:
ORDER #16356
ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FOR THE BULLETPROOF VESTS PARTNERSHIP (BPV) GRANT

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 #16357
ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION FOR STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM TO THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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 #16358
IN THE MATTER OF: ACCEPTING THE BID OF H. E. MOSLEY, INC., MARION, MS, FOR SLOPE STABILIZATION – HIGHLAND PARK BRIDGE AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF CONTRACT FOR SAID WORK

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 Resolution:
RESO. #6122

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, 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.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Henson duly seconded by Councilman Markham and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the claims docket dated June15, 2017 in the amount to $5,164,581.66.

President Houston called on Mayor Bland for his report:

Mayor Bland requested a proclamation be added to the agenda.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Markham and unanimously passed by the Council to amend the agenda to approve the following proclamation to be issued by the Mayor:

June 20-25, 2017 – “Barbara Henson Days”

Mayor Bland read the proclamation for Councilwoman Barbara Henson and expressed his pleasure of working with her over the last four years. And he thanked Councilwoman Henson for all of her good works and dedicated service to the citizens of Meridian. He wished her a great retirement!

Councilman Thomas then moved to amend the agenda to add a resolution. The motion was seconded by Councilman Markham and passed by unanimous vote of the Council to approve the motion.

Councilman Thomas then read the resolution to name the swimming pool at Highland Park “Barbara Henson Aquatic Center”. Councilman Thomas said it is only fitting that a truly dedicated and exemplary citizen such as Barbara Henson should have that pool named for her, she has taught just about half of the kids in Meridian to swim.

Councilman Markham offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Resolution:
RESOLVED: That a Resolution naming the swimming pool located at Highland Park in honor of Barbara Henson, member of the City Council of the City of Meridian, Mississippi.

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.

Councilwoman Henson said she was overwhelmed by the outpouring of good will towards her and she just doesn’t know what to think. But she is most appreciative and thankful for all the love and support she has always received from everyone.

Mayor Bland and Fire Chief Clayton presented a retirement certificate to Philip Jerguson for over 27 years as a Master Mechanic at the fire department. Phillip said June 30th will be his retirement day. He said he has loved the work and the people, but he is like Ms. Henson, it is time to go. He then asked if he is going to get something named for him. Battalion Chief, Jimmy Stockton is also retiring, but he was not present at the meeting to receive his certificate.

President Houston called for citizens comments.

a) Allen Shute – spoke on city issues
b) Walter L. Demers – did not appear

President Houston called for Council comments:

Council Hammon said during the last four years this Council has towed the line on the budget and did a lot of cutting, there was 1.5 million dollars that was cut out of the budget. We’ve done that every year for four years, and that’s the only reason we’ve been able to do anything to our infrastructure. And I hope the new Council continues that. I’m glad for Barbara and I’m glad for myself. I’ve worked in the private sector for 40 years, when I bring up a problem some people say I’m negative, but when we had a problem in the private industries we recognized it was a problem. We have a lot of problems in the city, regardless of what people say. When I was in the private sector we would address the problem and fix it. Here, what we do is tickle the people’s ears saying we will fix this and we will fix that. But I guarantee that Dustin and I won’t just sit back and accept that.

Councilwoman Henson said I certainly want to express my surprise and delight at what’s been done here tonight! And Beverly, you knew all about it. I tell you my daughter Beverly runs the
daycare, which makes it possible for me to do things away from there. I wanted to tell you a few things, and Council thank you so much. I really appreciate it; I’m just overwhelmed you are all special to me. And Pam, are you still here? Pam was the clerk for years and years. Well I thank you more than you will ever know. I want to share a few things with you to tell you the kind of person I am. I live alone and this is my 83rd year, so I’ve been thinking a whole lot and I talk to the Lord out loud, because I live alone. And I do know, if some of ya’ll heard me you’d laugh. But anyway, I said Lord, I’ve been here a long, long time and what would you have me do? And I was talking about the Council and things at the daycare. And he said, just as plain as day, “I want you to not do anything”. That really wasn’t what I thought he’d say. But you know it’s a strange thing, the relationship we have with our Father God, he can tell us things and let us know things. And so I knew I had to hurry and tell them I wasn’t going to run anymore, because I heard what he said. And I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the things you’ve done and through the years the many, many people that have come into my life because of this Council, and it’s just a glorious thing. So I’ll never forget you, you are all very special to me. Anyway, you are all dear to me and you won’t be any less dear when I’m not here, because I’m very much in love with every one of you.

