REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2020 AT 9:00 A.M.

Meeting called to order by Council Vice-President, Kim Houston.

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

The meeting was opened with prayer by Pastor Gary Morris, of Life Church, and followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilwoman F. Johnson duly seconded by Councilman Lindemann and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the minutes dated December 17, 2019. Voting yea: Thomas, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None. Absent: T. Johnson.

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

ORDER #16885  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, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: None
Absent: T. Johnson.

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

ORDER #16888  ORDER AUTHORIZING IN-KIND DONATION TO THE
MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S MUSEUM-MERIDIAN FOR $2,123.78
WATER METERS AND PERMIT FEES ON THE CONSTRUCTION
OF THE NEW CHILDREN'S MUSEUM AT 403 22ND AVENUE

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

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 **$813,166.60**. Voting yea: Thomas, F. Johnson, Houston. Voting nay: Lindemann. Absent: T. Johnson.

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 **$479,979.97**. Voting yea: Thomas, F. Johnson, Houston. Voting nay: Lindemann. Absent: T. Johnson.

**Total amount approved/passed $1,293,146.57** claims docket dated, December 20, 2019.

The bid below for the rehab of the Valley Road Bridge was recommended by Waggoner Engineering, Inc., as the lowest and best bid. Councilwoman Houston asked if this bid came is lower than the Cap Loan and Public Works Director Hugh Smith, said yes. Councilman Thomas asked when the bridge work would be complete and Mr. Taofik of Waggoner Engineering said the bridge will be repaired by July 2020.

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

ORDER #16891 IN THE MATTER OF: ACCEPTING THE BID #20-02 FROM CENTURY CONSTRUCTION GROUP, INC., TUPELO, MS, FOR REHABILITATION OF THE VALLEY ROAD BRIDGE OVER SOWASHEE CREEK AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF CONTRACT FOR SAID WORK

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

Motion was made by Councilman Lindemann duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the minutes as transcribed, minutes dated May 28, 2019. Voting yea: Thomas, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None. Absent: T. Johnson.
Vice-President Houston advised of the notification of legal advertisement for the following: a) Bid for Grass cuttings on Interstate 20/59 interchanges.

Councilman Thomas asked if the cuttings would be to the base of the trees’ trunk, not at the drip line. Mr. Smith said that is correct.

Vice-President Houston called for the Mayor’s Report:

Mayor Bland turned in an emergency status memo to the Council and requested it be spread upon the minutes. The document reads:

“This document is to inform the council that I have declared an emergency at Fire Station #9. After being made aware of a possible mold contamination I have made this decision to allow for the immediate response to this issue. The safety of our citizens and preventing further damage to city property is priority.”

Councilman Thomas - Is there was a reason we didn’t fix the leak, because on TV it said it has been leaking for months.

Mayor Bland – We had started the process to fix the leak internally and we had Serve Pro look at and they thought it was a possible mold issue and we stopped our process. It has gone on for some time now and we had other vendors look at and if there are contamination issues it will cost a lot more than anticipated. The city attorney is dealing with this matter as it relates to the build out and construction.

Councilman Thomas – So as fare as inspection, they are going to inspect the possible warranty on roofing and construction?

Mayor Bland – To my understanding, yes.

Councilman Thomas – If there is a problem or a problem with construction there should have been some warranty.

Mayor Bland – I can tell you as an insurance person, it will not be covered by insurance because of mold.

Councilman Thomas – I’m not talking about mold, I’m talking about the leak.

Mayor Bland – For 2020 we have a lot of projects we have going on across the city. We have businesses opening all around the city. I think we are going to do a better job as it relates to the Council and the citizens. Our plans moving forward are meetings where we will discuss possibly bond issues to pave our neighborhood street this year at our next work session; also we will discuss time-lines, projects, and issues of public safety. People have concerns with the level of violent activities. We will be addressing those issues and we will have more officers on the streets, putting more cameras in the neighborhoods. We have heard from our citizens and we are taking these issues seriously. We have put up more cameras and LED lights and the lights have helped, but we want to do more and be more responsive to our citizens. APAC is closed for the next three or four weeks so we can’t do any paving right now.

Councilwoman Houston – Mayor where are we with the police station unwind; didn’t we have a time-line on the lease to do something about it?

Mayor Bland – We are back and forth on the negotiations, they have not moved on the counteroffer our attorney presented to them, we are trying to get an answer. We are paying that higher rate since around November 2019; we are at a standstill right now.
Vice-President Houston called for citizen comments:

a. Melinda Vinson Northam – spoke
b. Rhoda Cole and Callie Smith Anderson – spoke

Vice-President Houston called for Council comments:

Various comments were made by the Council Members.

An executive session was requested regarding prospective sale of property and prospective litigation with possible action to follow. Motion was made by Councilman Thomas 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 prospective sale of property and prospective litigation. The Council then went into executive session. Motion was made by Councilman Thomas 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