REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, MARCH 06, 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 Lovell Mosley of St. John Missionary Baptist Church and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilman Lindemann duly seconded by Councilwoman Houston and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to confirm the agenda with the following amendments: Move C-7 to the routine agenda and make it 1-A (Order rescinding Council Order #16443 Hydrofluorosilicic Acid from Univar USA, Inc.); Add payment #802939 to the claims docket ($253.48 to the Mississippi Department of Revenue); and add to the Executive Session (potential litigation). 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 February 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 Resolution:

RESO. #6173 LEGISLATION TO ALLOW THE CITY TO PROVIDE UTILITY SERVICES OUTSIDE CORPORATE LIMITS TO NAVAL AIR STATION, MERIDIAN, 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.

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

RESO. #6174 RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF
MERIDIAN ENDORSING AND URGING THE MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE TO ADOPT LOCAL AND PRIVATE LEGISLATION GRANTING AUTHORITY FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN BY WAY OF A QUITCLAIM DEED TO RELINQUISH THE REVERTER CLAUSE, THE RESERVATION OF ALL MINERAL RIGHTS AND THE REQUIREMENT THAT ANY BUILDINGS AND IMPROVEMENTS BE SUBJECT TO THE CITY’S APPROVAL AS CONTAINED IN THE PRIOR CONVEYANCE TO T.C. CARTER, JR., POST NO. 21 DEPARTMENT OF MISSISSIPPI AMERICAN LEGION

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 #16504 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND ANDREW S. COVINGTON FOR PRINCIPAL ENGINEERING 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 Houston offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16505 ORDER ADOPTING USE AND FEE APPLICATION FOR THE MERIDIAN PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING FACILITY

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

ORDER #16506 ORDER DESIGNATING TEMPLE, INC., AS THE SOLE SOURCE SUPPLIER FOR TRAFFIC CONTROL PRODUCTS FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

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 #16507 IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE RE-APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF DR. EVADNA LYONS TO THE MERIDIAN MUNICIPAL SEPARATE SCHOOL DISTRICT TRUSTEES

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 #16508 ORDER RESCINDING ORDER NO. 16443 ENTITLED “ORDER ACCEPTING LOW BID FOR SOURCE OF SUPPLY FOR THE PERIOD OF OCTOBER 20, 2017 THRU OCTOBER 19, 2018 FOR HYDROFLUOROSILICIC ACID FROM UNIVAR USA, INC., KENT, WA”

And, Councilwoman F. Johnson 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.
Nay: Thomas, Lindemann.

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

ORDER #16509 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE USA SWIMMING FOUNDATION’S MAKE A SPLASH INITIATIVE

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 Order:

ORDER #16510 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF A MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, OFFICE OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES APPLICATION FOR MOSQUITO SURVEILANCE GRANT

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 #16511 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO STOP INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

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 #16512 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AS-NEEDED BASIS AGREEMENT BETWEEN STEPHEN P. WILSON (ATTORNEY AT LAW) AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN CONCERNING CELL TOWER APPEAL

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 Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman T. Johnson for Council to open discussion on R-6 Order authorizing execution of agreement for sale, purchase, and redevelopment of the Old Police Station. The Order was discussed and motion was made by Councilman Lindemann duly seconded by Councilwoman Houston to Table R-6. Voting yea: T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: Thomas.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman T. Johnson for Council to open discussion on R-7 Order authorizing agreement with Couvillion Design Build for City Hall park design. Order was discussed and motion was made by Councilman Lindemann duly seconded by Councilwoman Houston to Table R-7. Voting yea: T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: Thomas.

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

ORDER #16513 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF WELLNESS SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN ANDERSON REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (CITY EMPLOYEES WELLNESS SERVICES)

And, Councilman Lindemann seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:
Councilwoman F. Johnson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Resolution:

RESO. #6175 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, 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.

Motion was made by Councilman T. Johnson duly seconded by Councilman Lindemann and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the claims docket dated March 01, 2018 in the amount of $2,085,188.32 with an added amendment of payment #802939 for $253.48 bringing the docket total to $2,085,441.80. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

President Thomas advised of the notification of legal advertisement for the following:

a) Hydrofluorosilicic Acid

President Thomas called on Mayor Bland for his report:

Mayor Bland talked about the drug seizure money and things it is used for, such as cameras and computers in the police vehicles, plus all the technology used in the world of policing a community in today’s society. Mayor Bland called up the officers of the K-9 Unit to talk about their dogs and the excellent work these animals are doing on the force. There are six dogs, two are single purpose dogs that we have on the streets and the interstate to detect narcotics, and the remaining four (one for each shift) are dual purpose dogs used in service to track, locate missing persons, etc. Sergeant Lagoy, Officer Lawn and Officer Vallas are the trainers and handlers of the three dogs we have here today; they are valuable assets to the Meridian Police Department. On Friday, March 09, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. on the city hall lawn there will be a Military Sendoff Celebration honoring the 150th Brigade Engineer Battalion (BEB). We honor these soldiers as they put their all, on the line. We invite everybody to come out and
President Thomas called for citizens comments.

a) Allen Shute - spoke

President Thomas called for Council comments:

Councilman Lindemann said I want to start by talking about redevelopment of blighted neighborhoods. If we start as we are today as our opening line, I feel like we are setting the bar too low. I think there are real alternatives to rushing into bad deals that are not the best that we can provide for people who end up becoming tenants of section 8, section 42 housing. I think other cities found a reasonable solution by using crowd funding as a way of making that happen. So, basically what that looks like as an example; you look for say about 500 people with $200.00, and that’s one aid to redevelopment. It becomes truly affordable because these are people in our community who have an interest in seeing revitalization of our neighborhoods. In addition to that, they will see it as an investment opportunity because we have the highest rate of affordable housing occupancy in the state, which means there is a market for affordable housing. The problem with the current system that we have is that the people don’t get an opportunity to become home owners. And if you go to the Meridian Housing Authority and speak to them about that, they will tell you that they only have about 50 to 75 families in transition programs where they are trying to get people into housing or into home ownership. That brings me to another thing; I’m hoping to launch a program that will take maybe between 10 thru 20 of those residents interested in a home ownership program to do a business cooperative. A lot of these other cities are throwing piles of incentives and going after businesses like Amazon trying to get warehouse facilities, but these people could actually download on their phones an app that lets them go into stores and scan a product’s barcode and it tells them if this product is worth more on Amazon; and if it is, they can buy it from the store and sale it. The idea is to get 10 to 20 of these people together to all do the same thing and within a matter of months they could open up a warehouse and start doing business for themselves. So, if we are not going to be bringing in good paying jobs that will give better opportunities to help home ownership, then the least we can do is set up a program that helps them become a worker owned cooperative to create the demand themselves. I’ll be looking at this and other options. I want to thank Dwight Herlong, of the Ladders Academy a none profit enterprise here in Meridian, for being generous enough to help build a website for the crowd funding platform. I think the expectation we have is to have it on line later this month, but I’m not 100 percent confident about that yet. Talking about downtown, land use, and various projects, generally it’s a good thing to put energy into downtown, but just because people put a lot of energy into something doesn’t mean it’s always going to become the best way. Just look at 5th Street as an example of that, it’s been less than ideal according to some of the property owners. I think we should have an open
discussion about some of the problems and I don’t think it’s just going to go away. Now, we are looking at doing some development just outside the area that was supposedly most impacted by the project that took three and a half years to complete. I think we have to have discussions about some of those issues that do exist there. Thank you for coming out today.

Councilwoman Houston said good morning and thank you all for coming. I just need to follow up on some things. We sent in a request to address some lighting on Hooper Street and Railroad Street, does anybody know where we are here? Mr. McAlister said he didn’t see the request, but right now they are addressing lighting issues. Councilwoman Houston asked about the sidewalks project, and Hugh Smith said it is ongoing but he doesn’t have any new information to disclose at this time. Councilwoman Houston said that Mr. Kelly of Mississippi Power said he would speak to Mr. Smith to see what he could do to move the project along; Mr. Smith said he had not spoken to Mr. Kelly, and he may have missed his call, but he would try to contact him. She asked about the Sowashee Creek Walking Trail, Mr. McGruder said he spoke with Joe Norwood and was told it is still an ongoing project and Mr. McAlister said it is a grant funded project. Councilwoman Houston asked Mr. Stephens if his department offered any type of professional development training, he said not at this time, but occasionally we host training provided for various city employees and other charters. Ms. Houston asked if that is something your department can look at moving forward by being intentional about having those types of training in house? Mr. Stephens said he thinks it’s a project we can look at by maybe partnering with MCC to bring that type of training in and help with some funding. Ms. Houston said if you would please look into that, because we are in a situation where number one, we need to be partnering with those in our community and also keep our eyes on the dollars. Councilwoman Houston said, Ms. Carmichael you were not here at the time, but there has been an ongoing issue about a house behind James Chaney Park. We are preparing to have our annual Easter Egg Hunt at the park and that house is in bad condition. What they normally do is a little bit to get us off their backs. But there’s a pile of rubble there and it’s starting to get warm and I know how snakes and other vermin operate, if we could please put a little pressure on them to clean that property. No one lives there and it has been an ongoing issue behind James Chaney Park. Next week is spring break, if you can, take the time to mentor a child in your neighborhood or community, so they can see that the possibilities are endless for the children here in Meridian. I appreciate the committee for inviting us to come and be a part of what they are doing. Everybody can start something; they can make big change as it relates to the children in our community. They are looking for us, and looking at us, and we need to inspire them and let them know that they can do great things. Not just in February during Black History Month, and not just for African American children, but for all our children in our city. They need to be inspired to do great things so we can continue to move our city in a better direction. Thank you.

Councilwoman F. Johnson said, talking about our children, I want to give special thanks to Parks & Recreation. I was involved with this special project along with all the parents for our kids with special needs. They did soccer, they did baseball and they did
basketball. And it was really nice to see those kids get to be involved with more activities and I’m looking forward to more activities with those children. Thank you all for coming out.

Councilman T. Johnson said good morning, and just a reminder; on March 23 and 24 we will be doing the build of a playground at the Velma Young Center.

Council President Thomas said we will continue to get the agenda out on Thursdays, so everybody can look at it. There are some good things happening. Lamar school has won State Championships for the Boys and Girls Soccer. Coach Leon does an excellent job out there. A lot of those students are City of Meridian residents. MCC Track Team came out fourth in the nation, in an indoor track meet and they don’t even have an indoor track! So, to come out fourth in the nation without having their own indoor track, is amazing. The Riley Center has put out the information about their upcoming series. MCC has had several choral concerts out there. The Little Theatre is having more theatre productions, they are asking for people to come out and audition. If you are not going to church Wednesday night, Meridian High School Basketball Team is still in the playoffs for the state championship. So not only do we have activities in the arts community, we have it in the athletic area, we have a lot of things going on that are good things. As you saw today, we have a lot of good plans that the administration and council will be discussing that can enhance this total community and make it better for all of us.

An executive session was requested regarding economic development and potential litigation. Motion was made by Councilman Lindemann 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 Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to declare an executive session in order to discuss economic development and potential litigation. The Council then went into executive session. Motion was made by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilman T. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to go out of executive session. The meeting was called to order with no action to be 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