

Meridian City Council Work Session

July 27, 2021.

A Meeting of the Meridian City Council was called to order at 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, July 27, 2021, by Mayor Robert Simison.

Members Present: Robert Simison, Treg Bernt, Jessica Perreault, Brad Hoaglun and Liz Strader.

Members Absent: Joe Borton and Luke Cavener.

Also present: Chris Johnson, Bill Nary, Caleb Hood, Joe Dodson, Brian Caldwell, Joe Bongiorno and Dean Willis.

ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE

☒ Liz Strader	☐ Joe Borton
☒ Brad Hoaglun	☒ Treg Bernt
☒ Jessica Perreault	☐ Luke Cavener
☒ Mayor Robert E. Simison	

Simison: Council, we will call the meeting to order. For the record it is Tuesday, July 27th at 4:30 p.m. We will begin this afternoon's work session with roll call attendance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Simison: Next up is the adoption of the agenda.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: It's my distinct honor to -- sorry. Is my distinct honor to make a motion to adopt the agenda as published.

Hoaglun: Mr. Mayor, I will second the motion.

Simison: I have a motion and a second to adopt the agenda as published. Is there any discussion? If not, all in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it and the agenda is adopted.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

CONSENT AGENDA [Action Item]

- 1. Approve Minutes of the July 13, 2021 City Council Work Session**

- 2. Approve Minutes of the July 13, 2021 City Council Regular Meeting**
- 3. Dovetail Subdivision - Jackson Drain Pathway Pedestrian Pathway Easement**
- 4. Graycliff Estates Emergency Access Easement Agreement**
- 5. Southridge Subdivision No. 4 Sanitary Sewer Easement**
- 6. Final Order for Apex Northwest No. 2 (FP-2021-0038) by Brighton Development, Located at 6575 S. Locust Grove Rd.**
- 7. Final Order for Oaks North Subdivision No. 11(FP-2021-0039) by Toll Southwest, LLC, Generally Located at 5685 N. Black Cat Rd.**
- 8. Agreement Between the City of Meridian and Jessica Condominiums, Inc. for Provision of Water Service Outside Meridian City Limits: Parcel Number R4622730010, S. Meridian Rd.**
- 9. Consent to Annexation Between the City of Meridian and Sawtooth Laboratory, LLC for Property Located at 4455, 4463, 4471, and 4479 S. Meridian Rd.**
- 10. Consent to Annexation Between the City of Meridian and TVM, Inc. for Property Located at 4487 and 4495 S. Meridian Rd.**
- 11. School Resource Officer Agreement Between the City of Meridian and West Ada School District for the 2021-2022 School Year**
- 12. Resolution No. 21-2278: A Resolution Approving Adoption of the Community Development Block Grant Program Year 2021 Action Plan and Submission to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development; Authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to Execute and Attest the Same on Behalf of the City of Meridian; and Providing an Effective Date**
- 13. Resolution No. 21-2279: A Resolution Declaring the Intent of the City of Meridian to Convey to the Ada County Highway District for Right of Way Purposes a Portion of Certain Real Property Located at Discovery Park off of E. Lake Hazel Road Adjacent to the Proposed Apex Subdivision, Approximately 1320 Feet to the East Of S. Locust Grove Road; Instructing the City Clerk to Establish and Notice a Hearing to Review the Proposed Conveyance; and Providing an Effective Date**
- 14. Resolution No. 21-2280: A Resolution Amending the City of Meridian's Citywide Records Retention Schedule; and Providing an Effective**

Date

Simison: Next up is the Consent Agenda.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: Very grateful for the opportunity to make a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda and for the Mayor to sign and for the Clerk to attest.

Hoaglun: Second the motion.

Simison: Is the second also greatly -- once it is greatly --

Hoaglun: I'm appreciative that I can second the motion, Mr. Mayor.

Simison: Okay. Thank you. I have a motion and a secondary. Is there any discussion? If not, all in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it and the Consent Agenda is adopted.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

ITEMS MOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA [Action Item]

Simison: There were no items moved from the Consent Agenda.

DEPARTMENT / COMMISSION REPORTS [Action Item]

15. Mayor's Office: Recommendation of Appointment of Laurelei McVey to Public Works Director with an Effective Date of August 3, 2021

Simison: So, we will go right into Item 15, which is a recommendation of appointment of Laurelie McVey to Public Works director, with an effective date of August 3rd, 2021st. This is one where I expect the whole public to say someone's very grateful to make this motion fairly at the appropriate time.

Bernt: That's a guarantee.

Simison: But, Council, you have before you my recommendation to appoint Laurelie McVey to be the next Public Works director for the City of Meridian. We -- you all know her. I have had an opportunity to get to know her more through the process and it is clear she is the right person to take the reins and move the Public Works team forward, with the challenges we face and the opportunities, and lead the department and so it's with my honor that I recommend her for your approval and consideration for this new position and I would be happy to answer any questions you have and we won't let her talk until

after our motion is made at that point in time. Unless you have questions for her, but -- yes.

