REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2019 AT 5:00 P.M.

Meeting called to order by Council President, Tyrone Johnson.

Present: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Lovell Mosley, of St. John Missionary Baptist Church, and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilman T. Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to confirm the agenda with the following changes: Remove: R-1 (Order authorizing service agreement with Altaworx for telephone lines to East Freshwater Plant.) Add: R-1a (Ordinance setting rules on panhandling, begging and related activities for the city.) Add: R-1b (Ordinance setting rules on traffic and trafficways.) Add: R-1c (Resolution declaring the intention to issue Combined Water and Sewer Systems Revenue Bonds, Issue Revenue Bonds for sale to the Mississippi Development Bank, or enter into a Loan with the Mississippi Development Bank: and directing publication of intention.) Add: R-1d (Resolution approving employment of professionals in connection with issuance of the Combined Water and Sewer System Revenue Bonds.) Add: R-1e (Order authorizing engineering services from Waggoner Engineering, Inc., pm EPA Consent Decree.) Add: R-1f (Order authorizing engineering services from Kimley-Horn & Associates on EPA Consent Decree.) Add: R-1g (Order authorizing engineering services from Neel-Schaffer, Inc., on EPA Consent Decree.) Add: R-1h (Ordinance amending Sections 25-40 and 25-41 of the Code of Ordinances for the city.) Add: R-5 (Lift from Table “Minutes dated May 28, 2019.”) Move from Consent Agenda C-2 and make it R-6 (Order authorizing McNeil Rhoads as sole source source distributor of the Mueller Systems water meters currently used by the city.) (Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the minutes dated November 05, 2019. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

Councilman Thomas asked the attorney if he has looked at both of the ordinances and can we legally do this?

City Attorney, Mr. Kendrick said yes sir. I’m not guaranteeing it won’t be challenged by the Southern Poverty, nor can I guarantee it won’t be challenged by the ACLU; I can’t guarantee it won’t be challenged. But yes, the ordinance for panhandling and the traffic ordinance comport and comply with Mississippi State Statutes.

Councilwoman Houston offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Ordinance:
ORDI. #4527  ORDINANCE SETTING RULES ON PANHANDLING, BEGGING AND RELATED ACTIVITIES FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI

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, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: None
Abstain: F. Johnson.

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

ORDI. #4527  ORDINANCE SETTING RULES ON CHAPTER 23 ARTICLE III SECTION 23-89 TRAFFIC AND MOTOR VEHICLES

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, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: None
Abstain: F. Johnson.

Mr. Mac Underwood of Raftelis Financial Consultants said the bonds needed to finance the improvement required by the EPA Consent Decree will be issued in stages. The financial analysis their company conducted suggests we issue bonds in groups; the first group of bonds issued will be about 41 million and the second group around 36 million dollars and an additional 18 after that.

Councilman Thomas asked how we will pay it back.

Mr. Underwood said by the revenue generated through the water bill rate increases we must impose to pay for the mandated water system improvements required by the EPA.

Councilman Thomas said we need to give the media information on how much the water bill will go up.

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Resolution:

RESO. #6244  RESOLUTION DECLARING THE INTENTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI (THE “CITY”), TO EITHER ISSUE COMBINED WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM REVENUE BONDS OF THE CITY, ISSUE A REVENUE BOND OF SAID CITY FOR SALE TO THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT BANK (THE “BANK”) OR ENTER INTO A LOAN WITH THE BANK, ALL IN THE TOTAL AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL
AMOUNT OF NOT TO EXCEED FORTY ONE MILLION DOLLARS ($41,000,000) FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACQUIRING, CONSTRUCTING, ENLARGING, IMPROVING, REPAIRING, MAINTAINING AND/OR EXTENDING THE COMBINED WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM OF THE CITY; AND DIRECTING PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF SUCH INTENTION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

And, Councilwoman Houston 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 Resolution:

RESO. #6245 RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI (THE "CITY"), APPROVING THE EMPLOYMENT OF PROFESSIONALS IN CONNECTION WITH THE ISSUANCE OF THE COMBINED WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM REVENUE BONDS OF THE CITY, THE ISSUANCE OF A REVENUE BOND OF SAID CITY FOR SALE TO THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT BANK (THE "BANK") OR ENTERING INTO A LOAN WITH THE BANK, ALL IN THE TOTAL AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT TO EXCEED FORTY ONE MILLION DOLLARS ($41,000,000) FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACQUIRING, CONSTRUCTING, ENLARGING, IMPROVING, REPAIRING, MAINTAINING AND/OR EXTENDING THE COMBINED WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM OF THE CITY; AND TO PAY THE COST OF ISSUANCE FOR THE BONDS.

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

The contract cannot be exceeded by any amount. Any increases must come before the Council for approval. The Council must be given quarterly reports on the project. All of the three engineering contracts are three year contracts. Task orders approvals may only be issued by the Public Works Director for the following three engineering firms. The Council requested the stipulations above be added to each of the contracts.

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

ORDER #16863  ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF GENERAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN WAGGONER ENGINEERING, INC., AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (EPA CONSENT DECREE COMPLIANCE 2019)

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.

Kimley-Horn will address the collection system with the actual lift stations, specifically, there is a trump line that runs along Highway 80 that is part of the issue the EPA has that needs rehab.

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

ORDER #16864  ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND KIMLEY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC., (EPA CONSENT DECREE COMPLIANCE 2019)

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.

Neel-Schaffer will address the CMOM Capacity Maintenance Operations Management portions of the consent decree dealing with how well you run your utilities. The EPA has specific guidelines to evaluate management practices. It is about a five year process the EPA gives you to have your management at the expected level.

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

ORDER #16865  ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION AND ACCEPTANCE OF TASK ORDER BASED ENGINEERING SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN NEEL-SCHAFFER, INC., AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (EPA CONSENT DECREE COMPLIANCE 2019)
And, Councilman Thomas 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.

Mr. Underwood of Raftelis did the rate study for the water rate increase to support the bond issues needed to finance the EPA Consent Decree waste lines improvements. There will be a 9% water rate increase per year going forward for the next five years.

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

ORDI. #4529   AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTIONS 25-40 AND 25-41
OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN,
MISSISSIPPI (THE “CITY”)

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

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

ORDER #16866   IN THE MATTER OF: ACCEPTING THE BID OF CONTROL
SYSTEMS, INC., JACKSON, MS FOR SCADA SYSTEM UPGRADE
IN THE AMOUNT OF $80,000.00 AND AUTHORIZING
EXECUTION OF CONTRACT

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 #16867   IN THE MATTER OF: CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT
BY THE MAYOR OF TRENT POSEY AS PARKS AND
RECREATION DIRECTOR FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN
And, Councilman Thomas 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.
Nay: Lindemann.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a majority vote of the Council to approve Section (1) Payroll of the claims docket in the amount of $974,529.72. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston. Voting nay: Lindemann.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a majority vote of the Council to approve Section (2) Mandatory & Operational Items of the claims docket in the amount of $1,565,521.30. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson Houston. Voting nay: Lindemann.

**Total amount approved/passed $2,540,051.02** claims docket dated, November 14, 2019.

Motion was made by Councilman Lindemann duly seconded by Councilman T. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote to lift from the table for discussion the Minutes dated May 28, 2019.

Councilman Lindemann said there were minor changes in the transcript; instead of weapons of protection it should have been levels of protection. I don’t know if it’s a big deal or not, but just for the sake of accuracy the correction was made. So are we voting on what was certified or the correction of that certified transcript? The other thing that was missing is the recording that was requested dealing with the Scott Crenshaw issue that was never provided. But other than that, if we can get on the same page concerning what minutes we are voting on, so it can be part of the permanent record and receive that audio as well, because it was voted that we would request that and have it in the minutes and we are ready to vote at that point.

Councilman Thomas – I’m not going to vote on this, I don’t know if the corrections are correct, I don’t know if they are incorrect, I have not listened to the tape.

Councilwoman Houston – Who certified this?

