

Meridian City Council Work Session

December 19, 2023.

A Meeting of the Meridian City Council was called to order at 4:34 p.m. Tuesday, December 19, 2023, by Mayor Robert Simison.

Members Present: Robert Simison, Brad Hoaglan, Joe Borton, Luke Cavener, Jessica Perreault, Liz Strader and John Overton.

Members Absent: Luke Cavener.

Others Present: Chris Johnson, Bill Nary, Tina Lomeli, Todd Lavoie, Christena Barney, Debbie Hoopes, Kris Blume and Dean Willis.

ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE

☒ Liz Strader	☒ Joe Borton
☒ Brad Hoaglan	☒ John Overton
☒ Jessica Perreault	☐ Luke Cavener
☒ Mayor Robert E. Simison	

Simison: Council, we will call the meeting to order. For the record it is December 19th, 2023, at 4:34 p.m. We will start our work session with roll call attendance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Simison: Next item up is adoption of the agenda.

Hoaglan: Mr. Mayor?

Seal: Councilman Hoaglan.

Hoaglan: I move that we adopt the agenda as published.

Borton: Second.

Simison: 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: FIVE AYES. ONE ABSENT.

CONSENT AGENDA [Action Item]

- 1. Approve Minutes of the December 5, 2023 City Council Work Session**

- 2. Approve Minutes of the December 12, 2023 City Council Regular Meeting**
- 3. Dutch Bros at Ustick Full Release of Easement (ESMT-2023-0177)**
- 4. Knighthill Center Water Main Easement (ESMT-2023-0114)**
- 5. Final Order for Ringneck Place Subdivision (FP-2023-0027) by RiveRidge Engineering Company, located at 2315 E. Ustick Rd.**
- 6. Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law for Crowley Park Subdivision (H-2023-0053) by Riley Planning Services, located at 4135 W. Cherry Ln.**
- 7. Development Agreement (Promenade Cottages Subdivision H-2022-0013) Between the City of Meridian and Lesley's Mobile Estates, LLC for Property Located at 403 E. Fairview Ave.**
- 8. License Agreement Between the City of Meridian and Ada County for Meridian Police Department Use of Work Space at the FACES Downtown Boise Location**
- 9. Acceptance of Donations of Real Property from the Martin L. Hill Trust and DWT Investments, LLC to expand Hillsdale Park**
- 10. Master Services and Purchasing Agreement between Axon Enterprise, Inc. and City of Meridian and Quote for Hardware, Software, Services, and Warranties for a Not-To-Exceed Amount of \$4,488,035.93 with \$287,778.93 for Fiscal Year 2024 and the remainder evenly paid out at \$640,051.40 for five consecutive fiscal years (FY25-FY29)**
- 11. Fiscal Year 2024 Net-Zero Budget Amendment for Idaho Transportation Department Traffic Enforcement Grant**

Simison: Next up is the Consent Agenda.

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Hoaglund.

Hoaglund: I move that the Council approve the Consent Agenda and for the Mayor to sign and Clerk to attest.

Borton: Second.

Simison: Have a motion and a second to approve the Consent Agenda. Is there any discussion? If not, all in favor signify by my saying aye. Opposed nay? The ayes have it and Consent Agenda is agreed to.

MOTION CARRIED: FIVE AYES. ONE ABSENT.

ITEMS MOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA [Action Item]

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

Simison: So, we will -- oh.

Borton: Sorry to interrupt.

Simison: Councilman Borton.

Borton: Real quick just on Item 10 on the Consent Agenda. I know Keith Watts -- oh, he is here. Thanks for doing that, for sending that out, a little note. I think when it's on larger items just a little heads up, here is what happened, you always follow process and policy, but it's a good heads up for us on the bigger ones. So, thanks for doing that.

Simison: Thank you, Councilman Borton. There were no items moved from the Consent Agenda.

DEPARTMENT / COMMISSION REPORTS [Action Item]

12. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Amendment in the amount of \$1,100,000.00 for Aquisition and Implementation of Human Resource Management System Software

Simison: So, we will go on to our Department/Commissioner Reports. First item up is Item 12, which is a fiscal year 2024 budget amendment in the amount of 1,100,000 for acquisition and implementation of Human Resource Management System Software. We will turn this over to our CFO Mr. Lavoie.

