The meeting was opened with prayer by Pastor Ralph Henson, of Life Baptist Church, and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilman 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-3 (Order authorizing award acceptance of 2019 Department of Public Safety Grant to Homeland Security.) Add: R-8 (Order authorizing lease agreement of Union Station to Meyer & Rosenbaum Insurance.) Add: R-9 (Order authorizing lease/rental of Old Freedom Project Building as storage for Ascent Hospitality, LLC, Threefoot Building Renovations.) Add: R-10 (Order authorizing sale of three parcels of surplus property to Sam Dabit.) Add advertisement notification: (Construction Services for Repair of Valley Road Bridge) Move from Consent Agenda 1 to Routine Agenda as R-11 (Minutes dated September 27, 2019 and October 01, 2019.) (Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

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

ORDER #16846 ORDER ADOPTING AND AUTHORIZING CERTAIN PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES PAY ADJUSTMENTS TO BE EFFECTIVE WITH THE FIRST PAYCHECK IN NOVEMBER 2019

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, Lindemann.
Nay: Thomas.

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

ORDER #16847 ORDER AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF 2019 GOOD NEIGHBOR GRANT FROM BIMBO BAKERIES USA AWARDED TO HIGHLAND PARK FOR IMPROVED HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY

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 #16848  ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE FY'18 BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT FOR THE MERIDIAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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

ORDER #16849  ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF FRANCHISE AGREEMENT BETWEEN COMCAST OF MERIDIAN, INC., AND 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.

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

ORDER #16850  ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND RAFTELIS FINANCIAL CONSULTANTS, INC., (PREPARE WATER AND SEWER RATE STUDY)

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.  
Nay: Lindemann.
Councilman Thomas - I want the citizens to understand that if you are expecting a refund back from the state and you owe the city any money it will be taken from you refund to pay the city the debt you owe.

Councilman T. Johnson - I will vote no on this measure because I feel that sometimes this refund coming in may possibly be exactly what some people need to get them back on track.

Councilman Thomas - They can come in and make payment plans to take care of their debt.

Mrs. Latimer - They will send out letters to let people know if we have a good mailing address on file.

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

RESO. #6240 RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI, AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE MUNICIPAL INTERCEPT COMPANY, LLC (“MIC”) TO COLLECT THE CITY OF MERIDIAN’S DEBT BETWEEN MIC AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AS AUTHORIZED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEBT COLLECTION SETOFF ACT

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

Yea: Thomas, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: T. Johnson.

Councilwoman Houston - I wanted to get clarification, email was sent out I’m not sure if there was a response. Is Mr. Norwood still our acting Parks & Rec Director?

Mayor Bland - If y’all want to talk about personnel we can go into an executive session.

Councilwoman Houston - No we are talking about the claims docket payroll.

Mayor Bland - The Park & Rec Interim Director is Joe Norwood.

Councilwoman Houston - Where is he tonight? We haven’t seen him since you Facebook announcement.

Mayor Bland - Again, If y’all want to talk about the Parks & Rec Director or department we can go into executive session.

Councilwoman Houston - Not the department I’m talking about payroll, we’re on the claims docket and I have a very big concern, we have a budget set, as I mentioned in the email, and it is my understanding that payments are being made for two people that are supposed to be operating in a certain position, and one person is in a position that we never see. I’m just trying to get clarification because it seems that we do have a budget set, how is that person being paid such funds and we’re in the process of interviewing and things of that nature. Why would we mess up this year’s budget funding something that is not supposed to be funded, as we’ve never seen this individual?

Mayor Bland - We are not messing up this year’s budget. If y’all want to go into the specifics of the day to day of that department, I will discuss it in an executive session. We have not moved any new money to Doug Stephens; he is still in the role of Director of Homeland
Security and Public Safety. As I've discussed with you all, I do have multiple people helping out in Parks & Rec.

Councilwoman Houston - That’s fine if you don’t want to discuss and answer that question I’m not in favor of voting today on the payroll.

Councilman Lindemann - It's really a question of where is the money coming from?

Motion was made by Councilwoman F. Johnson duly seconded by Councilman Thomas and passed by a majority vote of the Council to approve Section (1) Payroll of the claims docket in the amount of $973,483.53. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson. Voting nay: Houston, Lindemann.

Motion was made by Councilwoman F. Johnson duly seconded by Councilman Thomas and passed by a majority vote of the Council to approve Section (2) Mandatory & Operational Items of the claims docket in the amount of $815,272.62. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson. Voting nay: Houston, Lindemann.

Total amount approved/passed $1,788,756.15 claims docket dated, October 10, 2019.

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

ORDER #16851 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN MEYER & ROSENBAUM, INC., AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (OFFICE SPACE AT UNION STATION)

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 #16852 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN ASCENT HOSPITALITY, LLC AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (STORAGE USE OF OLD FREEDOM PROJECT BUILDING DURING THREEFOOT BUILDING RENOVATIONS)

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.
Resolution:

RESO. #6241 RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN MUNICIPALLY OWNED REAL PROPERTY TO BE SURPLUS AND NOT NEEDED FOR MUNICIPAL PURPOSES AND AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING SELL OF SAME AND EXECUTION OF DEED/S (24TH AVENUE BETWEEN 5TH AND 6TH STREET –BROOKSHIRE LOTS)

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.

Motion made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the minutes dated September 27, 2019 and October 01, 2019. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

President T. Johnson advised of the notification of legal advertisement for the following: a) Contract Services for Repair of Valley Road Bridge.