Councilman Markham said, Ms. Henson, I can tell you we love you, you’ve always been levelheaded and you calmed us down when things got heated. I will miss that, I appreciate everything you’ve done for the city, and everything you continue to do as a private citizen. Randy, I appreciate the kind words you’ve given me, and I appreciate how strong you’ve been over the last four years we’ve worked together. And how you articulate the goals of the city as we have worked back and forth to help find reasonable alternatives to what was presented to us. And Randy your clarification on some issues that you raised about things published and whether they are true of false, and does it satisfy the public figure exception or does it relate to malice. So you hit the nail on the head. Regardless of what was said, and who it was directed to. I want to express my sincere gratitude to the City of Meridian for allowing me to serve as Councilman for Ward 2 since 2013. I want to thank God, my family, my parents, my friends and my associates that have crossed paths with me. I’m grateful for the people out there and the network of opportunities I’ve been blessed with. When I look at where I am at 32 years of age and what I’ve been able to do, it’s overwhelming to realize that I could only do what I have done, with God’s help. I’m thankful to the Meridian City Council that I have served four years with, and I am convinced this is one of the best, most diverse, and most intensively thinking group ever established for the City of Meridian. My thanks to Ms. Jo Ann Clark and our former clerk Ms. Pam McInnis for your service to our city and for your assistance during my time on the Council. I want to thank my firm and my clients that graciously accommodated me and helped me through my schedule and time commitments. I want to give special thanks to the Meridian Public School District and the Transportation Department for accommodating my early morning obligations, from time to time having to find someone else drive my bus route. I want to thank those who gave me a chance, and for those that didn’t give me a chance, I want to thank you for motivating me. If I can leave one thing on the minds of those in attendance here today, those who will take their place as the newly elected Council, and those who will serve another term on the Council, it is this: Proverbs 27:17 said, “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another”. Always challenge your peers, for that is where the best ideas are created. Always strive to do better, even if it’s still unclear as to what better is. Always advocate for Meridian
to be its best and excel even if the path of how we get there may be different. God bless you, God bless this Council, and God bless this city.

Councilman Thomas said, I want to thank these three, we disagree a lot and I know all of their intent is for a better City of Meridian and I think they have shown that. We disagree sometimes about the way it should become a better city, that’s why there’s five of us up here. I think that’s a very positive thing. I know they have dedicated a lot of time and energy to this job. Ms. Henson and I are the older folks up here and you can always count on her to keep us straight. Having these people up here and what they dedicated themselves to do, the time and effort they have put in and the impact it has had on their personal lives, their family lives and their financial lives take a concerted effort to do what they have done, it is great. Kim has done this also, but she and I will be back. I’m always amazed when people say they will run for public office, when you do that you put yourself out there and you open yourself up and sometimes your family to situations that you wish sometimes you had never done it. But if you have a wife like mine it doesn’t bother her, she will tell you hush in a minute, she doesn’t take that. But children and grandchildren take comments based on what grandpa does and they shouldn’t have to. Sometimes the public can be cruel to people and it’s just not justified, I don’t know what they get out of it. Whether criticizing the Mayor and his family, Richie or myself, or any of us, it just shouldn’t happen. We live in a very interesting time, a time of respect, a time of ethical behavior, it’s just an odd time, and we have people that I don’t know where their morality went. I’m not talking about their religion I’m talking about their morality and ethical behavior. Hopefully that will improve and hopefully get better. We have three outstanding people coming onto the Council in the next couple of weeks; I look forward to working with them. They will have new ideas and new ways, and I think they will add a lot to this city if you will give them a chance, you have to give them a chance. The purpose of the city is to provide opportunities, you know that old saying where you have the opportunity of, “Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” it doesn’t say we are going to give you happiness it says we will give you the opportunities for the pursuit of happiness. That’s up to the citizens, if they want happiness they have to pursue it. We’ll do our best to provide the opportunity but we can’t provide you happiness, government can’t do that. But we can hopefully provide the opportunity for happiness in life. I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve this term, it’s been fun, we’ve got our dates and I think we had a good four years. So I appreciate these people taking the next four years of their life to be willing to do this. It means a lot to me personally as a citizen. So Kim, this Council will start with some new folks in the next couple of weeks. Please come to the 4™ of July Gala, and the swearing in of the elected officials on Wednesday the 5™. @ 9:00 a.m. in the Temple Ballroom.

President Houston said, again we thank everybody for coming out tonight. And to the three Councilmembers that are leaving, this is their last meeting, and we thank you for your service and all that you all have done on this City Council. It is quite a unique Council; we have been able to accomplish a lot together. You will be missed and we thank you for your service. Ms. Henson, love you to death, I believe kind of like in the Bible, where we can glean a little bit of your spirit and keep it alive on this City Council and with God’s help we are going to do just that. And for the new City Council members that are sitting out there, we look forward to working with you and we are excited about the new opportunities. Yes, we will still hold the administration
accountable; nothing has changed on that end. Despite the rumors and things that have been said, I will always be who I am, just a happy-go-lucky positive kind of person. I believe you can attract more flies with honey than with vinegar. So, we want to do what we can to make our city shine. Especially when the cameras are rolling and we are trying to make our city attractive, we are going to say what we need to say while those cameras are rolling. Then when they are not rolling we do hold people accountable. You can ask anybody sitting in that audience right now and they will tell you that Kim Houston will hold you accountable. So again, we thank you all for coming.

An executive session was requested regarding personnel matters. 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. Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman Henson 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 Markham 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. No action was taken.

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