Lavoie: Thank you, Mayor, Council Members. Again, appreciate the opportunity to present this item to you. As Robert just stated, we are presenting a budget request for 1.1 million dollars. It's one time dollars that we are looking for to move forward with acquisition and implementation of a human resources payroll and timecard solution. About seven days ago we presented to you a handful of documents that provided supporting information for this request. We had the memo. We had this budget document that is presented to you tonight. So, we had a ten year cost analysis as well in that document -- or in that package. We also included questions and answers. Each individual Council Member had a conversation with myself, Christena Barney, David Tiede or Debbie Hoopes in regards to this particular topic. Those questions and answers were a consolidation of the questions that you presented to the four of us and,

then, the answers were provided in that consolidated document. So, again, we provided that information for you and the last item on there -- or in that package was a PowerPoint presentation that we presented to you in previous meetings. To explain what we were requesting for. So, again, the summary of this request -- you know, what are we requesting? Again, we are looking for a modern solution for the city for the next 20 years to provide payroll, timecard and human resource management. In the current systems that we have right now range from I think 24 to 19 years. So, again, we have been utilizing solutions for 19 plus years. We are looking for the next 20 years. Again, the solution that we are looking for we want it to be reliable and accurate. Just like you or all the employees, they want to make sure they have a paycheck that's reliable and accurate on a monthly basis. We are looking for flexible and timely solutions given as the city grows from, you know, the 300 employees that we had back in 1999 to 620 that we have now. We have fire, we have police, we now have a golf course, we have a potential command center. So, again, our dynamics are changing and growing. We need to have a solution that can evolve with that. We need a solution that can be supportive and manageable and Human Resources needs to be able to manage all the different pieces of data moving through the system for the larger number of employees. And, then, we want to be able to convey an effective and confident solution to our employees and to our -- our citizens. So, again, in summary that's what we are looking for. We are looking for a modern solution for the next 20 years for our department -- for our departments and our employees. We stand for any questions. I have all the subject matter experts here, again, we are looking for an approval for a budget requests of one time dollars of 1.1 million that will acquire the solution and the funds will be split between the Enterprise Fund and the General Fund fund balances and stand for any questions.

Simison: Thank you, Todd. I assume you are not pointing to the firefighters with that -- looking behind you on this topic.

Lavoie: If they wish to be subject matter experts, yeah. We have other ones in the office in --

Simison: In Human Resources. Council, any questions?

Borton: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Borton.

Borton: I would love to have HR come forward and just -- just provide your comments on this solution. It's really your wheelhouse. We don't get to see HR enough.

Barney: Is there anything we can answer specifically? I think Todd spoke to the dynamics of our city has changed over the last 19 years or so that we have been using our current solutions.

Borton: Here is -- here is -- I will answer your question with a question I think. The reason I asked you to come up is, you know, we are not in the day to day, we are broader picture policy decision makers and so it's tempting at times -- if we are able to say, well, why don't we just kick the can down the road another five years? We don't know what you are dealing with on a daily basis and the massive growth that we have dealt with, so from -- from either of your perspectives what's the snapshot from HR that says kicking the can down the road is a fatal mistake?

Hoopes: I'm going to defer to Christena, just because she's been involved in this for the last three years. I'm coming on newer at six months. So, I'm going to let her answer and, then, I will --

Borton: Okay.

Barney: So, essentially, we kind of have been kicking the can down the road as we have been doing this RFP process for about the last five years. So, some of our systems have not had support for the last five years and so we knew that we were going to have to provide a different system going forward. We started this process about three years ago looking at different vendors, what could support us into the future. Found a solution that we liked -- and this is all in the memo, but just on the record found a solution we liked, you know, put that money in the budget. They didn't have like a sole source that we needed in order to contract with them. So, we did the full RFP process. Through that we found that Workday responded and meets a large portion of our requirements and will help us go into the future. That being said, a lot -- almost all of our processes are manual and we approximate saving about 400 manual entry hours on payroll and HR side of the house. It also allows us to be more flexible in place, offer different types of benefits, offer different pay codes and those types of things that we are just simply limited right now. I have made reference before at this meeting and other meetings -- we have what's called the Black Box. So, we have this interface that works between HR and our payroll and we can't make any changes to it, because if we do it breaks, we are signing paper paychecks and so really that is the risk. If we don't move forward with this right now is the potential that that breaks and we go to a fully manual process for payroll.

