REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, JANUARY 03, 2018 AT 9:00 A.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 Edward Griffin of Greenhill Baptist Church 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 amendments: C-2 [Move to Routine Agenda to make R-6 “Order authorizing adjustment of salary band for the Public Works Director” and [Add Executive Session concerning a personnel matter]. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting 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 minutes dated December 19, 2017. 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. #6162 RESOLUTION RESCINDING RESOLUTION NO. 6133 ENTITLED “RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI, GRANTING TAX EXEMPTION FROM AD VALOREM TAXES NEW CANAAN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH/PARKING LOT (4820 26TH STREET) AS AUTHORIZED BY SECTIONS 27-31-1 (D) AND 79-11-33 OF THE MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, AS AMENDED” AS ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON AUGUST 15, 2017

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 #16480  ORDER AMENDING ORDER NO. 16432 ENTITLED “ORDER AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF FY 2018 GRANT APPLICATION TO THE MISSISSIPPI OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY (402 POLICE TRAFFIC SAFETY SERVICES)”

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 #16481  ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND RUSH HEALTH SYSTEMS, GREATER MERIDIAN HEALTH CLINIC, AND MERIDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATES, P.A. (WAIVE $25.00 CO-PAY FOR CITY OF MERIDIAN EMPLOYEES)

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 #16482  ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN TAYLOR POWER SYSTEMS AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (STANDBY GENERATOR)

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.
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 December 22, 2017 in the amount of $2,196,130.89. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

Council President called for a motion to open discussion on agenda item # R-6 “Order authorizing adjustment of salary band for the Public Works Director.” Motion was made by Councilman T. Johnson to open discussion, but there was no second made by any other Councilmember. The motion died, no action taken.

President Thomas called on Mayor Bland for his report:

Mayor Bland said he wants to inform everyone about some of the events coming up and I ask Laura Carmichael, Cultural Affairs Coordinator to come up and report. Laura said the Martin Luther King Day Parade will be downtown January 15, 2018 and the celebration immediately after the parade on the City Hall Lawn.

President Thomas called for citizens comments.

a) Allen Shute – did not appear

President Thomas called for Council comments:

Councilman Lindemann said thank you all for coming out again and the Young Entrepreneurs Club at Meridian High School will be meeting in two weeks. They are going to start getting ready for a Shark Tank style event. They will get into groups and come up with a business plan and somewhere towards the end of the school year they will pitch their ideas to a group of investors, like they do on the TV show “Shark Tank”. It’s a creative way to get the students involved and interested in their future. We had a question about the E-911 Commission a couple of weeks ago about whether we should audit the Commission. I believe an audit is in order, it’s always better to know, if there are questions about finances. The City is to contribute financial support, so, we need to know how the money is being used. The Capitol is in full swing this month and we are continuing to lobby our Legislatures for a fair share of the sales tax diversion. Right now we get about 18.5% and I think a fairer number would be about 25%. I’m hoping to persuade some of our Legislatures to support yearly increases to reach that point.

Councilwoman Houston said Happy New Year everybody, thank you for coming. School is back in session and we want to continue to encourage you to get involved and volunteer. Our Sara’s Daughters Leadership Academy for middle school girls will kick off February 03, 2018, if you know of any middle school girls that might benefit from this mentoring program please contact me. Councilman Tyrone Johnson and I will be meeting
with Dr. Carter this afternoon. So, if there is anything we can take back to the school board and district; let us know so we can try to keep them informed. I hope everyone had a great holiday season, its 2018 and we will keep moving forward.

Councilwoman F. Johnson said Happy New Year everybody! I want to say something special to the people that work with the homeless. Lately it’s been really cold, and I want to give a special thank you to Multi-County, The Frances W. Davidson Center and the people at The Salvation Army. They relaxed some of their rules and guidelines to let people in, but they also had to maintain some of those rules and guidelines to keep people safe who are at those facilities. Our homeless people have not been forgotten, we are not looking over them, and we are not ignoring them. But at the end of the day, we can only help them do what they want to do. For those of you that have been working with them we thank you, and for those of you that want to help, please call one of those shelters and do something that can help long term not short term. Thank you, Happy New Year.

Councilman T. Johnson said Happy New Year everyone. On January 13, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. the East End Temple Lodge #476 will be having a cemetery clean-up. We are asking if you have anyone would like to come out and volunteer to help please come on out. The cemetery is on 33rd Avenue and we really need your support. Again, Happy New Year you guys.

Council President Thomas said we have had to make some cuts in the budget this year. The Department Heads have had to make some tough choices and they have done a good job of it. They’ve had to deal with some things they didn’t want to deal with, but the council had to take action concerning money, because we didn’t have it to spend. They have made real progress with what needs to be done to try to make this city financially solvent. It’s been tough on them, but we have an opportunity for a good year coming up and we are making progress. The Administration is working diligently with the people in the downtown area preparing for the museums and the Arts and Entertainment Experience coming in; it should be an excellent year, a lot of those things should start in April. Sometimes people wonder why we do a lot of the things we do financially, but we have to do what is necessary. Hopefully we can get Mr. Hood’s water problem fixed, and all the other things we have to do. The Police Department is working diligently, a lot of people are wondering why we’re stopping a lot of these things; but, we have mean people in this world, and a lot of times people don’t consider other people’s rights, and it’s difficult to stop them breaking the law. But I can assure you there are very few unsolved things that happen in the City of Meridian. The Police Department does an excellent job of finding the culprits that commits these crimes. Now, what happens to them after they are caught is not up to the Police Department. The Fire Department continues to issue warnings to people practically at this time of year about space heaters and things like that. But there are a lot of good things happening, we usually only hear about the bad things, but good things are happening. Schools are back in, the Riley Center has a lot of performances going on, the Temple Theatre is starting a program back up, and the Community College has a lot of good programs going. So there are a lot of excellent things going on in the City of Meridian, you need only take advantage of them. The Police, Public Works, Community Development,
Parks and Recreation, they could all use your help. The only way they can help you if there is a problem, and fix it, is if you let them know about it.

A request was made to add an executive session to the agenda concerning a personnel matter. Motion was made by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve adding the executive session to the agenda. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

On executive session requested regarding a personnel matter. Motion was made by Councilman Lindemann duly seconded by Councilwoman Houston and unanimously passed by the Council to close the meeting to determine whether to declare an executive session. Motion was made by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilman Lindemann and unanimously passed by the Council to declare an executive session in order to discuss a personnel matter. The Council then went into executive session. Motion was made by Councilwoman Houston 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