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 Lovell Mosley, St. John Missionary Baptist Church and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilman T. Johnson duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to confirm the agenda with the following amendments: Add: R-13 (Order authorizing contribution in the amount of $75,000.00 to the Mississippi Children’s Museum-Meridian on pledged amount for development of the museum.) Move: (Citizens Comment Agenda to performed before Routine Agenda.) Add: (Barbara Ivey to the Citizens Comment Agenda.) Switch R-1 to R-11 (Order Confirming the Mayor’s appointment of Tyeasha Lindsey to the Civil Service Commission.) Switch R-11 to R-1 (Residence requirements for Councilmembers and set a hearing date for factual determination.) Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting 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 February 04, 2020. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

President Johnson called for citizen comments:

a) Melinda Vinson Northam – spoke
b) Eddie Holt – spoke
c) Barbara Ivey - spoke

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

RESO. #6254 RESOLUTION SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING IN CONNECTION WITH FACTUAL DETERMINATION REGARDING RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS (FEBRUARY 21, 2020 @ 9:00 A.M.)

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

ORDER. #16901  IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF ROBERT T. CALCOTE TO THE MERIDIAN AIRPORT AUTHORITY

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 #16902  IN THE MATTER OF: CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF KENNETH DUETIN MARKHAM AS PUBLIC DEFENDER EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 15, 2020 FOR THE CITY OF MERIDIAN FOR THE TERM OF THE MAYOR OR UNTIL HIS SUCCESSOR IS SELECTED

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 #16898  ORDER ADOPTING PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING AND STORAGE OF MONEY AND RECORDS USED FOR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PURPOSES

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 #16904  ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI AND COUNTY OF LAUDERDALE, MISSISSIPPI, (2018 BYRNE JUSTICE GRANT (JAG) PROGRAM AWARD)

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 #16905  ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI AND COUNTY OF LAUDERDALE, MISSISSIPPI, (2019 BYRNE JUSTICE GRANT (JAG) PROGRAM AWARD)

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 Resolution:

RESO. #6255  RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF 2020 CONTRACT FOR THE USE OF THE KEMPER COUNTY JAIL

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

Councilwoman Houston offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:
ORDER #16906  ORDER AMENDING ORDER NO. 16857 “ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF LEASE AND MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN BEN NELSON GOLF & OUTDOOR AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (GOLF CARTS FOR USE AT LAKEVIEW GOLF COURSE)” IN ORDER TO ADD A NEW LEASE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

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.

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


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.

Motion made by Councilwoman F. Johnson duly seconded by Councilwoman Houston and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to open the discussion on R-10 (Ordinance authorizing amending and adoption of Water Ordinance Section 25-9, 25-11, 25-13, 25-14 and 25-36 for the City of Meridian.) The issue was discussed and Councilman Thomas said that he has received a lot of questions concerning the Ordinance and to get more clarity on the issue. A motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman T. Johnson to Table the issue. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

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

ORDER #16907  IN THE MATTER OF: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE APPOINTMENT BY THE MAYOR OF TYEASHA LINDSEY TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

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.

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 $989,280.01. 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 unanimous vote of the Council to approve Section (2) Mandatory & Operational Items of the claims docket in the amount of $1,809,329.19. Voting yea: Thomas, T. Johnson, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

Total amount approved/passed $2,798,609.20 claims docket dated, February 13, 2020.

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

ORDER #16908 ORDER AUTHORIZING CONTRIBUTION IN THE AMOUNT OF $75,000.00 TO THE MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN’S MUSEUM-MERIDIAN ON PLEDGED AMOUNT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE MUSEUM

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

President Johnson called for Margaretta Campbell of the Mississippi State DECA – she did not appear. Council President Johnson said he believes they were going to request a proclamation on a DECA Day.

Henry Homan of Street Dreams Car Club, announced a car show at the Northeast Complex on Saturday, March 07, 2020.

President Johnson called for the Mayor’s Report:

Mayor Bland – I am going to be brief, I’m inviting the engineers up here because they are going to be a part of this EPA Decree. They will inform the Council and the community where we are in regards to this consent decree. We have two very important things coming up. This weekend we have on Saturday, February 22, 2020, from 3:00 to 9:00 rain or shine, is the Meridian Mardi Gras. This week is also Arbor Day Week, I won’t read the whole proclamation, but Happy Arbor Day to everyone. We will be planting trees this year.
We will be discussing two or three items in executive session, our Bond Attorney, Tray Hairston, and our Finance Manager, Mr. Thompson, is here tonight. I will skip that for the Friday meeting.