Hoopes: That I think in a nutshell is what it comes down to. We kick the can down the road. It may last another three years, it may break tomorrow, and the sooner we can implement something to navigate that the better. You know, we don't want to go back to manual checks.

Barney: Just -- just so that you are aware of this implementation process is not a -- an easy or a fast process either. So, if, for instance, the system broke tomorrow we are 12 months out from being able to implement another system, because of all the business processes that it touches.

Borton: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Borton.

Borton: One other question. Does this cost include all of the onboarding and training necessary to not only get it installed and to us, but to train all of us and all of you to -- how to use it going forward?

Barney: It does include training all the subject -- subject matter experts, the implementation team and, then, internally we will be working on training all of the employees on how to utilize the self-service portal.

Borton: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Hoaglund.

Hoaglund: I -- I won't throw this one at Debbie or Christena, but if Todd -- from IT -- I mean Dave Tiede from IT would come up, I -- I just want to ask about the -- the transition process taking the Legacy system and bringing something new, is this a full merge? Is it a complete wipe the slate clean and drop something in? Give me some comfort, having gone through some things that are not fun, how this process will move forward.

Tiede: Fair enough, Councilman Hoaglund. So, we do plan to migrate data from our current systems to the new system, but what we migrate and how much of it will depend on what area of the program we are talking about. So, for HR data we will probably be talking about active employees and information and that Legacy data will be backed up by reporting. So, we will be able to access that data from reporting. On the payroll side we will have to bring in more data, so that we can do parallel processing with systems and make sure that things are matching up and aligning moving forward, so that we have accurate paychecks and whatnot. So, that will have a little bit more information, but we will still be able to pull from Legacy systems from reporting sources.

Hoaglund: And, Mr. Mayor, just a follow up.

Simison: Councilman Hoaglund.

Hoaglund: So, you are fairly confident this is a decent process that we can kick off and have completed and it sounds like it is a lengthy one. What is your estimate of time frame? I think I heard possibly a year, but --

Tiede: We estimate 12 to 18 months at this point. And, yes, we do feel very confident in the data migration component of the overall solution.

Hoaglund: Okay. Mr. Mayor, I just want to wish him well on that project.

Simison: Thank you.

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Perreault: I have a question for Mr. Lavoie. If he would join us again. In the presentation that you provided on the dollars and cents page, I want to see if I'm understanding that the funding relocations are monies that will -- are currently being used for these five or six categories, but they will then -- yes, they will, then, be reallocated to cover the annual ongoing costs. Is that what I'm understanding?

Lavoie: Council Woman Perreault, you are referring to I think the second to the last page of the PowerPoint presentation that we provided to you. This document goes over the 1.1 million for on -- one time and, then, the ongoing cost. The ongoing cost -- the Mayor worked with a few directors to figure out what budgets we had in place to make sure that we experienced zero request -- new additional dollar request to the Council or the citizens to cover these charges and this table here displays the information that we were able to collect between the Mayor and the directors. These other solutions that we found, we could omit these in the future so that we can take those existing budget dollars, added to the approved budget that was approved in their original request, so that the total ongoing costs are covered with a net zero cost or increase to the budget for the fiscal '24 and in '25 we will probably have a little inflation, just like any other software cost, but this -- for '24 Mayor and a few directors found the dollars to make this a net zero increase for the bottom line of the budget.

Perreault: Excellent. Thank you.

Lavoie: Thank you.

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I appreciate everyone's working on this. I do think Workday is the gold standard and it's a very comprehensive solution. So, I know you are using it for payroll and timecard and so forth. I just want to make sure and confirm with everyone that all the departments are making -- planning to make full use of the system, including the performance management aspects of the system and just to call out if there is any part of the system you are not using what those are and why.

