REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 04, 2018 AT 9:00 A.M.

Meeting called to order by Council President, Tyrone Johnson.

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

Absent: None.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Pastor Gary Morris, Life Church and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to confirm the agenda with the following amendments: Add: R-9 (Order authorizing emergency bridge repairs for Valley Road and Hawkins Crossing bridges.) Add: R-10 (Order authorizing submittal of grant application for bridge repairs.) Add: (Executive session to discuss personnel performance.) Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to amend the agenda with the following amendments: Change: R-9 to R-6a and R-10 to R-6b. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

Motion made by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the minutes dated November 20, 2018. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

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

ORDER #16662 ORDER AUTHORIZING DONATION OF COST TO RENT THE FRANK COCHRAN CENTER BY MISSISSIPPI ACTION FOR PROGRESS, INC. /MERIDIAN HEADSTART CENTER

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, T. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: None.

Councilwoman Houston offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Resolution:
RESO. #6204  RESOLUTION RESCINDING AUTHORITY TO SELL AND EXECUTE DEEDS FOR SEVEN (7) LOTS FROM COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 6192 AND ADDING LOTS BACK ONTO INVENTORY FOR NEIGHBORHOOD LOT PROGRAM

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.

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

ORDER #16663  ORDER RESCINDING ORDER NO. 16526 ENTITLED “ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT FOR THE SALE, PURCHASE, AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD POLICE STATION AND THE VACANT BROOKSHIRE LOTS, CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

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.

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

ORDER #16664  ORDER AUTHORIZING TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT WITH LION INVESTMENTS, LLC (FOR THE SALE, PURCHASE, AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD POLICE STATION AND THE VACANT BROOKSHIRE LOTS, AND TO REFUND THE EARNEST MONEY DEPOSITED OF ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND 00/100 ($1,000.00)

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.

Councilwoman F. Johnson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the
ORDER #16665 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF JUSTICE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE GRANT APPLICATION TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

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.

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

ORDER #16666 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN TAYLOR POWER SYSTEMS AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (STANDBY GENERATOR FOR UNION STATION)

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 #16667 ORDER DECLARING EMERGENCY CONDITION AND AUTHORIZING EMERGENCY REPAIRS TO BRIDGES ON VALLEY ROAD AND HAWKINS CROSSING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF § 31-7-13(K)

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 #16668

RESOLUTION AND ORDER AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI, TO APPLY FOR AVAILABLE GRANTS FROM THE EMERGENCY ROAD & BRIDGE REPAIR FUND PROGRAM AND TO SEEK SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR REPAIRS TO THE VALLEY ROAD AND HAWKINS CROSSING BRIDGES RESULTING FROM THE CLOSURE DIRECTED BY THE OFFICE OF STATE AID ROAD CONSTRUCTION

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 Resolution:

RESO. #6205

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF LAUDERDALE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

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

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a majority vote of the Council to approve the claims docket dated November 29, 2018 in the amount of $1,029,635.65. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston. Voting nay: Lindemann.

President Johnson called for the Mayor’s Report:

Mayor Bland said in regards to what we have done in the past, we can do some of the similar things. We had some committees formed with the Threefoot Building, the same as with the Old Police Department and those lots. A lot of times people look at just the cost of what the appraisal is, even with the appraisal being 60,000.00, it winds up being much more than that. Even though the person that purchased the Threefoot Building for $10,000.00 there were a couple of other people who wanted to pay $200,000.00 or more.
But it was contingent on them completing that building, getting a lot of tax incentives and other loopholes. The way we worded the way that project was to be done would have put us at risk and a lot of things having to go perfectly for that buildout to happen. So keep in mind that the Threefoot Building will have over 30 million dollars of investments put into it. Keep in mind that purchase appraisal may have had a negative value, but the person that purchased that building, purchased it from the city for $10,000.00. There are a lot of people who can purchase and hold that Old Police Station building for $60,000.00, but that building will take a million dollars or more to invest into it and some other loopholes. So whoever gets title and control of that building we have got to think about what we want as a city to be over there, and who has the capacity to build out that building after the $60,000.00 purchase.

We have a lot of businesses opening around the City of Meridian and I want to catch you up on a lot of them. We are proud to see that some have turned around what could have been major eyesores in this community. One is on Hwy 39, it was the Old Winn Dixie, it is now a great new Planet Fitness. When Winn Dixie left that site we were very concerned about the type of tenant that would move there. We have seen that those old grocery store sites sit vacant for a long time, so we are very happy that Planet Fitness has placed a major workout facility in that location. Joe Hudson Collision Center will hopefully be open within the next month or so, as well as Pasquale’s Pizza in the Broadmoor shopping area. Mimmo’s Downtown Italian Restaurant is opening in downtown Meridian, and we have a Cardiovascular Institute that will open within the next 30 days as well. That’s some of the new business development happening.

This past weekend we are sorry we didn’t have the parade, it was raining in the morning, we called the National Weather Service and they thought it would be another rain storm, so the decision was made to cancel. In the upcoming council work sessions we would like to look at updating some of our codes and ordinances. We have a lot of dilapidated houses and structures that homeless people are living in and other issues. Some of our community development personnel and police officers have seen things going on that can’t be seen until you go inside these structures. This is something we need to address, so we can get more economic development not just in the downtown area, but in the entire city. With the Council work session on December 11th, we hope to discuss the employee pay bands and some of these other items so we can move forward.

Mayor Bland introduced Betty Lou Jones speaking for the Meridian Restoration Foundation and Hilda Roberts, Treasurer of the Meridian Restoration Foundation. Betty Lou said, 50 years ago five spunky ladies got a bee in their bonnets that Meridian needed a place in our community to have meetings and also we needed to be involved with preserving our historical buildings to save our history and provide ways for our community to show respect for the past. Today we are fifty years old. The Meridian Restoration Foundation was founded and was approved as a 501c3 Organization and has been in operation for the benefit of this community and our state for those fifty years. We have entertained our citizens, students, and people from all over the world. We have enjoyed students visiting our architectural treasures, both of our houses are on the National Registry of Historic Places and also designated as Mississippi Landmarks which is a significant accomplishment for our city. We appreciate all the support this community has given; The Federated Women’s Clubs and all the organizations who have been involved. For
fifty years the Meridian Police Department and the Meridian Fire Department have lovingly tended to these properties. When we have events, problems and when we are making plans we involve the Police and Fire Departments. When we call them, they run to offer help and we appreciate that, we could not have accomplished our mission without the TLC that the Meridian Police and Fire Departments have given us over the fifty years. As a token of our appreciation our Foundation has voted to honor the Police and Fire Department personnel. I with me today a pass for every Police and Fireman to come and bring their family, compliments of the foundation to tour Merrehope Trees of Christmas. We know they wished they could come in and view the things going on but they were working and not able to bring their families. We will be open until December 29th, Monday thru Saturdays 9:00 to 5:00 p.m. Also, for two Sunday afternoons which are the 9th and the 16th. For the Police and Fire Chiefs, the tickets for the police are blue and the tickets for the firemen are red. We ask that you give these to your police and firemen and ask them to come and visit at their leisure when they can.

President Johnson called for citizen comments:

a) Allen Shute – did not appear
b) Freeman Walker, Jr. - spoke
c) Tommy Williams - spoke

President Johnson called for Council comments:

Various comments were made.

An executive session was requested regarding personnel performance. Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to close the meeting to determine whether to declare an executive session. Motion was made by Councilman Lindemann duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to declare an executive session in order to discuss personnel performance. The Council then went into executive session. Motion was made by Councilman T. Johnson duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to go out of executive session. 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