REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 05, 2019 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 Dr. Jeff Myers, 15th Avenue Baptist Church and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman Houston and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to confirm the agenda with the following amendments: Add R-14 (Order authorizing execution of professional services agreement between Waggoner Engineering, Inc., and the City of Meridian (Emergency Road & Bridge Repair Fund).) Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

Motion made by Councilwoman F. Johnson duly seconded by Councilman Lindemann and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the minutes dated January 15, 2019. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

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

ORDER #16694  ORDER DECLARING EQUIPMENT SURPLUS AND NO LONGER NEEDED BY THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND AUTHORIZING SAID SURPLUS EQUIPMENT TO BE DISCARDED

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

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

ORDER #16695  ORDER DECLARING FEMALE BELGIAN MALINOIS K-9 DOG “REBEL” SURPLUS AND NO LONGER NEEDED BY THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP TO RODGER BROWN
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.

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

ORDER #16696 IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF MARK REVERE DAVIS TO THE MERIDIAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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 #16697 IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF DAWN WRIGHT TO THE MERIDIAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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 #16698 ORDER AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF DONATION OF $50.00 FROM KATHERINE FITZMORRIS IN MEMORY OF FIRE-FIGHTER ERIC GUSTAFSON TO BE USED IN ANY WAY FOR THE MERIDIAN FIRE DEPARTMENT

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 #16699 ORDER ACCEPTING DONATIONS FOR SPONSORSHIPS FROM JOHN O’NEIL JOHNSON MOTOR CO., REFUGE COUNSELING CENTER, MERIDIAN WEIGHT MANAGEMENT CENTER AND THE NELSON CENTER FOR WOMEN (FOR THE 2019 HEALTHY HOMETOWN CHALLENGE)

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

ORDER #16700 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNING AUTHORITY SERVICE AGREEMENT BETWEEN C SPIRE AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN FOR WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT AND 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 #16701 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF CONTINUING DISCLOSURE ENGAGEMENT LETTER AGREEMENT BETWEEN BUTLER SNOW LLP AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (DISSEMINATION AGENT)

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

RESO. #6208  RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN TO REQUEST ACTIVATION OF THE 22ND AVENUE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT TO IMPROVE SIDEWALK/BICYCLE PATHS ENHANCEMENT VIA APPROVAL FROM MISSISSIPPI TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION WITH TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM FUNDS

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 Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Ordinance:

ORDI. #4517  ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY’S ZONING ORDINANCE NO. 3966 SO AS TO RECLASSIFY CERTAIN LANDS IN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN FROM R-1 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT TO B-1 RESIDENTIAL BUSINESS DISTRICT INCLUDING AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

And, Councilwoman F. Johnson seconded the motion, whereupon said Ordinance 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 Ordinance:

ORDI. #4518  ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 23, ARTICLE IV, DIVISION 1, SECTION 23-122 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES (PARKING AND STORAGE OF TRUCKS PROHIBITED IN RESIDENTIAL ZONES)

And, Councilman Thomas seconded the motion, whereupon said Ordinance was discussed,
passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:

Yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: None.

Agenda Item R-10 (Ordinance revising Section 707 Storage of commercial vehicles.) Motion was made by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson for discussion. After questions asked about the wording and uncertain answers given, a motion was made by Councilwoman Houston duly seconded by Councilman Thomas to Table the issue. The motion passed by a unanimous vote. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: none.

Agenda Item R-11 (Order establishing additional duties for certain employees’ specific job descriptions.) Motion was made by Councilwoman F. Johnson duly seconded by Councilman Lindemann for discussion. After it was determined that the extra duties list for each employee was not included with the Order for the Council to look over, the issue did not come to a vote, and there was No Action Taken. The Council moved on to the next item on the agenda.

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

RESO. #6209  RESOLUTION APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE AMENDED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 20, 2019, AND DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK IN REFERENCE THERETO

And, Councilman Thomas 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 Councilwoman F. Johnson duly seconded by Councilman T. Johnson and passed by a majority vote of the Council to approve the claims docket dated January 31, 2019 in the amount of $2,798,821.05. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston. Voting nay: Lindemann.

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

ORDER #16702  ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN WAGGONER ENGINEERING
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.