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor, would you like a motion and, then, discussion?

Simison: That works for me.

Hoaglund: Well, Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Hoaglund.

Hoaglund: I move that we approve the esteemed Mayor's recommendation appointing Laurelie McVey to the Public Works director with an effective date of August 3rd, 2021.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: I second the motion.

Simison: I have a motion and a second. Is there discussion on the motion?

Bernt: Mr. Mayor, I will start off.

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: No brainer. It was a great interview. Laurelie is just very well prepared for this role. I think that -- very confident that she has the support from her -- from her team. Highly regarded in the Public Works arena, not only in the -- in Meridian, but also -- not even in this -- in the valley, but throughout the state and just very grateful and happy that she did well in her interview and not surprised at all and I'm excited to see what this -- the next chapter is in Public Works. So, congratulations to you, Laurelie, and great to see you in this position. I know you are going to do awesome.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: I wholeheartedly agree and I believe that Laurelie is the exact type of leader that we need in this role and she has my confidence. Thank you for recommending her.

Simison: Anybody else at this time for discussion?

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Hoaglund.

Hoaglun: Well, I just appreciate that my Alma Mater is well represented with Laurelie's appointment, so that's always a good thing. Go Yotes. But it just -- it's -- it's wonderful to have her with her experience coming to -- to lead the organization in Public Works and I think the best advice I can give her is that you aren't -- you aren't doing this alone. Yes, you are now going to be the leader, you are -- you are -- you are -- people are looking to you, but you have got a great team and you have got people who -- in Public Works that know their jobs, do it well, great customer service and you are going to be well supported and -- and I know that your success will be their success and everything else that comes along with that. So, I just look forward to your -- your tenure as the Meridian Public Works director.

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: I'm very excited to see that we have someone who has been with the city for a long time that loves being here and that wants to -- to lead our significant Public Works department and that is what we hope and -- and desire for the city is that we have staff that -- that want to stay with us long term and serve here. It's an honor when our staff do that and I also want to say that I always believe that we should have the -- hire the best candidate no matter what, but I am excited to have another female director in our city.

Simison: Thank you. Well, I have a motion and a second and everyone has spoken. So, with that I will ask the Clerk to call the roll.

Roll call: Borton, absent; Cavener, absent; Bernt, yea; Perreault, yea; Hoaglun, yea; Strader, yea.

Simison: All ayes. Motion carries. Congratulations on your appointment effective August 3rd.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

Simison: And, of course, she's prepared with remarks.

McVey: Don't worry. No PowerPoint yet. First I would like to thank the Mayor and Council for your support and your continued support over the years. I really appreciate it. You know, most people go into Public Works -- usually not by choice, but kind of just fall into it. But I feel so lucky that I did. Not very many jobs you get to provide something to every single citizen of the entire city every single day and I don't take that responsibility lightly. I also feel really lucky to get to do what we do for the environment every day, taking care of one of our most precious resources, our city's water. But, more importantly, I love that I get to work with so many amazing people from diverse backgrounds. So, scientists, operators, to engineers. So, thank you for giving me this opportunity. I promise that I will give it my all. I will always be honest, fair, and fiscally responsible and I will work hard to make you proud, but, more importantly, to make you proud of our whole department and

so to all of the Public Work staff, thank you, because I couldn't do it without you -- without your support, your talent, and your hard work and I promise to always work hard to ensure that you have the resources to do your best work every day and hopefully make this a place that you enjoy coming to every day and I would also like to thank Dale for his support and motivation. I probably would not have gone back to school without his push. So, I thank him for that. But one of the many lessons that I have learned from Dale is to always put your people first and that's something I plan to carry forward. So -- and, lastly, to my family that's watching -- I'm not sure on which one, but thanks for always being in my corner and I love you and thank you for your support.

Bernt: That's awesome.

16. Police Department: Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Reallocation in the Amount of \$927,633.00 to Fund Police Department Administration Building Remodel

Simison: It is. And you are welcome to stay throughout the rest of this time if you would like or we won't take offense if you decide that the next few items are not as exciting from that standpoint. But with that we will move on to Item 16, which is the Police Department Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Reallocation and I will turn this over to Mr. Lavoie.

