REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2017 AT 5:00 P.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.

A motion was made by Councilman Lindemann duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the council to confirm the agenda with amendment to add R-8 (Adopt job study conducted by the Stennis Institute less the pay bands). Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

Motion was made by Councilman T. Johnson duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the minutes dated November 07, 2017. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

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

RESO. #6153 RESOLUTION APPOINTING DEPUTY COURT CLERKS OF THE MUNICIPAL COURT

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

ORDER #16459 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF APPLICATION TO THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR PERMIT TO INSTALL ALPR CAMERAS ON INTERSTATE SIGN GANTRY ON OR ACROSS HIGHWAY NO. I-20
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 #16460 ORDER DECLARING EQUIPMENT SURPLUS AND NO LONGER NEEDED BY THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF SAID SURPLUS EQUIPMENT

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 #16461 IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF ALLAN W. WILLIS TO THE EAST MISSISSIPPI CORRECTIONAL FACILITY AUTHORITY

And, Councilwoman Houston 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 #16462 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF HOMELAND SECURITY COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
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 #16463  ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION AND ACCEPTANCE OF FISCAL YEAR 2016 HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM AWARD FROM THE MISSISSIPPI OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY (MOHS) AND EXECUTION OF GRANT RECIPIENT AGREEMENT (GRANT #17HS258)

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

ORDER #16464  ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A GRANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND THE PHIL HARDIN FOUNDATION CONCERNING THE FY’ 17 GRANT FOR JEANNIE’S PLACE AT PLANET PLAYGROUND

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 #16465  ORDER AUTHORIZING CONTRIBUTION IN THE AMOUNT OF $7,000.00 TO THE DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING PARADE
AND CELEBRATION COMMITTEE (MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY PARADE)

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

Yea: T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: Thomas.

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

RESO. #6154 RESOLUTION ENDORSING LOCAL AND PRIVATE LEGISLATION FOR SALES TAX DIVERSION DURING THE 2018 SESSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

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

Yea: T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: Thomas.

Motion was made by Councilman T. Johnson duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the claims docket dated November 16, 2017 in the amount to $3,019,362.14. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

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

RESO. #6155 RESOLUTION ADOPTING PROVISIONS IN STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE STENNIS INSTITUTE REGARDING CITY EMPLOYMENT

And, Councilwoman F. Johnson 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.
President Thomas called on Mayor Bland for his report:

Mayor Bland was absent and CFO, Richie McAlister, Cultural Affairs Coordinator, Laura Carmichael, Public Works Director, Hugh Smith and other department heads spoke on upcoming Holiday Events and other city issues.

President Thomas called for citizens comments.

a) Allen Shute – did not appear
b) Loretta Bennett – did not appear

The hour of 5:15 p.m. having arrived, the public hearing as called for in Resolution No. 6149 regarding unclean property was opened with a motion by Councilman T. Johnson duly seconded by Councilwoman Houston and unanimously passed by the Council. Those who signed up to speak were as follows: 1) Daniel Vaughn (714 23rd Street, Meridian, MS) – He stated that he is going to be tearing down the house himself, beginning next week. 2) Myrna Moore (711 26th Street, Meridian, MS) - She stated she is representing her sister Brenda Horne, who owns the property, and they are going to work on the property to bring it back to code. Both parties were made aware that the property would be handled in the same manner as all other property on the unclean property list discussed in this hearing tonight. If the property owner wants to now take responsibility for their property, an agreement must be entered into with the city by the property owner to make any agreed upon improvements after a motion has been moved and adopted by the City Council following this hearing. Motion was made by Councilman T. Johnson duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to close the hearing with the following action:

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

RESO. #6156 RESOLUTION ADJUDICATING PARCELS OF LAND TO BE A MENACE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE COMMUNITY

And, Councilwoman F. Johnson 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.
President Thomas called for Council comments:

Councilman Lindemann said he is keeping it shot and sweet by thanking everyone for coming and have a Happy Thanksgiving.

Councilwoman Houston said we appreciate everybody for coming and we know this is a holiday season and I know there is a lot of talk about things that happen in Meridian, I really want to encourage the citizens and visitors to shop local. The local tax dollars make a huge impact in our city. A lot of time we wonder why businesses are closing, but if they are not getting the local support, they have no choice but to close or put their business online. We are encouraging everybody within the sound of my voice to shop local this holiday season. I’m sure Chief Dubose will have his officers out patrolling. He always has a game plan for the holiday season. So there’s no reason to be fearful, shop Meridian, you will be glad you did because it’s an investment in our city, our future and everything else. Have a Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving.

Councilwoman Johnson said, thank you all for coming, and with my southern drawl, “Shop Small Y’all”. Everybody make sure you try to support the small businesses. Try to shop at the local stores, these are your neighbors, the people you go to church with, and the people you work with. So try to shop local. Thank you all for coming out and have a Happy Thanksgiving.

Councilman Johnson said thank you all for coming out. Tonight at the Velma Young Center we will host an expungement awareness seminar. If you know of anyone that has a record, they are welcome to come by, to see what we can do to get their record expunged so they can get a job to have a better future. I also want to say Happy Holidays, and have a Happy Thanksgiving. We are going into the holiday season and there will be robberies and burglaries going on, I had my truck broken into last week. I just want everyone to be cautious and cognizant of your surroundings. Just be safe.

President Thomas said I want to second what was said about shopping our local stores if you can. Sales taxes are about half of the city’s general fund budget, so when you don’t shop city stores it really makes a difference. Last year we had about a $300,000.00 drop in sales tax revenue which impacts our budget, which is one of the reasons we have to do some of the things we are doing. A couple of other things that would help; if you have garbage pickup and you’ve been issued a recycling bin, use the bin, it helps us with the cost of garbage and trash pickup, garbage dumping fees and so forth and so on. Just the simple matter of putting newspapers and plastic products in the recycle bin helps a lot on our budget. Another thing, I’ve been driving around town and seeing people stuff yard waste down into our drainage system, which is another thing Public Works has to deal with. These are the kind of things that if people would not do, or do properly, it could help us with our overall budget. And that would allow us to do other things such as sidewalks and other improvements, if you would only take a little time to do that. Tina Gunther wrote a thing about thankfulness. With the season of thanks in mind, most of us in the room are blessed more than we ever thought we’d be, by the fact that we’re here. So, I’m going to read
some of them. “I am Thankful: For the teenager who is complaining about doing the dishes because that means she is at home, not on the streets. For the taxes that I pay because it means that I am employed. For the mess to clean after a party because it means that I have been surrounded by friends. For the clothes that fit a little too snug because it means I have enough to eat. For the taxes that I pay because it means that I am employed.” There are a lot of things I think we take for granted when it comes to Thanksgiving, the thanks part and the giving part. You are blessed and there are a lot of people in this community that needs help, not necessarily money, but time and effort. Again, I hope all of you have a great Thanksgiving.

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