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

a) Public Meeting – Community Input on Settlement Agreement and Summary Action Plan with the Department of Justice.

b) Requests for Proposals – Upkeep of 22nd Avenue Interchange.

President Johnson called for the Mayor’s Report:

Mayor Bland said Arbor Day will be February 8th this year and I have a proclamation to observe the official date. We will not celebrate on February 8th, but we will let you know when we will have the Arbor Day celebration.

Coach Adams from Parks & Recreation is giving out a form and some of you may have seen it out front where people pay their water bills, it’s for Camp Hoops. Camp Hoops is a new program that we are doing through the City of Meridian’s Park & Recreation Department. This program is designed to allow athletes with special needs of all ages the opportunity to play basketball and have fun through our parks and recreation program. Camp Hoops will take place on three consecutive Fridays. Beginning Friday, February 22nd and continuing through March 1st and 8th; each event will be from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. at Carver Middle School Gym, 900 44th Avenue. The cost to participate is free; we only ask that you register for this event. For more information call Ms. Tracy Bragg at 601-678-2665 or email tracybragg44@att.net. On March 8th there will be a field challenge and a game of players versus the coaches. We are just trying to give everyone the opportunity to play sports, especially those kids with special needs.

Also Parks & Recreation are partnering with Citizens National Bank; they have a financial management course going on at Velma Young, an eight week course that started Monday, January 28th from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. each Monday. This course starts with basic banking, credit and debt, budgeting, income planning and risk management. It also helps people with their taxes. It’s to help people toward home ownership and basically giving people the tools to increase their credit score, better handle their finances and obtain the knowledge they need to be a homeowner.

This morning we are having a Job Fair at the MCC Tommy Dulaney Center. We’ve had a really big turnout for the last two years and I wanted to let everyone watching today to be aware of the job fair that will be going on until 1:00 p.m. today.
We have been doing a lot of work raising money through partnerships of city, county, business owners and individuals to rebuild Planet Playground. The build out for the playground will be this month, on Monday, February 18\textsuperscript{th} and on through Saturday the 23\textsuperscript{rd}, we are expecting to have between 1500 to 2000 possible volunteers put their hands in to help build out this structure. The city and other partners of ours have already been doing work out there and we ask everyone in the community to come out and lend their support. This playground was built in 1999 and it has been the primary site for a lot of people around town as the playground of choice for families. This has been a huge endeavor, we have had this playground shut down for over a year and we are glad to bring it back. It will be a one of a kind playground for families and for individuals with special needs. We are looking forward to a big community campaign to help with the build out of Planet Playground during that week.

I know the Council has been asking questions about the Village Fair Mall and also what we are trying to do to better enhance that area. We are going to be moving forward on some more aggressive codes and ordinances. It’s not going to make everybody happy, because for a long time we have had properties just set up and become eye-sores in our community for a long time, not just downtown but in our neighborhoods. So, some of these things that we are addressing are some of the codes and ordinances we have on the books and some we will have to rectify a little bit to update the language. One of them of course deals with some of these commercial properties, one being the Village Fair Mall. Dr. Steven Redd and Laura Carmichael have been working really hard on some proposals they will be bringing to the Council shortly. They have met out there with the owners of Village Fair Mall; of course the owner is trying to sell that property for 1.2 to 2 million dollars, depending on who you ask. But, from our findings it will take from 800 thousand to a million dollars to demolish that building and deal with the asbestos and everything else that goes along with that. In the middle of all of that we are trying to work with the owner and other partners to get them on the same page so we can have something very creative that this community can hopefully have as a tourism site for many years to come. Everything has not aligned perfectly with this yet, we are still in negotiations and those people are in private negotiations. Those types of talks are very sensitive, that’s why we haven’t brought anything to the Council yet, because we don’t know exactly where everything is right now. People have got to decide upon what they are willing to sell things for, people have to decide how much of a private investment they are going to make and how much long term financing it’s going to take to put those deals together. Sometimes it takes a lot of talking in situations like that, until they all agree and understand what the city can and cannot do. Sometimes we don’t engage everyone until they get to that point, because people are real sensitive about those things and they will walk away from a deal real quick. So, to try to prevent that from happening we have allowed those people, those persons and those firms to continue to work together until they come to a conclusion of what they need the City and County to do. But, saying all that, still understand that building is still being marketed to sell and the biggest other issue is the demolition and asbestos in that building.