Lavoie: Mr. Mayor, esteemed Mr. President, I just want to say grateful that you give me the opportunity to speak in front of you today. But I'm here to answer any questions that you may have on this request. Give you the quick summary version of this. Fiscal year 2020 this budget was presented to you as Council for remodel at the police station. It was approved in 2020 for about a million dollars. At that time we -- Finance, we failed to review the document in details to figure out exactly what was being requested. At that time we requested a certain amount of the money to be used by impact fees and impact fees are restricted to certain construction projects and we failed to recognize the construction projects at that time. So, we are now standing here in front of you acknowledging our error. The projects still want to move forward. We are just asking that we utilize the Capital Improvement Fund in lieu of the impact fees in the amount of 900 and something thousand dollars that's submitted to you. So, again, we are owning our error. We are just asking that the project still wants to move forward. We do have Jamie Leslie to answer any project questions. He has the scope details. I'm owning the mistake of using impact fees, instead of Capital Improvement Fees, from fiscal year 2020's budget. So, I would stand for any questions that you may have.

Simison: Thank you, Todd. Council, do you have any questions?

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: Todd, it's not obvious to me why the impact fees are not -- why this isn't permissible. Can you go into detail on that?

Lavoie: Definitely. So, impact fees can only be used for construction, one time capital projects, that expand or increase the level of service as it is measured within the impact fee study. Within the impact fee study the Police Department level of service is actually measured by the amount of square feet of administration building. Since this project is not increasing the level or the amount of square feet, it's only remodeling existing, therefore, these projects are not actually eligible, because we are not increasing the number of square feet within the building.

Simison: Irregardless of what that space is used for you.

Lavoie: You got it. The footprint is the footprint still.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Thanks, Todd. Appreciate you coming up here and we all make mistakes, all of us do, and the important thing is just to own it in a straightforward way and I super appreciate that about you and your team, because that's what gives us the confidence in the Finance Department is how transparent we are. So, I really appreciate that. I don't have any concerns personally.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: I don't have any concerns either, but, you know, again, ditto to what my fellow Council Members have said. I would also like to add to the fact that, you know, one of the reasons why we are who we are as a city is because how financially responsible we are. I mean there are many cities in the state and -- and -- and throughout this nation that if they were -- that have to flip a bill of a million bucks, there would be no way that they could do it and -- and with us and how we are managed -- not going to say that it's a big deal, but this is something that we absolutely can handle and we are going to move on. So, it's just a true testament to how we run our city. How the Finance Department make sure that -- you know, that we dot our I's and cross our T's and we have the resources available during a rainy day when problems arise that we are going to be okay and to our citizens who are out there listening, this is how it's done. This is the reason why we have funds available for these type of situations and so, on one hand we made a mistake, but on the other hand we are okay, because we prepared for these things. So, that's what I wanted to say. Thanks, Todd.

Lavoie: Thank you.

Simison: And I will just add, this actually frees up impact fees to go towards police substations as well. So, they have a use -- a dedicated use that makes more dollars available for that sooner, rather than later, of one way -- no matter how you want to look

at it, so --

Lavoie: Great.

Simison: Not a loss, just reallocation. It's my understanding that we do not need a motion on anything pertaining to this. This was more informational.

Lavoie: Not in this case. I don't think we need to get a motion. I think it was more informational and answer any questions for you. Fund allocations are under my purview as the CFO of the City of Meridian. I have the authority to make this change on your behalf, if you guys are okay with it, which sounds like we are okay with it. Thank you.

Simison: Thank you, Todd.

Bernt: Jamie, thank you.

17. Public Hearing for Ordinance 21-1936 to Amend Title 1, Chapter 6, Section 5 of Meridian City Code Providing for Mayor's Compensation and Providing for Market Adjustments and Ordinance 21-1937 to Amend Title 1, Chapter 7, Section 9 of the Meridian City Code Providing for City Councilmembers Compensation and Providing for Market Adjustments

Simison: Okay. So, Council, the next item is a public hearing for Ordinance No. 21-1936. I'm going to open this public hearing with comments from Mr. Nary.

Nary: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, Members of the Council. So, what we have done -- this is the -- this is the time that we had noticed for a public hearing for today for any citizen comment or any Council discussion on the ordinances. The ordinances are listed on your regular agenda for approval. If you recall from last week, Mr. Evarts came and explained what the recommendation from the citizen committee was in relation to both increases for the Council's compensation annually, as well as the Mayor's compensation and their basis for it. Crystal Ritchie, the HR director, and myself attended all those meetings. So, if there are questions about -- about process, Mr. Evarts couldn't be here tonight. But if you have questions about process or any additional follow up from last week, my only ask is that based on the state ordinance -- or state statute and what's required in put -- in adding any addition to compensation for either the Council or the Mayor, we will have to take action tonight for it to be published timely to meet the state requirements before the election. We wouldn't have another opportunity, since there is no meeting next week, to have it passed and published in time. So, I can answer any questions. Crystal has certainly all the information and data that the committee looked at if you have additional questions after last week's conversation. I don't know if anybody signed up online or -- we are here to testify about it, but this is the time for the public to weigh in if they wish to. I don't know what our -- if anyone has wanted to weigh up.

Simison: Okay. Thank you. Council, any questions for Mr. Nary at this time? Okay.

Bernt: No, sir.