Tiede: Council Woman Strader, so we are planning on using what they call HCM, which is their Human Capital Management side of the product. They also have a financial suite and that is not in scope for what we are doing, as the city is not looking for a financial solution at this time. As far as the umbrella of what's covered under their HCM product, I believe we are intending on using every component that we intend to license, with the exception of scheduling, which is a fairly new addition for them. We are not planning on using scheduling at this time. However, that's not to say that timecards,

absences, things like that won't be managed in the system. They will. Scheduling is a different solution for needs like what Police and Fire currently have scheduling solutions for.

Simison: Thanks. That's really helpful. And so just to confirm that performance management specifically would run through Workday?

Hoopes: Mayor, Council Woman, this is Debbie and, yes, performance management is something that, you know, we currently run. There is a lot of manual information that we have to process and so this is something that whatever is available to us through Workday is something that we would use for the good of the employees in the city.

Strader: Right. No, that's super. I just appreciate hearing that. Thanks.

Simison: Council, any additional questions?

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Okay. Councilman Hoaglund.

Hoaglund: Doesn't appear to be any additional questions. I would move that we approve the fiscal year 2024 budget amendment in the amount of 1,100,000 dollars for the acquisition, implementation of Human Resource Management System Software.

Perreault: Second.

Simison: Have a motion and a second. Is there discussion?

Borton: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Borton.

Borton: An added element -- I think Todd hinted at it. The memo certainly covers it, but it's a lot of money. Everything's a lot of money these days in a city this size. But the fact that it does offset what would otherwise be some recurring labor costs and manual data entry or payroll processing, some of the expenses that would be incurred one way or the other, certainly the one-time expense that you describe seems to be a more appropriate solution to something that has to be solved. So, I just thought that was an added element that made it worth supporting.

Simison: Council, any additional comments? If not, Clerk will call the roll.

Roll Call: Hoaglund, yea; Borton, yea; Cavener, absent; Perreault, yea; Strader, yea; Overton, yea.

Simison: All ayes. Motion carries and the item is agreed to.

MOTION CARRIED: FIVE AYES. ONE ABSENT.

Simison: Good luck, team. Look forward to what happens next.

Hoopes: The real work starts now, so --

Simison: The work starts now. Don't break the system in the next year, 18 months.

Hoopes: Thank you very much.

**13. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Amendment in the Amount of \$1,736,714.00
for Meridian Fire Department SAFER Grant**

Simison: All right. With that we will move on to Item 13, which is the fiscal year 2024 budget amendment in the amount of 1,736,714 dollars from Meridian Fire Department SAFER grant. Turn this over to Chief Blume.

Blume: Good evening, Mr. Mayor, Members of Council. About 109 days ago and, in fact, exactly 109 days ago the city of Tu -- or Tucson. The City of Meridian was noticed. Sorry. Freudian slip.

Simison: You didn't say it all.

Blume: I didn't. Yeah. I was thinking it, but, no, I'm sorry. I'm going there next week, if that makes any difference. Anyway, we were noticed being in recipient of the SAFER -- the Staff -- Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Resources grant for 24 firefighters. The dialogue that, then, took place between staff, members of Council and city legal, was a -- a different number, actually, represented the actual need for the City of Meridian and that number was 18 and so after a lengthy process going through an attempt to get it amended through FEMA, they accepted our amended request of 18, because it complied with the intent of the grant the way that it was intended to be applied and utilized by the City of Meridian. So, this evening you see before you a request to fund the 18 positions that are recognized by the SAFER grant this year. The -- the amount also looks at, recognizes and accounts for the additional funding that is not covered by the grant and so any hours of overtime, uniforms, emergency equipment that the -- that these people will use, that is also represented in this budget amendment request. So, with that that's what the Meridian Fire Department is requesting this evening is your consideration of approving the funding, so that we may move forward with our SAFER grant award.

Simison: Thank you, chief. Council, any questions?

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: Thank you, Chief. Were you able to get anymore clarification on the timing of when we could start requesting reimbursement?

Blume: Councilman Perreault, as far as reimbursement goes, it occurs on a -- once we have -- which we have done, we have made notice of acceptance of the award to FEMA. After 180 days have transpired that's when our clock starts and, then, we are allowed to do quarterly -- or we will be doing, if moving forward this evening, we will be doing quarterly reporting and that quarterly reporting includes expenses, what we -- how much money the City of Meridian has expended and of that -- a significant portion of that is reimbursed by the grant. So, it's a reimbursement quarterly.