Our Public Works Director, Hugh Smith and Managing Engineer, Waggoner Engineering is here to talk about the consent decree.

Hugh Smith – Tonight we have our team here to address the issues we have with the consent decree:

Ms. Jennifer George, Program Manager from Waggoner Engineering, we are responsible for document control, developing and writing the semi-annual and annual reports that gives and account of all the activities that are happening within the team, reviewing all the reports before they go to the EPA, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Justice. We are in charge of meeting the deliverable deadlines that are required by the consent decree. We are in the process of developing timeline criteria within the consent decree process, and we are also making sure there is public access of the documents concerning the decree.

Mr. Jason Gault, Project Manager from Kimley-Horne Engineering, we are working on the sewer system evaluation and rehabilitation portion of the consent decree. The primary goal is to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows (SSO). We go in and do a comprehensive study of the sewer system and prioritize the sewer basins and formulate a more detailed analysis based on that priority we go in and design rehab measures. We are looking at the chronic sanitary sewer overflows and these are defined and more than one overflow within a twelve-month period. Highway 80 has already been identified as a priority, and we are prioritizing the rest of the system, that is where we are today, our future reports will have more details.

Mr. Matthew Horton Program/Project Manager for the Capacity Management Operations Maintenance (CMOM) portion of the consent decree, and Phillip Gibson, Department Manager from Neel-Schaffer Engineering. We will essentially make sure that once Kimley-Horn has done the evaluation, that information goes properly into the system so in 20 or 30 years we are not back in the same situation again. To get a standard protocol the becomes the standard operating procedure for the public works department in keeping the maintenance of the sanitary sewer system going forward. The CMOM System is the framework public works will use to manage one of the city’s most valuable assets, it’s wastewater collection and transmission system. The CMOM will support the wastewater collection transmission system while supporting the reduction of sanitary sewer overflows, this is what occurs when raw waste water is released through manholes and pump stations within the wastewater collection system. An adoption of an effective CMOM system reduces the city’s long-term liabilities stemming from permit violation, penalties and enforcement actions. While at the same time it protects public health, environmental health, it protects the community as a whole. Other benefits are improved service to customers and reduced operational costs. Essentially the CMOM is a prevention method.

At present this power point is to highlight all the actions taken to assure that all the deadlines are met, that make us in compliance with the consent decree stipulations. Every action taken is based on the original date of the decree, which is August 06, 2019 this is the date the decree became effective.

The delivery timetable for the nine programs: the phase over a period between six to twenty-four months of the consent decree’s August 6, 2019 effective date: Of the nine CMOM programs, the first one due was the sewer overflow response plan (SORT) was submitted to
the EPA on the 4th of February 2020 which satisfies its required February 5, 2020 delivery date.

The following submittal of the SORT, the next two CMOM programs that we’ll develop are the emergency response plan and sewer mapping program; both of which are due to the EPA by August 5, 2020. We are already in the process of developing those. Between now and the next quarterly report we will continue working diligently and come back with more information on those two programs.

Councilman Lindemann – What exactly does the sewer mapping program entail?
Matthew Horton – Essentially it will bring all of the City of Meridian’s collection system assets into a GIS Database. There are already some sewer assets plotted and incorporated into a GIS platform, but at the moment it’s incomplete.

Councilman Lindemann – When this is done, will we know which sewer lines we need to do work on, and therefore which streets will need to be dug up.
Matthew Horton – You won’t be pulling out a paper map, unfolding it
Phillip Gibson – That’s correct, it’s an asset management system, it allows you to tie in your water system.
Matthew Horton – And one day once the tie ins are done it can be accessible online, for public access to see what streets are closed and work being done.