Simison: This is a public hearing. Is there anybody that would like provide testimony on this item, please, use your raise your hand feature on the Zoom platform or come forward at this time to the podium.

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: We don't have to take any action this evening or make a motion or anything. We still have some more readings then?

Simison: The readings are on the 6:00 o'clock --

Nary: They are on the 6:00 o'clock and if -- whatever action you are going to take has to be taken today.

Bernt: Or even at the 6:00 o'clock or is that now?

Nary: No. It can be at 6:00 o'clock.

Simison: It says 6:00 o'clock.

Nary: This is just the hearing opportunity.

Simison: Yeah. We -- and I think we said if we have anyone to come speak -- is there at 6:00 -- for the 6:00 we would probably take their testimony or comments at that time on the ordinances as well. But we thought we would do the official public hearing here from that standpoint. So, seeing no one who has raised their hand or come forward, I would take a motion to close the public hearing.

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: So moved. I move that we close the public hearing for Ordinance 21-1936.

Strader: Mr. Mayor, I will second the motion.

Simison: I have a motion and a second to close the public hearing.

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: I apologize. Mr. Nary just pointed out there is two ordinance numbers, so may I restate my motion?

Simison: Yes. I don't know that I opened both of them. I think I just opened the first one to -- I mean technically we don't even need a public hearing --

Nary: Correct.

Simison: -- from that standpoint, but for the record we will note that both Ordinance 21-1936 and 21-1937 were opened. No one provided testimony on either one and Council Woman Perreault has made a motion to close both of them at this time. Any second?

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: If -- if -- will that still allow people to -- folks to testify at the next meeting, even if it's --

Simison: Correct.

Bernt: Okay. Council Woman Strader second.

Simison: Okay. Motion and second. Any discussion? If not, all favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it and the public hearing is closed and we will take up the ordinances at the 6:00 o'clock meeting.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

18. Valley Regional Transit Fiscal Year 2022 Funding Request

Simison: Next item up is Valley Regional Transit fiscal year 2020 funding requests. I will turn this over to Mr. Hood.

Hood; Thank you, Mr. Mayor, Members of the Council. Stephen Hunt is here. He is the development director from VRT. Just a quick introduction. On May 28th VRT staff did send a memo to the city. It was addressed to our CFO Mr. Lavoie. It outlined and detailing their FY-22 requests and services in the projects in Meridian. Their FY-22 requests are different than what was anticipated by about 18,000 dollars, largely because of revenue shortfall. This came up when you were talking about the draft budget for this next year. We didn't have the memos readily available to give to you at that time when you were in this room looking at those and requested that VRT come and explain and discuss that request a little bit further. So, again, Mr. Hunt is here and he will walk you through that a little bit more.

Simison: Thank you.

Hunt: Good afternoon, Members of the Council and Mayor. Glad to be here. So, again, my name is Stephen Hunt, development director with Valley Regional Transit, and I was going to -- tonight's presentation I was going to touch on three different things. Before we get to the funding request just wanted to go over some highlights of what we were able to accomplish over the last year and also some background on the cost allocation model and, then, the request so -- I'm not sure --

Johnson: Steve, is it on your screen?

Hunt: It is not.

Johnson: Okay. I will be right there.

Hunt: It is not yet responding. There we go. So, again, yeah, highlights, cost allocation funding request. First of all, the thing that I wanted to mention is that we over the last year have been working on developing the -- the electric charging infrastructure, as well as getting electric vehicles for the electrification and expansion of our transit fleet. We took delivery of our first vehicle this past month and want to actually invite the Council and anybody that is interested into a ribbon cutting that we are planning for mid September when we will be out of the Orchard facility launching the -- unveiling the -- the electric vehicles that have started to arrive. By the end of the year we will have 12 of those vehicles, two of those to support the service here Meridian. We have also been working on improving loading and unloading areas within the City of Meridian and events of the service launch this October. Therefore, different locations that we have been that -- that we have improved to -- to make it easier for people to get on and off the bus. We have also redone the website, which is an effort to just improve our communication with the public. It supports the efforts we have done on Twitter and Facebook to better engage the public. We have had more responses that -- that way and the website redesign is focused on helping people use the service, get faster to how to pay, how to -- how to ride and do trip planning and that's been -- that's been great. Along those same lines we also redesigned the transit schedules. These are small things, but they are important, because what we are trying to do is make sure that it's easy for the public to -- at a glance see what transit connects people, to how to use it, and -- and what it means to them. So, the front cover of all -- of all of our paper schedule is now at a glance show when the service is available, the types of destinations you can reach using that service and the amount of time that it takes to travel along that. The other thing that we have been doing over the last year and a half is improving our on time performance. We have seen some substantial improvements in that over the last period. Our current regional -- or system wide on time performance now stands about 84 percent. But all of those things happened, as you know, under -- under the veil of COVID over the last year, which has had some significant impacts on our service -- the service we have been able to provide and the activities that we have been doing, again, over the last 18 months or so. Throughout that period VRT as a -- as a sponsor and support to Harvest Transit continued to provide technical support to our specialized transit providers. In the City of Meridian that -- that includes Harvest Transit. We increased the amount of cleaning, as everybody else did, in our services to try to make sure that we were providing safe places for people to use

