REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, JULY 07, 2020 AT 9:00 A.M.

Meeting called to order by Council Vice-President, Lindemann.

Present: Thomas, Davis, Houston (via phone), Lindemann.
Absent: F. Johnson.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Councilman Dwayne Davis, followed by the pledge to the flag.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Davis and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to confirm the agenda with the following changes: Add R-13 (Resolution supporting movement of certain monuments.) Voting yea: Davis, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: Thomas. Absent: F. Johnson. Add R-14 (Order authorizing information requests from Councilman Lindemann from police department on Levi Gibbs case.) (Executive Session: pending and potential litigation.) Voting yea: Thomas, Davis, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None. Absent: F. Johnson.

Motion made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Davis and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve the minutes dated June 16, 2020. Voting yea: Thomas, Davis, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None. Absent: F. Johnson.

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

ORDER #16968 IN THE MATTER OF: ACCEPTING AND RECORDING INTO THE OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE MERIDIAN CITY COUNCIL THE OFFICIAL RECAPITULATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE MERIDIAN MUNICIPAL SPECIAL ELECTION FOR WARD 2 HELD ON JUNE 23, 2020

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

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

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

ORDER #16969 ORDER ACCEPTING MONETARY DONATION FROM COLONIAL PIPELINE FOR THE MERIDIAN FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING

And, Councilman Davis seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:
Councilman Thomas offered and moved the adoption and passage of the following Order:

ORDER #16970 ORDER RATIFYING THE RENEWAL TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND KERMIT KENDRICK WITH BURR & FORMAN, LLP, TO SERVE AS CITY ATTORNEY

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

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

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

ORDER #16971 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF SERVICE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND THE MISSISSIPPI POWER COMPANY FOR CAMERAS AT JAMES CHANEY AND VELMA YOUNG PARKS (TOTAL OF EIGHT CAMERAS)

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

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

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

ORDER #16972 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF SERVICE AGREEMENT BETWEEN MISSISSIPPI POWER COMPANY AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN (POLICE DEPARTMENT 33 CAMERAS FOR CRIME PREVENTION TECHNOLOGY)

And, Councilman Davis seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:
Yea: Thomas, Davis, Houston.
Nay: Lindemann.
Absent: F. Johnson.

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

ORDER #16973 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A PERPETUAL EASEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN UNITI FIBER LLC AND THE CITY OF MERIDIAN

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

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

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

ORDER #16974 ORDER AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN POLICE DEPARTMENT AND PIKE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT (LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES TO INCLUDE HIGHWAY INTERDICTION)

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

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

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

ORDER #16975 ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CROSSING RELEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN AND THE ALABAMA GREAT SOUTHERN RAILROAD COMPANY (MILEPOST NO-4.94, DOT 725488X)

And, Councilman Davis seconded the motion, whereupon said Order was discussed, passed and adopted by the Council by a vote as follows:
Yea: Thomas, Davis, Houston, Lindemann.
Nay: None.
Absent: F. Johnson.

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

ORDER #16976 ORDER AUTHORIZING DESIGNATION OF CONTRACTING OFFICERS FOR THE MERIDIAN AND BONITA LAKES DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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

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

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

ORDI. #4534 AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING “AN ORDINANCE GRANTING AN ELECTRIC FRANCHISE TO MISSISSIPPI POWER COMPANY, ITS SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS IN THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI”

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

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

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

RESO. #6274 RESOLUTION SETTING AN ELECTION DATE: NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION OF ELECTRIC FRANCHISE MUNICIPALITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI (AUGUST 4, 2020)

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

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

ORD. #4535 ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI TO: ALLOW FOOD TRUCK PARKS IN THE B-5 GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT BY SPECIAL USE PERMIT BY AMENDING APPENDIX A, ARTICLE II, SECTION 350.04, ARTICLE IX, SECTION 14-171-172, 178-179

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

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

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Davis and passed by a majority vote of the Council to approve Section (1) Payroll of the claims docket in the amount of $1,816,625.56. Voting yea: Thomas, Davis, Houston. Voting nay: Lindemann. Absent: F. Johnson.

Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Davis and passed by a unanimous vote of the Council to approve Section (2) Mandatory & Operational Items of the claims docket in the amount of $1,103,871.52. Voting yea: Thomas, Davis, Houston, Lindemann. Voting nay: None. Absent: F. Johnson.

Total amount approved/passed $2,920,497.08 claims docket dated, July 01, 2020.

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

RESO. #6275 RESOLUTION BY THE MERIDIAN CITY COUNCIL TO REQUEST THAT THE LAUDERDALE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REMOVE ALL CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS WITHIN LAUDERDALE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

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

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

Motion was made by Councilman Davis duly seconded by Councilman Lindemann to open discussion on Routine Item 14 (Order authorizing information requests from
Councilman Lindemann of the police department concerning the Levi Gibbs case.) After due discussion the vote was called for. Voting yea: Davis, Lindemann. Voting nay: Thomas Houston. Absent: F. Johnson.  Motion Failed.

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

Mayor Bland said he is excited to announce the city has received an additional grant of $750,000 funding for the Sela Ward Parkway/22nd Avenue in the Legislative Session. I encourage the Council to reach out and thank our Legislative Delegation and I’d also like to send a thanks to our team of Julia Norman and Eddie Kelly, and our state lobbyist Beth Clay for putting together a package to make this deal happen. We have had a lot of talk back and forth in regards to ditches here in Meridian and what a citizen should do to get the process started. As you all know we don’t have a lot of funding for those type of things and we have to partner with National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to kind of help our citizens to make that happen. We have to go through their process to try and get grant money to make it happen. We have ditch issues all across the city and in every Ward.

Today I have Calvin Jackson here to give a report in regards to this, so we all will know the process for this grant funding avenue. Some things we can’t do for lack of budget and lack of grant funding. I am telling the department to let the persons involved know and close out the work orders.

Hugh Smith – Most of the projects we have done in the past four years as it relates to drainage issues of any significance, other than maintenance projects that were done on the city’s right-of-way have involved NRCS. For the last few months discussion has been what qualifies and what doesn’t qualify for this funding, how do we get the funds and so forth. I thought it would be prudent to bring Mr. Jackson in to speak on this NRCS process.

Calvin Jackson, District Supervisor for the National Resources Conservation Service - I service three counties, Clarke, Kemper, and Lauderdale. The agency’s primary focus is to help landowners make improvements as it relates conservation. One of other programs we assist is land use development. There are what we call storm events, we call the storm events four inches of rain within a 24-hour period. Due to this excessive rain, if there are bridges, streets and roads that are compromised, there is a program that we assist call the Urban Watershed Protection Program. I will reach out to Mr. Smith or he will reach out to me to share that there has been a rain event and the site or location that the city has issues with. I go out to look at the site to verify the damage and that this particular rain event caused the damage. Documents and pictures of the findings are sent to my engineer located in Pearl, MS. She then comes out to verify and we look for structures that can be compromised, any utilities or water systems that can be compromised. She develops a Damage Survey Assessment DSA and a cost for that assessment. She sends that preapproved DSA to Congress for funding. This program isn’t always funded, these requests come into Congress from all over the nation. If the program is funded the city will go out to secure right-of-way and easements needed for the project to move forward. Traditionally the funding is 75/25 where government covers 75% and city 25%. Once the city has secured their funding, easements, signed the agreement; there is only 220 days to repair the project, this includes bids, easements, etc.

Vice-President Lindemann called for citizen comments:
Melinda Vinson Northam – spoke  
Tommy Williams – spoke  
Loretta Bennett - spoke

Vice-President Lindemann called for Council comments:

Various comments were made by the Council Members.

An executive session was requested regarding pending litigation and potential litigation. Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Davis 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 Councilman Lindemann and unanimously passed by the Council to go into an executive session regarding pending litigation and potential litigation. The Council then went into executive session. Motion was made by Councilman Thomas duly seconded by Councilman Lindemann 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