Council President T. Johnson said we will have a work session on October 22, 2019 @ 8:30 a.m.

Susan Byra spoke; she is the interim Meridian Lauderdale County Public Library Director. I thought it would be a good idea to come and introduce myself; I just started a few weeks ago. I have over thirty years of library experience in administration. Eight years as assistant director, twenty two years as a director, after thirty years in, I was out. But as the story says, just when you think you are out, they pull you back in. The board has hired me to take care of matters at the library while they are in the process of taking applications to the end of this month for a permanent director and going through the interview process and everything like that. Because I’m retired I can only work so much and make only so much money. I figured it up and I’m pretty sure they will find somebody before I reach my limit, I hope. Definitely by the end of the year there will be a permanent director there. But in the meantime, here I am. I wanted to come over and introduce myself. If there are any questions please let me know, I’m normally there in the afternoons.

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

Mayor Bland - I just want to thank the Council for moving forward with the Public Works Department employees.
We have two events on Saturday the 26th; one is the USM Eagles Wheelchair Basketball Team at 2:00 p.m. against the City of Meridian All-Stars Basketball Team at Carver Middle School Gym, this game is put on by the Parks & Recreation Department. Also on the 26th, from about
10:30 until 2:00 p.m. we will have the David Ruffin Event at the Temple Theater and also at the MAXX. This is posted on the city’s facebook and a lot of you put it on your personal facebook as well. We will be naming a portion of that street as David Ruffin Boulevard. Also on Thursday the 24th, we will have our Candy Crawl in Downtown Meridian and on the City Hall Lawn. And briefly, in regards to Parks & Rec, I had a conversation with some of you guys in regards to the situation we’re in right now in leadership. I have communicated with Mr. Norwood Councilwoman Houston, and the question that you were asking, we are moving forward in the direction on that; he will not be the leader of that department. I do want to talk to you one on one in regards to that instead in an open meeting. So I do want to discuss that with you. But the day to day management issues within these departments as the mayor I still have to deal with that.

Councilwoman Houston - The Council set salaries, that haven’t changed. So, we can talk whenever you’re ready. But the Council is supposed to set salaries!
Mayor Bland - And again, you all give us a budget
Councilwoman Houston - Council is supposed to set salaries when some position or something is created, that is supposed to be approved by the Council! So we’ll talk later, since you don’t want to talk now, we’ll talk later,
Mayor Bland - Thank you guys for moving forward with our Public Works Department. Our City will be off for a week, so if there are any meetings we need to have let’s make sure we are aware of that. Thank you.

Councilman Thomas - What about the light at Poplar Springs School, have we gotten that part?
Mr. McAlister - We are working on that right now, the problem is the light is very antiquated and requires new lights, ballasts and wiring for around 30,000. We are working to find a good solution around it as best we can, and we have a police officer on site to direct as needed.
Councilman Thomas - It would appear, if it’s ancient now we’d be better off replacing it, rather than to continue to hunt ancient parts.
Mr. McAlister – I know it sounds crazy, but you are exactly right.
Councilman Thomas – Because today at about 2:30 there’s a policeman that’s having to stand out in the middle of five lanes of traffic in the pouring down rain and cars are still backed up 20 and 30 minutes.
Mr. McAlister – We are working very diligently to try and find money to for repair or replacement.
Councilman Thomas – The police are doing a great job, I appreciate them being there.

My next topic, you know what that is, street sweeper.
Mr. McAlister – The street sweeper will be here Thursday.
Councilman Thomas – Will it be working?
Mr. McAlister – It will be! And I’ll tell you this Doc, I didn’t realize that when it came to the street sweep and the electronics involved, any little pickup that it may have it kind of creates a counter issue, but they have fixed the primary issue and it will be here Thursday or Friday.
Councilman Thomas – And I’m assuming in the next week or so we’ll have a schedule of where it’s going to sweep?
Mr. McAlister – You will. I’ll talk to Mr. Smith, he and I together will ride along in that sweeper to set a bench mark of how much we feel can be swept in an eight hour period.
Councilman Thomas – I imagine with this rain the absence of a street sweeper are going to create major problems for the Public Works Department.
Tell us about the bridge repair.
Mr. McAlister – Some months ago we applied with the Council’s blessing for a CAP Loan through the MDA. That is a loan we pay back, it doesn’t have an interest rate associated with it. It gives the ability to replace that bridge for an industrial entity within the City of Meridian that not only generates a lot of revenue in property taxes, but also is a major employer. The amount we applied for is $1,025,000 and after going through this process with the Engineer, Mr. Taofik, he was able to get the overall price not to exceed this amount.
Waggoner Engineer, Mr. Taofik – Good evening Council, are there any questions that I can answer?
Councilwoman Johnson – You saved the city some money, we are happy!
Councilman Thomas – When are we getting the bridge fixed, and what is the anticipated time?
Waggoner Engineer, Mr. Taofik – We will have the advertising next week. And the construction time is 180 days and we may modify that to 210 days.
Councilman Thomas – We hope by June it will be ready to go.
Waggoner Engineer, Mr. Taofik – I would say by June, July next year, that is correct.
Councilman Thomas – That’s good, thank you.

President T. Johnson called for citizen comments:

   a. Melinda Vinson Northam – spoke
   b. Kevin M. Locke – spoke
   c. Cara Divelbliss and Todd Anreacchio - spoke

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