to get to where they need to go. We implemented remote working and meetings, again, leveraging some of the social media output -- or tools, platforms that we have been using with -- with the website, with Facebook, doing Facebook live meetings, as you all have done as well. Those are the same types of activities that we were doing through this -- through this period. You know, we also suspended the launch of the Route 30, which was scheduled to begin this past spring. We put that off until October of this year, which, again, we are hoping gets us farther out of COVID. We will see I guess with that. But that's -- that's on the schedule now for October. I stepped over the Safe Travels Treasure Valley newsletter, which is something, again, that we launched during COVID to help communicate to the public what it was the VRT was doing to ensure that people can use both our services, as well as the vanpool services that the Commuteride offers to make sure the people knew that they could still get around to where they needed to go in a safe manner and that web -- or that newsletter we have continued throughout this whole time and I think has become an asset to us in terms of our ability, again, to communicate with the public about what's going on and highlight things for them and we anticipate doing that on into the future. But some of the significant impacts that came with COVID was in our ridership. So, we were seeing some growth going into 2020 compared to the previous years and all of that was reversed with the -- with the impacts of COVID. The two services -- fixed route services that serve Meridian, the Routes 40 and 42, and in the first quarter of 2020 totaled about 17 -- almost 18,000 boardings and in first quarter of 2021 that had dropped down to -- just to 8,000. Those were the routes that -- well, 40 in particular, which is a peak period service getting people to work from Nampa, Meridian and Caldwell into Boise saw a decline of upwards of 75 percent of -- of our ridership during COVID. So, those took some -- some big hits. The 42 -- what's a smaller route, less -- less significant in terms of ridership decline, but still significant. Specialized transit services, such as Harvest Transit and Rides To Wellness also took a hit during COVID. There was a period of time when they completely shut down at the depths of COVID. Those have all started to come back. But we are still off of where we were in 2020 or 2019. So, that's the background for where we are headed as we go into 2021, which includes the launch of the Pine 30 route, which connects Ten Mile to Kleiner Park in The Village. We are beginning to develop -- or we are developing our -- our launch and awareness campaign for that. We anticipate doing some events. So, the 14th I think I mentioned was when we are doing the ribbon cutting for the electric vehicles of Orchard. We plan on doing another ribbon cutting style event for the launch of the service -- like next week or the week after that prior to October 30th when we launched the Pine 30 route and we would like to work with you all to invite you to come out to that as well. And, then, post launch we anticipate doing a number of engagements throughout the fall with the public to just raise awareness about the service and encourage people to use the new service. But we -- despite all of that we do still plan on the slow start for -- in terms of ridership, but we -- we know that it -- looking at the corridor, everything's still continuing to grow along the corridor. We -- we believe it's the right solution and we will work with you and our partners to -- to be successful in that. We have also talked to staff about how we -- how we grow that service over time. We -- whenever we launch new services we talk about the amount of time it takes for service to mature, about 12 to 24 months for the route to have the ridership that -- for people to change their travel behaviors and start using it to the extent that they will. And, then, we are also continuing to work with our partners at the City of

Boise and elsewhere about connecting that over -- that service, so that we have connections on both ends to Nampa and to Boise and those are things that we -- we see coming down the -- down the pipeline -- pipeline. So, just a few words now about the cost allocation model. There are three different types of services -- three different types of costs that we speak of in the cost allocation model. There is a regional overhead, which handles the administration and finances the things, the type -- the types of things that aren't directly attributed to where service is consumed and, then, we -- we have services which are distributed according -- well -- so, that's things like the fixed route service, para-transit, anything related to the operations of service and, then, capital, which is, obviously, any associated capital for providing that service. So, those are the three categories of -- of expenses that we have put into the cost allocation model and the way -- the way it works is we start with identifying all of our expenses in those categories and we subtract from that the revenues that we see coming in and those revenues would be either directly generated revenues or revenues that come from -- from advertising or federal sources and that -- that gap between our expenses and those revenues is what we, then, target to raise locally. That's our total local need. We take that and break that up into those categories of general assessment service and capital and, then, we distribute those categorized costs into -- among our partners according to either where the services are consumed -- in the service and capital. So, that's the amount of revenue miles. Or for the general assessment based on their regional share of the -- of -- sorry -- their share of the regional population. So, general assessment costs are distributed by the -- each jurisdiction's share of the regional population and services capital is based on where service is consumed and that results in, then, the local requests. So, for the City of Meridian, as was mentioned, we -- we work with our partners early and often to try and help them see what -- what to expect. However, the downside of that is those numbers continue to change over the -- the budget period. We -- when we -- early in the spring we had an estimate -- original estimate of about 595,000 dollars that we would need for FY-22 from the City of Meridian and as we -- as the budget process cycle continued we recognized that we needed to reduce what our directly generated revenues were going to be for FY-2022. We weren't expecting the impacts of COVID to last as long as they -- we anticipate them lasting now, so we have -- we have modified those revenues down and, then, had to redistribute those costs among our partners, which means our local share went up. We also made a few minor changes to the route miles, which had some -- some changes around the edges, but that's the -- what you can see on the slide in front of you is how those cost broke out between the -- the general assessment service assessment capital and special assessments. So, special assessments I guess I failed to mention. Those are the things such as Harvest Transit and Rides To Wellness. Those specific things that the community wants to see VRT accomplish. We work with -- with those communities to identify the appropriate funds for the services. So, the difference between what was presented in the spring and now was, again, because of the -- the reduction in directly generated revenues and, then, we took those -- those back through the cost allocation model and everybody's share adjusted and Meridian's share went from 595, up to three -- or, sorry, 613 -- 651. A note on here about what the difference between the proposed and the baseline is. We, again, work with our partners to ensure they understand what the total costs are for providing the service. We -- as you know or may know -- have received more federal funds over the last year to address some of the

