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 David Chandler of First Assembly of Meridian and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilwoman F. Johnson duly seconded by Councilwoman Houston and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to confirm the agenda with amendment: Remove payment #802041 for $500.00 from the claims docket. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

Motion was made by Councilwoman F. Johnson duly seconded by Councilwoman Houston and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the minutes dated January 03, 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 Resolution:

RESO. #6163 DATE AND TIME CHANGE NOTICE TO: FEBRUARY 20, 2018 AT 5:30 P.M. FOR RESOLUTION #6159 CALLING HEARING TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT CERTAIN PARCELS OF LAND ARE IN SUCH A STATE OF UNCLEANLINESS AS 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.

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

RESO. #6164 RESOLUTION TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI APPROVING THE EMPLOYMENT OF PROFESSIONALS IN CONNECTION WITH AN ENERGY
SERVICES LEASE AGREEMENT IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $9,991,214 PURSUANT TO SECTION 31-7-14 OF THE MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, AS AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME

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

RESO. #6165 RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI APPROVING IN SUBSTANTIAL FORM THE REQUEST FOR FINANCING IN CONNECTION WITH AN ENERGY SERVICES LEASE AGREEMENT IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $9,991,214 PURSUANT TO SECTION 31-7-14 OF THE MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, AS AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME

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 #16483 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN GREYHOUND LINES, INC. AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (SPACE AT 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.
Motion was made by Councilman T. Johnson duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to open discussion on R-5 Order authorizing execution of title transfer of the Witherspoon School property to the City. Order was discussed and motion was made by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson to Table R-5. Voting yea: Thomas, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann Voting nay: T. Johnson.

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

ORDER #16484 IN THE MATTER OF: CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF DOUGLAS STEPHENS AS PUBLIC SAFETY & TRAINING DIRECTOR FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

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.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the claims docket dated January 11, 2018 in the amount of $3,930,778.49 with the amendment to remove payment #802041 for $500.00. Bringing the claims docket total to $3,930,278.49. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

President Thomas called on Mayor Bland for his report:

Mayor Bland said he wants to present a proclamation to the Crisis Intervention Team for CIT awareness month. John Griffith, Asst. Police Chief and Wade Johnson, CIT Coordinator were both present to receive the proclamation, along with other team members. Mayor Bland then called up the Public Safety Director, Doug Stephens to give an update on the weather conditions. Doug said we are seeing a good amount of snowfall and the Weather Service is predicting from 1½ to 2 inches of snow for us. But the number one concern is a hard freeze, we are expecting temperatures to be freezing and below through Thursday, and possibly see wind chill factors of zero or below. He said they are working with the County and Mr. McGruder to provide a warming shelter at the Frank Cochran Center. There won’t be any beds but the Red Cross will provide food and drink. The Salvation Army and Multi-County will also be available as shelters. We encourage the citizens to be aware of the four Ps, people, pets, pipes and plants. And please check on your neighbors, they may be in a situation of need. Dr. Thomas commented that some city workers and first responders will be out doing those essential jobs and to keep them in your prayers. The Mayor asked Mr.
McGruder to report on the leaking pipes situation at the Boys and Girls Club. Mr. McGruder said the leak is repaired and the bill has evened out and reading as it should. Mayor Bland said on the title transfer of the Witherspoon School site, that the administration is trying to position itself in a way that they will have better control of the building and what goes on in that area. Dr. Thomas said the issue will be discussed at the upcoming work session.

President Thomas called for citizens comments.

a) Allen Shute – did not appear
b) Elliot Street – did not appear

President Thomas called for Council comments:

Councilman Lindemann said good afternoon, thank you all for coming out. I think in November I heard we would get an update on the EMBDC, I haven't received anything and I wanted to know, can we get an update at some point? We had talked about possibly live streaming council meetings for transparency; I think we all agree that transparency is a good thing. There is no down side to having the public aware of what we are doing. That is something I would encourage, or at least discuss further, at the next work session. As far as housing developments go I want to put in a word of caution, these are Section 42 developments that the city is not going to benefit any tax revenue from. I want to stress that it's important that we are getting tax revenue from these developments, and not just rushing into developments that's going to lead to perpetual renting and not improving the quality of life. On the bright side concerning House Bill-722 at the State Capitol, I think we need to encourage our senators in this area to support this when it comes to the Senate. This could provide Meridian with about 1.4 million dollars for our roads we all know how much we need that. It's as simple as picking up the phone and calling our state senator. If you have the opportunity to visit them in the state capitol, it might surprise them a little bit, but I think they are more willing to support things when they see you face to face. This is a real big deal here and we really need to upgrade our construction.

Councilwoman Houston said good afternoon, we thank everybody for coming out; our Public Safety Director has advised us that the snow is falling pretty heavily. We had a very successful MLK Weekend and I want to thank everybody that participated, Laura Carmichael, Community Development, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Police Department and Fire Department. We wanted to thank everybody that participated from Saturday night, Sunday through all day Monday. It was a great thing to honor Dr. King, but we need to honor him more than that one day a year. We really truly need to try to live a life of involvement to have a positive impact on our city. Sometimes that means making hard choices and doing things that everybody doesn’t always agree with. But nevertheless, we have to keep pushing forward. We will have a neighborhood meeting at Bethel Baptist Church in Ward 4 this Thursday, January 18th, at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Bland I understand you will not be able to be there,
but a representative from the Police Department and Public Works is definitely needed, most of the questions are directed to these departments. Anyone is welcome to come out. Thank you all for coming out this afternoon.

Councilwoman F. Johnson said thank you all for coming, I will try to check in at the Frank Cochran Center to see if there is anything we can do to help during this time of need. Please know that the help is there, but there are some clients that will not go to the shelters, we have offered transportation, but they will not go, they don’t want to follow the needed rules and regulations. So, while driving around and you see some of the clients that don’t appear to have help, it is by their own choice. But, I do appreciate everybody that tries to help; I will be checking in tonight if possible, I won’t put myself in danger with the roads in such slippery conditions, but I will try to check on things. Everybody please be safe.

Councilman T. Johnson said a lot of good things happened yesterday, one was in the Old Velma Young Center, a lot of the Mississippi Power Company employees, Public Works and myself, we all got out there and cleaned it up and we got on the inside and also did a little work there, it looks very nice. The Boys and Girls Club and all the kids that come through that facility will really enjoy it. I invite all of you guys to go out there and check it out. I want to thank Mississippi Power for coming out and doing that. Secondly, we had a Father-Daughter Dance at Parkview School. It was for Parkview, but we held it at the Magnolia School Gym. A lot of fathers came out with their daughters and we all had a really great time. I encourage you to get involved with the good things happening in our ward. Thirdly, I think taking control of the Witherspoon property is a good idea, because that is a pretty bad area and by the city taking that property, they may be able to control some of what goes on in that area. There is an 87 year old lady that lives across the street and things happen there on a daily basis, and we need to address some of those issues. As for this Council, Mayor, and Department Heads, I ask the citizens to pray for us. There are tough decisions that have to be made and everyone doesn’t agree on everything, but I care for all of these people. So moving forward, I ask you to be patient with us as we make tough decisions, it is for the betterment of the City of Meridian.

Council President Thomas said we are adjourned!

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