We are trying to turn lemons into lemonade around this city; we have a lot of eye-sores and we are trying to create a better space for all of us, and create a greater space that will bring in tax dollars to this city.
Laura Carmichael said we have met with the owners of the mall on three different occasions; they have been sited on property violations. We’ve had conversations, there is a plan, and we have been diligent about working with them about getting that area in a place where we can bring economic development.

Dr. Steven Redd said we have two different options we are looking into dealing with an overlay of that area; a corridor overlay which will give the city the decisions on what will go there in the future combined with the beautification of Sowashee Creek with the eventual multiple walking trails there. This allows the city to have more restrictions on that area to ensure the continued enhancement of our corridor into the city.

Mayor Bland said the next thing is Charter Properties, and the reason I want to bring this up is that they are going to move forward with the project in Ward 4. So we can be very clear, we talked about a Witherspoon Project before, neither myself and no one on my team was saying that we were trying to partner with just Charter or with Charter in that endeavor, but that we wanted control of that building in that area of the old Witherspoon School so that we could have options on whatever decisions we made together as a group; while working with one partner or several partners to try to build out houses in the range of 75 to 125 thousand dollars in that area. I want to come to the Council with our plans on trying to move forward in the community with the build out of properties between 75 to 125 thousand dollars. Some of the local banks have changed some of their financial programs to make it more attractive for people and for us to get the appraisals in certain areas and for homes in that area in that range, and it’s a lot of people that will qualify for those 75 and 85 thousand dollar homes. In areas that are very blighted right now, have been underserved for years, and that we are trying to make more attractive. So, we are talking about two things here; I know everyone doesn’t agree with Charter’s business model, but in some of these areas where there are issues we need to upgrade. That’s one option and other models are options, but we want to bring some of those ideas to the Council so that we can move forward or stay the same, one way or the other.

I would like to bring forward Chris McNeil with McNeil and Rhoades to update us on our water meter project that is going on around town right now. We are on schedule for everything and I wanted to give recognition of a good job to our Public Works Director Hugh Smith and two of his team members Kevin Locke and James Lloyd as they continue to move this project forward.

Chris McNeil said since the last time I have spoken to the Council there has been a lot of progress. My company has a lot of projects going on in the north part of the state. When it gets cold it’s not the most optimal time to be working in the north part of the state. So, what we did is seriously ramped up, starting about the end of November to basically triple the amount of people we had out here installing. As of today, just in the last two months we have done almost half this project in the last eight weeks with the amount of man-power that we put down. Of the 13 thousand meters to put down we have put in a little over 10 thousand. That leaves us around 3 thousand to be done, 2500 will be residential the other 500 will be larger. My goal is to be totally done with the residential hopefully by the middle of March. The way this project is tracking right now we hope to have the project complete by the middle of July 2019. We were contracted to get done by April of 2020, but it looks like we will be done about eight months ahead of schedule. Between us and the city, as far as issues go, it has been clean and pretty streamlined. We
have an email system set up with us and the city on it, so every time a resident calls we are all notified. I haven’t heard of any major issues, it’s been good.

Public Works Director Hugh Smith talked about the streets starting with potholes. The phone number to call is 601-485-1990 that is the direct line into the public works department where a work order is prepared to address each pothole. We go out every morning we can, to do repairs; with the exception of the days of bad weather or we don’t have the asphalt needed to make repairs. Our pothole patching unit goes out with a list of potholes that are in an area where the holes are closest together, because we can get more done if we don’t have to move equipment far distances between holes. So, more time is spent actually patching potholes than running around town chasing potholes. That is why you will see us spending days in one area at a time. We also do crack sealing as a preventative measure to keep the pothole from occurring. We are working with the County on paving, I spoke with County Road Manager Rush Mayatt and Supervisor Joe Norwood yesterday, and we looked at some of the roads they want to partner with the City to pave.

President Johnson called for citizen comments:

   a) Melinda Vinson Northan – spoke
   b) Eugene Boger – spoke

President Johnson called for Council comments:

   Various comments were made.

   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