Attorney Kendrick – I don’t know if certified is a word I would use. I did hire a court reporter; I had to find two of them to listen to the tapes to try to get them transcribed. I was going to recommend to the Council; I don’t know if anybody in the administration has had a chance to look at and or review any edits that are in there to see if in fact that is correct. I would recommend it’s totally up to you guys, that the administration have a chance to review the transcript for that and the edits that were made. Or, if you want to vote on the transcription going in as is without any edits.

Councilwoman Houston – Will we still need some recording or something to pass.

Councilman Lindemann – It’s in the minutes that we asked for it. I would feel comfortable voting for the transcript done by the reporter, there are minor errors, but I don’t think it’s that big a deal. It's more an issue of getting it approved and getting everything that was requested.

Attorney Kendrick – I will work to get the audio transcribed. The Council will have to approve the cost.
Motion was made by Councilman Lindemann duly seconded by Councilwoman Houston and passed by majority vote to Table the issue. Voting yea: T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: Thomas.

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

ORDER #16868 ORDER DESIGNATING MCNEIL RHoads AS THE SOLE SOURCE DISTRIBUTOR OF THE MUELLER SYSTEMS WATER METERS 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.

President T. Johnson called for the Mayor’s Report:

Mayor Bland – I want to take the time to thank the Council for adding the needed items to the agenda tonight. We will continue to work as an administration across all departments. As you all know IT, Public Works, Finance & Records, Executive, and Community Development are going to have to work together on a lot of things you all have voted on tonight. The things with the EPA have been going back and forth for the last four or five years to get to where we are. This is a federal mandate that we have with the EPA and we’ve listened to a lot of information from engineers and other professionals over the last five years to get to this point. We went back to get another rate study to get to the point where we as a community and city had to review how we could actually fund this project. Mr. Underwood and his team at Raftelis presented a lot of that at the meeting last week, but even before that, we had to negotiate back and forth for years to get the federal government to allow us to get the nineteen years to do this work. All of this accumulated tonight on the items you voted on. It has been a lot of work. But, at the end of the day some people may see their water bills going up some, but the mandate had nothing to do with the City Council or the Mayor’s Administration. This is something we are mandated by the Federal Government EPA to deal with. In saying all that even after five years when we look at our water rates comparable to other communities our size, in five or six years we are still going to be in line with what they are paying today. But we as a city will have to communicate to our citizens on how we got to this point and how it affects everyone, both residential and commercial users. What we were discussing with the water meter project took over a year and a few months to install. It is a total on-line system that we have now and it will take some ongoing training and communication that the administration will have to do with you guys. But we are going to train and retrain some people on this. So we will continue to work together on those things. The issue Dr. Thomas brought up tonight on the weekly reports, the young lady in one of the departments has been sending it up the channel to us but it is not getting to Miss JoAnn or to
the Council. We are going to make sure that doesn't happen in the future, because we did say we will give a weekly report, it's been getting to us, but obviously it has not been getting to Miss JoAnn, and we will deal with that. But I wanted to thank you all for all the things we talked about for the last month or two and voted on. And also for the new Parks and Recreation Director, we are looking forward to moving forward in all of our departments. And the Parks & Recreation Department touches a lot of families and we want to service our citizens of all age groups. Thank you guys on voting for support of that role, of serving our citizens. We have a lot of good things going on in Meridian. We have progress going on in every Ward in the city. Whether we agree or disagree, we work together to move this city forward.

We have Meridian Attorney, Aa’keela Hudnall here for the Minority Business Alliance; this is Minority Enterprise Development Week. Ms. Hudnall said the Minority Business Alliance’s mission is to engage and fellowship to try to create ways to be more impactful. MEDW Minority Enterprise Development Week, this week was set aside forty years ago to recognize minority businesses for their achievements and accomplishments on a national, state and local level. This has been a very significant year; we have a slew of activities going on this week.

President T. Johnson called for citizen comments:

a. Melinda Vinson Northam – spoke
b. Christopher Burchfield – rescheduled

President T. Johnson called for Council comments:

Various comments were made by the Council Members.

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