REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2018 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 John Willis of Agape Storehouse Apostolic Church and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilman T. Johnson duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to confirm the agenda with the following amendments: Remove R-5 (Blight Elimination Program); Add R-6A (Sponsorship request to Miss. Development Authority for pole banners); R-6B (Change Order No. 1 for Cross Roofing on Museum of Art roof replacement); R-6C (Accept and adopt plat for Walmart Neighborhood Market). 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 February 06, 2018. 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 Order:

ORDER #16497 ORDER DECLARING ITEMS SURPLUS AND NO LONGER NEEDED BY THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND AUTHORIZING SAID SURPLUS ITEMS TO BE DESTROYED

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 #16498 ORDER DECLARING EQUIPMENT SURPLUS AND NO LONGER NEEDED BY THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND AUTHORIZING
SAID SURPLUS EQUIPMENT TO BE DISCARDED

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

RESO. #6168 RESOLUTION CALLING FOR NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BY THE CITY OF MERIDIAN FOR APPEAL OF DENIAL FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER TCA-18-01 (SITE ADDRESS: 5021 HIGHWAY 493 – NORTH MERIDIAN)

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

RESO. #6169 RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI (THE “CITY”) AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE FORM OF AND EXECUTION OF AN EQUIPMENT LEASE PURCHASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY AND TEXAS CAPITAL BANK, N.A., AND AN ESCROW ACCOUNT CONTROL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY, TMI TRUST COMPANY, AS ESCROW AGENT, AND A NOTICE TO PROCEED WORK, ALL IN CONNECTION WITH THAT CERTAIN ENERGY SERVICES AGREEMENT UNDERTAKEN PURSUANT TO THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY CAPITAL LEASE PROGRAM TO FINANCE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION EQUIPMENT FOR CERTAIN FACILITIES LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE CITY (THE “PROJECT”), AND RELATED MATTERS.

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

ORDER #16499  ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF ENGAGEMENT OF BREAZEALE, SAUNDERS & O’NEIL, LTD. TO ASSIST IN EVALUATING CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS OF LAUDERDALE COUNTY’S E-911 SYSTEM FOR THE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 01, 2016 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2017 (“FY2017”)

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 Resolution:

RESO. #6170  RESOLUTION OF COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND THE NAVAL AIR STATION MERIDIAN

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 Resolution:

RESO. #6171  RESOLUTION APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE AMENDED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2018, AND DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK IN REFERENCE THERETO

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

ORDER #16500 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF A SPONSORSHIP REQUEST LETTER FROM THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY-VISIT MISSISSIPPI FOR POLE BANNERS

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 #16501 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 BETWEEN CROSS ROOFING, INC., AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (MERIDIAN MUSEUM OF ART ROOF REPLACEMENT)

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 #16502 IN THE MATTER OF APPROVING AND ADOPTING NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET COMMERCIAL SUBDIVISION, A CACATING AND RE-SUBDIVISION OF PORTIONS OF MARKLINE TERRACE SURVEY, A COMMERCIAL SUBDIVISION OF 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.

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 February 15, 2018 in the amount of $4,700,242.66. 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 #16503 ORDER AUTHORIZING APPLICATION SUBMITTAL FOR A RILEY FOUNDATION FY’18 GRANT FOR JEANNIE’S PLACE AT PLANET PLAYGROUND

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.

President Thomas called on Mayor Bland for his report:

Mayor Bland said, to the community as a whole, in the last couple of days there has been a lot of crank calls from people threatening schools and businesses and places of worship. These threats are taken very seriously considering the things that are going on in our communities and around the United States. And I want parents to know those issues are taken very seriously even if they are crank calls made by their children. And our Police Department will be dealing with them accordingly. Doug Stephens have been receiving a lot of phone calls here lately as new Director of Homeland Security. I want to let everyone know that any threat is a threat. There are no idle threats and they will be handled as a serious threat. I got a phone call from a Councilwoman today communicating on an upcoming event, we have not made any plans, nothing is official and we are still working some things out in relation to Juneteenth. As you know the community has given this event back to the city to take the lead. Laura Carmichael is still putting her team in place and shaping the Department of Community Development and some people will be playing different roles as we continue with preparations of ongoing activities. With the Arts and Entertainment Center a lot of people will be performing a lot of different roles. We have all hands on deck right now. We haven’t
made any final plans in relation to Juneteenth right now, but the fact is that we will be taking that over within the city and we will communicate to the Council as we move forward with anything official. So anything that’s out there as of this date is not official. When it is official we will communicate what our plans are with the Council. The Meridian High School Girls and Boys Basketball Teams are in the playoffs. It was an exciting win at the high school last night. They go on to play Saturday in a must win game. There’s a lot of good players playing very well they have a lot of good defense and just like Councilman Tyrone Johnson when we play in the gym. And if they keep playing like that hopefully they will keep on winning. Last week Director McGruder installed four new computers at the Velma Young Center this will help out with a lot community things we want to do at the center. We are very proud of that and a lot of people in the community can use it for a lot of things with an active internet. The GED Program from MCC with the young lady over that program communicates weekly with our people at the center about the programs they want to do and they provide information we are trying to give to the community. Also, as we move forward on some of the projects that we have worked on we are going to be using that site as a place where we involve the community if there are some employment opportunities with some of these projects that we have going on within the city, and with some of these companies that are doing work in the city. The City of Meridian has a hoops player camp registration; this is designed as a camp for athletes with special needs of all ages the opportunity to play basketball. It will take place on three consecutive days for the sign up. It will be Friday, February 23rd, and continue on March 2nd and March 9th. The event will be at Carver Jr High School from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. If you want additional information about this, please contact our Parks and Recreation Director, Kelvin McGruder. On Friday, March 30th, an Easter Egg Hunt will be at James Chaney Park at 10:00 a.m. and another hunt at 1:00 p.m. at Sowashee Park. Saturday there will be a big hunt at Highland Park. The female basketball league for adults will start again. Registration will start February 28th and the season will start March 6th with a $150.00 team entry fee. They will play eight regular season games and then the playoffs. Also we will have coed basketball volleyball this year. The registration for that will be February 28th, at the Velma Young Center. These are new programs our Parks and Recreation Director has implemented and if anyone has any questions please contact the Director. Thank you guys for all that you do.

The hour of 5:15 p.m. having arrived, the hearing as called for in Resolution #6163 regarding unclean property was opened with motion by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilman T. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council. Jimmy E. Hoffer for 411 3rd Avenue; Virginia Palmer’s Daughter for 3611 Davis Street; Carolyn Dockery Jordan for 3721 Paulding Street; Ricky Ezell for 1705 8th Avenue; Ernest Smith’s Daughter for 2909 19th Street, all appeared to speak. The following five (5) properties were dismissed and removed from the list for this hearing:
PPIN 017734  411 3rd Avenue
PPIN 011845  503 54th Avenue
PPIN 010696  3306 5th Street
PPIN 010716  506 33rd Avenue
PPIN 016911  1912 8th Avenue

Code Enforcement Officer, Wiley Quinn advised that the remaining property discussed in the hearing this evening are still unclean and a menace to the health and safety of the community. Motion was made by Councilman T. Johnson duly seconded by Councilman Lindemann and unanimously passed by the Council to close the hearing.

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

RESO. #6172  RESOLUTION ADJUDICATING PARCELS OF LAND TO BE A MENACE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE COMMUNITY

And, Councilman T. 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 citizens comments.

a) Allen Shute - spoke
   b) Elliot Street - spoke
   c) Randy Ferino Wayne, Jr. - spoke
   d) Ellen Marie Franklin – did not appear

President Thomas called for Council comments:

Councilman Lindemann said he is still working to put together the logistics of the crowd funding interest meeting and potentially we are looking at March 1st as a date for that. I’ve got a meeting tomorrow to try to iron out some of the details. As soon as I have the information I’ll let everyone know. So be on the lookout for that information soon. Also about some awesome things going on in Meridian; I met Mr. Dwight Herlong, he is a Minister that will be bringing a program to Meridian this fall, it’s called ‘The Ladders Academy’, it’s the STEAM program, which integrates the sciences, technology, engineering arts and math. He can explain the details of the program better than I, but it is really impressive the number of students that he is trying to impact, over a
thousand during the summer involvement period. I think it will be a really big benefit to Meridian; teaching the kids real workforce development skills that will make them competitive in the economy. Programs like that, are what I think we need to encourage more of. Thank you all for coming out.

Councilwoman Houston said good evening, thank you all for coming. We are still encouraging you to volunteer, get involved, start something, and do something to help Meridian be all that she can be. I thank the Mayor for announcing our Easter Egg Hunt that’s coming up on Good Friday next month. So that the children on that side of town that may not be able to get to Highland Park have an opportunity to enjoy the thrills of hunting Easter Eggs and celebrate Jesus Christ as well. We encourage people to support the play being presented at the Temple Theatre this weekend. People are always saying there is nothing to do in Meridian, but when things happen in Meridian we choose not to support it. So, I’m asking you to support the things happening in Meridian, I’m asking you to shop Meridian. If you know a good restaurant or had a good experience somewhere, do a selfie and promote Meridian. We really need those sales tax dollars, we need that support, and our businesses need our support. So I encourage you to volunteer, shop local, and get out and support and enjoy our city, spend some money. Thank you.

Councilwoman F. Johnson said, I am the Councilwoman that made the phone call to the Mayor concerning the Highland Park location for the Juneteenth Celebration. I’ve had calls in the past from residents in that area about the noise. So my issue is an event like Juneteenth that is that large and that loud, in a residential area. I want to let everybody that may be watching and listening know; when something is posted on Facebook it spreads quicker than WTOK and the Meridian Star. That’s where I saw the flyer, on Facebook. I can see when putting events together that sometimes the possibility of overlapping events may occur. And I appreciate we may have some instances of being short staffed, but I would appreciate with issues like this, that the whole community didn’t know about them before we as Councilmembers are made aware of them. Thank you all for coming.

Councilman T. Johnson said good evening everyone, to the Mayor and the Department Heads, you all are doing a fabulous job. Particularly, the tearing down of some of those dilapidated houses. I see a lot of activity going on in Ward 2, in one of the old houses I’ve seen a lot of gambling going on and there is fighting going on. Not too long ago I broke up a fight over there. But thank you guys for working hard and trying to make a difference. I really can’t fully express my appreciation for the work you are doing. I went back out to the Elmwood Cemetery, this is the cemetery we cleaned last year and got a lot of work done, I want to start the cleaning back up and get it as clean as the cemetery on 10th Avenue. So if you see us back out there cleaning we are trying to keep it clean. There is no sense in cleaning it up and not keeping it clean. The memorial event we were planning to have at Ben Arthur Park a couple of weeks ago was rained out, so hopefully when the weather gets better we will again, try to have that event, we will let you know. I was told I had blue police lights on my truck. I want to let everyone know that is not true. On a great note, Velma Young Park is having a playground build on
March 23 & 24th, starting at 9:00 a.m. so spread the word and all volunteers come out to help. I’m in the Air National Guard and that’s the reason I wanted to get the contact information from the NAS Official here tonight, to see if we can get together with you and other branches of the service to see what we can do for the community. Thank you.

Council President Thomas said the Riley Center has put out their announcements for what’s coming up. The Meridian Little Theatre, the Meridian Community College, and baseball programs are going on. I’ve heard excellent reports about the competitions that went on and are going on, my daughter works at the school and she said you all are doing great, she is bragging on you all a lot, she claims you are still her students. She is very impressed and she is hearing very positive comments from everyone about the job you did and still doing. Again, concerning what has been talked about, get out and do what you can. Help the community. Thank you all for coming and the coordination with the Naval Station is good for the city, the more communication the better.

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