REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2020 AT 5:00 P.M.

Meeting called to order by Council President, Houston.

Present: Thomas, Davis, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Absent: None.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Lovell Mosley, of St. John Missionary Baptist Church 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: Add R-12 (Ordinance to change polling precincts 1-A, 5-D, and 5-E for electric franchise special election.) Add: Executive Session (pending litigation, personnel performance.) Voting yea: Thomas, F. Johnson, Davis, 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 July 07, 2020. Voting yea: Thomas, F. Johnson, Davis, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilwoman F. Johnson and unanimously passed by the Council to approve the following Proclamation to be issued by the Mayor:

“William F. Scaggs”

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

ORDER #16977 ORDER DECLARING 2012 CHEVROLET CAPRICE, SERIAL NO. 6G1MK5U27CL602316, CONTROL NO. 153-103 SURPLUS AND NO LONGER NEEDED BY THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND AUTHORIZING SAID VEHICLE TO BE USED FOR PARTS

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

Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:
ORDER #16978 ORDER RESCINDING ORDER NO. 16933 ENTITLED “IN THE MATTER OF: ACCEPTING THE BID #20-03 FROM J & P CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC., TUSCALOOSA, AL. FOR THE B STREET WATER TREATMENT PLANT & NORTH WATER TREATMENT PLANT IMPROVEMENTS 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, Davis, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.  
Nay: None.

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

RESO. #6276 RESOLUTION FINDING AND DETERMINING THAT THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED ON JUNE 16, 2020, WAS DULY PUBLISHED AS REQUIRED BY LAW; THAT NO SUFFICIENT PROTEST DESCRIBED IN SAID RESOLUTION HAS BEEN FILED BY THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF SAID BONDS AND/OR BOND AND/OR LOAN.

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

Yea: Davis, F. Johnson, Houston.  
Nay: Thomas.  
Present: Lindemann.

Motion was made by Councilwoman F. Johnson duly seconded by Councilman Davis to open discussion on Routine Agenda Item 2 (Resolution to refinance the city’s 2011 GO Bonds.) After due discussion on the item, motion was made by Councilman Lindemann duly seconded by Councilman Thomas to Table the item. Voting yea: Thomas, Davis, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None. Item Tabled.

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

ORDER #16979 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF CREDIT RATING ENGAGEMENT LETTER AGREEMENT WITH S & P GLOBAL RATINGS AND THE CITY OR MERIDIAN (CONSENT DECREE W&S BONDS, SERIES 2020)
Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16980 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF EARTH’S BOUNTY FARMERS MARKET GRANT APPLICATION TO THE LAUDERDALE COUNTY TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM 2021

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

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

ORDER #16981 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATION TO LAUDERDALE COUNTY TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM 2021 TO ASSIST THE JUNETEENTH HERITAGE FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES

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

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

ORDER #16982 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATION TO LAUDERDALE COUNTY TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM 2021 TO ASSIST THE MERIDIAN MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION ACTIVITIES

And, Councilman Lindemann seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:
Councilwoman F. Johnson offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16983 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 BETWEEN WAGGONER ENGINEERING, INC., AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (VALLEY ACCESS ROAD REPAIRS AT SOWASHEE CREEK LOAD RATING AND STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS)

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

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

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

ORDER #16984 ORDER APPOINTING KIM HOUSTON AS PRESIDENT OF THE MERIDIAN CITY COUNCIL EFFECTIVE JULY 22, 2020

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

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

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

ORDER #16985 ORDER APPOINTING FANNIE M. JOHNSON AS VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE MERIDIAN CITY COUNCIL EFFECTIVE JULY 22, 2020

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

Yea: Thomas, Davis, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: None.
Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Resolution:

RESO. #6277 RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI, GRANTING TAX EXEMPTION FROM AD VALOREM TAXES INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH (2911 6TH AVENUE & 601 30TH STREET) AS AUTHORIZED BY SECTIONS 27-31-1(D) AND 79-11-33 OF THE MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, AS AMENDED

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, Davis, 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 $803,538.99. Voting yea: Thomas, Davis, 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 $1,268,433.74. Voting yea: Thomas, Davis, F. Johnson, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None.

Total amount approved/passed $2,071,972.73 claims docket dated, July 16, 2020.

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

ORDI. #4536 ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING VOTING LOCATIONS FOR PRECINCT 1-A, 5-D, AND 5-E IN WARDS ONE AND FIVE (DESIGNATING NEW VOTING LOCATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL ELECTION OF ELECTRIC FRANCHISE MUNICIPALITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI AUGUST 4, 2020)

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

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

President Houston called for the Mayor's Report:
Mayor Bland said we have two more months in the 2020 budget period and September 30, 2020 is the end of this budget period. We had a strong month in May, we got the number in June. The sales tax revenue was 1.2 million, compared to the prior month of about 380 Thousand Dollars in April. For the year we are down 1.9% compared to last year. This is good compared to a lot of municipalities across the state that are laying off staff, doing furloughs and cutting back on services. Based on these numbers as we go into the budgeting process for 2021 and continue on some of the paths we are on, our budget numbers look strong. But, because of COVID this week we are going to announce another mandatory face mask order for the City of Meridian. We continue to be concerned with the increase in the number of cases coming in. With these increases our hospitals, health care workers and providers are being stretched to the limits. A lot of people across the state are being asked to go to other health care centers for their care, we are one of those that they are coming to, so when our citizens in this county need services we may have to send our people somewhere else if there is no space in our hospitals. With this face mask order, we hope to change the numbers of infections.

We are moving forward with our Explorer Program – leadership program for youth development with Chief Coleman, so I will be getting more information out to you all on what this program entails.

Thank you for accepting the proclamation on Dr. Scaggs, he was a 39-year advocate of Meridian Community College. Dr. Scaggs did a lot for education, he was a mentor for a lot of people, including myself.

I also wanted to mention the passing of Representative John Lewis.

As we go into the budget talks I want to remind everyone that we have a lot of new developments and businesses going on, the Heights will be coming and adding a lot of things to it. We are going to want to be in a position where we won’t have to shut down our city because of the virus, because we do have positive momentum. So, we are asking everyone to be diligent by wearing their masks, social distancing and washing their hands. It was announced that 90% of these transmissions can be stopped by just doing those three things.

President Houston called for citizen comments:

a) Melinda Vinson Northam – spoke
b) Rita Jack – spoke
c) Jessica Culpepper or Michelle McCool or Ruth Sanders – spoke
d) Sarah Johnson - spoke

President Houston called for Council comments:

Various comments were made by the Council Members.

An executive session was requested regarding pending litigation and personnel performance. 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 go into an executive session regarding pending litigation and personnel performance. 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 taken.

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