Councilman Lindemann – I think for our purposes we definitely need to know sooner rather than later, just because we are about to consider bonds for paving. We don’t want to tear up streets right after we’ve paved them. Hugh and I have talked about this.
Hugh Smith – And to kind of put you at ease we are in the process of modifying that schedule to address those streets we have an idea of paving. We can modify our schedule in regards to some of the work they are talking about.
Matthew Horton – This information management system is multi-faceted, it has some components that go out to each of the other CMOM programs, it ties back to sewer mapping.
Hugh Smith – Basically, it ties all the other attributes back to this main frame.
Matthew Horton - All 67 of the pump station will be able to identify if there is a mechanical issue, if water is rising above a set level.

Jason Gault - Of those manholes and pump stations that we have identified as having chronic SSO, the monitors we have installed will give an alarm if the set levels are in danger of overflowing.

Jennifer George – The first six months of the consent decree the EPA asked us to deliver both the semi-annual report and the sewer overflow response plan. In the next six months we have eight different deliverables to get through to the EPA. So that is a very extensive scope in a short period of time. We have an obligation per the consent decree to have every deliverable accessible to the public. We have done that by putting in the meridianms.org, your website a quick link, it’s the very first quick link called meridianms consent decree, the documents are there to date, which are only two, but many more will follow. The public can sign up to get an alert when new documents are posted. We have put in a paragraph summarizing each document.

City Attorney, Kermit Kendrick – This is a big benefit to the public, they can get the information there, with no costs associated with the normal information requests.

Jennifer George – I request we do this on a quarterly basis, the next one in June if that is convenient for the Council?

Councilman Thomas - Based on what has been discussed so far, how many more employees do you anticipate we need to hire, have y’all discussed that?
Hugh Smith -We have, based on preliminary information, we have been building the billet numbers for the last two years, so we are not looking at a whole lot.

Councilman Thomas – Do you mean fifty, one hundred?
Hugh Smith – No, no, maybe ten to twelve. Really equipment is our biggest issue, equipment and processing. Once we tap into the technology we can be that much more efficient. We won’t have the old AS-400 System, EPA won’t allow us to have it, that’s why a new system was written into the consent decree. The system should be operational in 36 to 48 months. Thank you.

Councilman Lindemann – Tray, I really need to see that ten years bond model we had discussed and the internet tax revenue, will it cover traffic signals and paving index, those things we discussed? He’s nodding yes, okay.

Bond Attorney, Tray Hairston – Yes to your question, when we had the work session that was something I had to take a look at, we had our weekly bond lawyers’ meeting; with bond lawyer around the state, and other cities have this question as well. We then huddled with the AG’s Office, Auditor’s Office and a few lawyers from the Department of Revenue. And it is of our opinion that anything that is pertinent to or in connection with repairing roads, infrastructure, etcetera, for those particular things you can use the internet sales tax money for those purposes. So, that’s our opinion, it will be referenced in the document when we adopt the bond resolution and when we validate the bonds, we are very comfortable with using the money that way.

Councilman Thomas – It has to be in addition to what we have already been doing. Is that correct, it doesn’t supplant it? My understanding is that the money can be used for additional, not what the city has been traditionally spending.

Tray Hairston – That’s correct.
Councilman Thomas – I don’t know if you have come up with a figure, but I asked you last time, what about bonds, 7,500,000 is a significant amount of money. If we would have to continue to spend that in order to get this money.

Finance Director, Brandye Latimer – According to my calculations the grants are the main issues. there is a place to subtract bonds out of the calculations.
Councilman Thomas – Does bond money count, you are positive?
Brandye Latimer - Bond money does not count.
Councilman Thomas – Okay, as long as you are sure. We will still be obligated to what we have been spending on infrastructure, this money is in addition to that.

Brandye Latimer – Correct.
Tray Hairston – The Legislature in 2018 to address issues relating to infrastructure, during its special session, various states had been using internet sales tax, we were slow to do it. When that Supreme Court case came down and that question was raised by the rating agencies for the state funds, but the legislation of 2018 codified for the use of those funds, and talks about the graduated escalation of the money over time. I looked at the law, there is no sunset to the legislation. As long as the internet exist and sales taxes are being utilized and paid for goods and services those monies will come into the cities up to the tune of 15%.

Financial Advisor – N. Thompson – The pages you have before you show the cost of bonds at 10, 15, and 20 years

President Johnson called for Council comments:
Various comments were made.

An executive session was requested regarding potential litigation with possible action to follow. Motion was made by Councilwoman Houston 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 Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to declare an executive session in order to discuss potential litigation. 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 with no action to follow.

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