impacts of COVID and that's the difference between the baseline and the proposed is the application of -- of those one time funds from federal sources to -- to offset those costs to local jurisdictions. So, that's what that -- what that discount or difference is, but we don't want that to become a surprise in future years when those funds aren't available. So, want to keep an eye on both the baseline and the specific budget. One more slide, but I feel like I want to pause here for any questions about --

Simison: Council, any questions?

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Thank you. Question. I mean COVID, unfortunately, is still here. Unfortunately appears to be happening continuously. Is it your recommendation that it's better to move forward on opening 30 Pine route, as opposed to suspending it for another year? Help me understand the -- the thought process.

Hunt: Mr. Mayor, Council Member Strader, so I don't know where the delta variant is going and I don't know the degree to which things may close back down again, but prior to the delta variant arising, yes, it was our recommendation that we go ahead and move forward with the Route 30 investments for a couple of reasons. One, we knew that we would be coming out of COVID at that time. We knew that people might be changing back into behavior like different travel patterns and we wanted to be there, then, when people might be trying out something new or getting back into the rhythm of things, as opposed to wait until everything's completely back to normal and, then, go and try and find new people. So, we feel that there is -- I mean there is a value in being there when -- when people are coming back, as opposed to waiting for them to be back and, then, starting. But to be completely frank, I don't know what's going to happen with the delta variant -- if things were to go back to how they were last spring, no, maybe we would want to -- we want to postpone that. But I think that would be more on an emergency basis to say like let's tap the brakes for a couple of months and implement when it makes more sense.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: When could we make that call? Is there -- is there a decision point where you would come back before us closer to October with an update about, okay, let's push the button and go, as opposed to waiting? And I don't know what the magnitude of the incurred costs are considering that there is a federal offset. If you can quantify that.

Hunt: Mr. Mayor, Council Woman Strader, I don't have a drop dead date. I mean we are working right now on -- on launching October 1st. I don't see -- I mean, yeah, we were not planning on -- on delaying given where we were at right now. When -- but when

COVID happened, remember, I mean nobody -- none of us saw that happening at that point. So, can we respond when things go crazy? Yes. And I guess I would anticipate delaying the 30 at this point would be more akin to that, then, looking at the future and saying we really don't think this is the right time, let's push off for another year. I think it would be -- nobody expects us to necessarily be where we were last spring. I don't know what people expect. But that would be different circumstances.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Got it. Thanks. That's helpful. So, from your perspective it makes the most sense to move forward as planned, with the thought being that if we were to see a big change in behavior from this new level of activity, which is already half of what we expected; right? Then at that point we could suspend it again. Okay. I just wanted to sort of understand like the thinking and at what point you would come back and sort of like touch base with City Council or others about plans.

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Hoaglund.

Hoaglund: Stephen, thanks for the presentation. I just want to explore a little bit on the baseline and proposed and you mentioned the federal funds and whatnot and it's kind of like some of the property tax funding that has happened where -- the property tax floor this year, but be ready for next year. But to that point, though, if we do have a bounce back and things get more back to normal, there should be higher revenues to help offset that. So, we don't -- I just want to be sure we don't have to look at that baseline as something that, oh, okay, the following year it's going to be at least that, if not more, because the revenue structure may increase enough to offset some of that increase; is that correct?

Hunt: Mr. Mayor, Council Member Hoaglund, yes, that's -- I guess I should say that's feasible; right? There is lots of different things that could happen there and what I hope you got out of it, that really brief cost allocation model is understanding, yeah, whatever happens to those revenues are going to impact the local cost that we, then, distribute. So, if we see an increase in fare revenue, which we would expect with ridership returning, the increase that we saw between what we said in the spring and now wouldn't be there and so -- but the additional revenue that we got from the feds wouldn't be there. They are not -- they are not at the same scale. But they would be -- if -- don't take the 732 to the bank I guess what I would be saying.

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor. Stephen, yes, that's what I want to be sure, so we can have that in mind, but, yes, it may not be a static figure for the future. So, thank you.

Bernt: Stephen?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: What is your current ridership as we speak? I know that earlier in the year it was, obviously, not where it was to be expected because of COVID, but where is it currently?

Hunt: It's -- I don't have a specific number, but it's still low. We haven't seen -- so, typically, what we see is we see ridership increase as we go into the fall, because school is back in session, that kind of stuff happens, so you will see a decline in the summer and, then, a jump back in the fall. We didn't see that this past fall and it's -- and now we are back into the summer again. So, it -- it's still low.

Bernt: Right. Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: So, I guess piggybacking on what Council Woman Strader mentioned, hence the reason -- normally in business where I come from, you know, if it's -- if ridership is low and business is low, you -- you cut costs, you scale back, and so that would be my first recommendation is to -- is to figure out how to maneuver through that unpredictability and I understand that that's what it is, it's hard, and you don't know what this delta variant is going to do and by all means do I want to scare the public and, you know -- not by any means, but it's -- it's real and so I would look real hard at that and -- because it's tough for me to allocate more funds to VRT knowing that your ridership is down and you are not getting as much activity as you once were and not knowing where that ridership is going in the future and hence the reason why Council Woman Strader asked the question that she did, so -- but did you guys -- one last question.

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: Did you guys -- did you guys get any COVID relief?

Hunt: We did. Yes.

Bernt: Okay. And -- okay. Those are my -- one last question. I'm sorry, Mr. Mayor.

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: So, what -- what did that COVID relief look like? I mean I know that we had a bunch of money that we got from the feds and we allocated it for different things. Did you allocate some of your funds from the feds to -- to offset some of your losses that you incurred this past year?

Hunt: Mayor and Council Member Bernt, yes, that's exactly what we did and working with our partners identified the areas that -- what -- those funds went to support operations largely and, then, that freed up other funds potentially for other types of activities and we have been working with -- with City of Meridian staff and all of our other funding partners

on how that impacts other investments. But they went to operations is the short answer.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Yeah. I mean -- so, it looks like -- at least based on this slide if their original estimate was 595,000, that the COVID relief was pretty significant in helping to offset the increase to the baseline. So, it's a change of around 18,000 dollars for this year coming up. I guess what I would say is I think there is a -- you are hearing -- you know, we are a fiscally conservative town, you are hearing that, so the change isn't huge this year, but next year if your ridership is the same or has fallen further, we would be looking at an increase of possibly 100,000 dollars with less ridership and I think you would be in a really tough position. So, I would say it would be important, I think, to come up with -- we are hoping -- you are hoping to get that net out there to capture people's behavior changes and that makes sense to me, but I think you would want to come through with a Plan B, you know, option for us or something, if we -- if we are in a bad situation a year from now, would just be my personal take on it.

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: Just some questions about Route 30 and it sounds to me like you have a marketing plan. Has there been consideration of making that more robust as far as mailers to residents that live near a stop, being present at community events with booths and whatnot? Just, you know, those types of marketing efforts can become very staff intensive -- intensive and expensive and maybe you have done these in the past and they have not worked for the, you know, effect that you had intended them to. So, can you -- in line with Council Woman Strader's question about do we delay, you know, can you speak to what your anticipation is of how that marketing effort will improve the public's knowledge of the route?

Hunt: Yes. Mr. Mayor, Council Member Perreault, the -- the efforts around the -- our engagement with the community are focused on -- we will have a few pre-launch events, but, then, post launch is where we would be focusing most of our efforts, so that we wouldn't be telling them to use something that -- in a month, but go out and use it tomorrow and so the schedule is that those will happen over this fall after -- after the service is launched. We are anticipating being present at various community events and doing the types of things that you have described. Those would be the -- kind of our go to and leveraging relationships we have both with the Chamber of Commerce and -- and the City of Meridian to get both the residential side, as well as the employment side, helping people see the opportunities that are available there. Yes.

Simison: And I will just add -- I mean part of the reason why we are here, quite frankly, was this -- this took more staff time and budget preparation than probably anything else

between Community Development, Finance, my office, because it was a moving -- this was a constant -- constant moving target and that -- that became probably part of some of my personal frustration when, again, we get to budget day and we have got a different number again presented. So, what I would encourage you to go back to VRT is find a number, stick with it, and present it and, then, live with it each year, you know, because that's an important part of our planning for when we are putting together a budget is to not have moving targets, to the best of our ability. So, that's -- that's my feedback. But I'm right in line with the Council Members -- you know, I think we have to think really hard if now is the right time to invest further into the services or, you know, what modifications can or should be made with either this dollar revenue -- we are not using the revenue at all, because of the -- the service level. That's -- those are great questions, so --

Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and speaking personally, that's been -- those are the things that we balance is trying to figure out how do we -- how do we share as much information as we can about where we are financially and being precise about those numbers and it's been on my mind about how we can improve that for all of our jurisdictions, because it's something that they all face -- is like what is that -- what is that number and that number depends on everybody else's decisions as well, because there is an amount that we need to use to operate, so we -- we strive to have as few changes in that as possible over the budget period and we will continue to do that. Trying to be sympathetic to the -- to -- to the concern certainly. We will look for ways to -- to mitigate that.

Simison: I have got some suggestions we can do offline if you are interested, but --

Hunt: Absolutely.

Simison: -- again, it takes your funding model and throws it out the window.

Hunt: We are open to that as well. It's been something else that we have been talking about is how you could -- it's a bit of a trade off when we look at that in terms of how specific do we want to be for the -- for the expenses versus stability for budgeting and they don't always line up exactly. Those are the -- those have been the things we have been trying to balance over time and as we went with the cost allocation model, the purpose of that was to get really clear about what the expenses were and how those could be distributed among our partners. Downside of that is it means that it dumps every time anything changes and so, yes, absolutely, we would love to have more conversation about what -- what would be most useful to the City of Meridian on how we can -- how we can partner on that.

Simison: Council, anything further?

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Stephen, you are navigating some muddy waters, so I don't -- I don't envy you.

But thank you for the update.

Hunt: Sorry, I did have one more slide that will --

Simison: Okay. Go ahead.

Hunt: -- warm your heart I'm sure. That was a joke, because it won't. The last thing I wanted to mention is the -- since we last talked the -- we have had a hard time continuing to -- to attract drivers. We haven't been able to keep our -- meet our pullout in some cases -- in some cases and so we are in our current budget that will be in front of us that was presented -- it will be in front of our board this next board third, includes an increase in wages to -- to ensure that we can keep operating at the levels of service that we have -- that we have. So, that would further change those requests from our local jurisdictions and we are working, again, that through our -- through our partners, recognize -- like what -- the point of all of this is to help our jurisdictions just to understand where things are at. We know that you all have to make decisions and when you do we will respond to that; right? That's -- that's the nature of our relationship is we want to make sure that everybody understands what the costs are for the service. You all make your best decisions about how and what's -- what's reasonable to fund and, then, we -- we adjust to that. This is just more information about if we are trying to keep all of our operators available to provide the services that we have talked about.

Simison: Your slide didn't advance if you are -- if there is something we are supposed to be looking at.

Hunt: Did not advance? They look very similar.

Simison: Oh. Okay. I apologize.

Hunt: The difference is it goes from 631 -- 613 to 631. It's actually even -- well, anyways. Yeah. So, there would be an increase in the total request.

Simison: Those -- are you suggesting that you would be asking to come back for a budget amendment in October, because we can't raise our budget, nor can any other jurisdiction. We are not alone.

Hunt: We recognize that. Yes. We are just trying to make sure that you see those costs.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: So, you don't know what -- I mean because of the way that our municipal budgeting works wouldn't it make more sense -- at least feedback for next time; right? Come -- come with a number that's your worst case scenario, if you are actively discussing something and, then, that way we can plug that in. So, will we be seeing the

631? We can't change that now; right?

Simison: No, we can't.

Strader: Yeah. Okay. Got it. Yeah. Okay.

Hunt: This is information.

Strader: Thank you for making perfect sense.

Simison: I think that laugh sums it right about up.

Hunt: Understood. And I mean the request -- one last comment on that is simply we understand that we were -- we make requests to our local jurisdictions for the amount that it would take to fund the services. Local jurisdictions need to make their own decisions as to how much they are willing to pay for that and, then, we are left to pick up the pieces and we recognize that that's been our situation, that's still our situation, and we just appreciate the time to at least come share what the costs are and try and do it in as clean a way as possible, but we understand that you can keep improving.

Simison: Thank you very much.

Hunt: Thank you.

Bernt: Thanks, Stephen.

Simison: Council, we have reached the end of our agenda. Do I have a motion?

Bernt: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Bernt.

Bernt: I move that we adjourn the meeting.

Hoaglund: Second the motion.

Simison: Motion and second to adjourn. All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay. The ayes have it. We are adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED: FOUR AYES. TWO ABSENT.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:21 P.M.

(AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE OF THESE PROCEEDINGS)

_____ MAYOR ROBERT SIMISON	_____ DATE APPROVED
ATTEST:	

CHRIS JOHNSON - CITY CLERK