Perreault: Mr. Mayor, follow up?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: So, would that reporting be done at the end of the quarter? So, we are looking at 180 days and, then, another 90 before that could be requested? Or approximately?

Blume: Council Woman Perreault, that is my understanding. But, again, before I -- I speak on behalf of finance practices, I would -- I would ask Todd if that's consistent.

Lavoie: Council Woman -- Council Woman Perreault, the timelines we have not identified to the final date yet, but we will report 30 days -- probably 30 days after our quarter ends. So, I don't know which quarters they refer to yet, is it January quarters or is it fiscal quarters, but we will do it as fast as we can -- usually 30 days within the quarter close. So, we won't wait another 90 days after -- we would have to figure out is a quarter closed or annual -- annual fiscal year quarter. Sorry. Fiscal year quarters or calendar year quarters. We are working with them, but we will do within 30 days of the quarter close. Yeah.

Simison: Council, additional questions?

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: If there are no additional questions I would like to make a motion.

Borton: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Borton.

Borton: Of course there are. Sorry. I have a few, if I can just -- yes. So, no surprise that I have got questions. So, here is my overarching concern is from a long-term perspective -- and I worry greatly and, quite frankly, worry for the folks that are in our fire

department right now. So, there is -- there is policy considerations that -- that we can argue about and have differences of opinion and there is facts and so what I have tried to do is -- is see if I understand the facts correctly to help inform the decision. I have shared some of these -- I put them in an e-mail to everybody, right, a couple months ago and so there is no surprises to some of the questions. So, this very well may have the support tonight, but I think it's important to, one, make sure if anyone in this room disagrees with the facts as I understand them. So, one of them is -- and it's a comment in the -- in the budget amendment form -- actually states -- it makes the -- it states this sentence. The city will need to acquire new revenues to pay for the employees after the SAFER grant expires. Right? No surprise there. And it's about -- I will use a round number -- three million dollars. Is that a safe round number? It's not high. Is that correct? Finance, correct? Chief, anything that you think is different?

Blume: No. Sorry. Again, I would defer to Finance on what was -- what -- what an approximate value in year four is. I -- I'm not -- I'm not too sure I have that number for you.

Borton: Okay. So, all of these facts kind of informed the decision. That's why I'm going to go through these steps. I think it's important, whether I'm for or against it, for everyone in our department to understand at least how I think through these things. Act number two was we have established and adopted a written policy that -- that requires or encourages us up here to avoid utilizing one-time proceeds to pay for recurring costs. Seems pretty elementary, but we -- with very rare exception -- I can't think of any, but there probably is one, small one -- we never do that and it makes sense, because it's a short-term funding source or a long-term perpetual cost. We all balance our own checkbooks at home and if we do it right none of us do that; right? You get a bonus. You don't go buy a car and finance it. You can, but is it prudent? So, that's a fact. I think; right? Nobody -- the policy exists; correct? It's where I have seen it. I don't know what it's called. So, for what it's worth. And the third one that I wrestled with is the budget amendment talks about you have to find new recurring revenue of three million dollars in year four and so -- and what I had put in that communication a couple of months ago, as I understood it, here is, you know, a dozen revenue sources, potentially, if everything's on the table and here is why certain ones don't work or they are not recurring or they are not available or we don't control them and none of that, as I understood it, total three million dollars. So, did anyone -- was that correct? Does anyone have -- did you have information, chief, that showed otherwise?

Blume: Councilman Borton, and I don't have any other information --

Borton: Not to put you on the hot seat, but --

Blume: No, I --

Borton: -- you're at podium. So, all of that leaves me with the concern that if you have recurring revenue -- or recurring expenses in year three or year four and you don't have recurring revenue to pay for it, it shines a light on the -- the incomplete and the more

complete question. The incomplete question is can the city afford it? Absolutely. It can. The city could afford five or six. I think the city could probably afford 30 or 40 firefighters. I think the complete question for me is can the city afford it in relation to the trade-offs that have to be made? That's what makes me nervous. That's what's puzzled me for a couple of months; right? So, what -- is their revenue? Sure. What I put in that e-mail that gives me pause is -- we know there is not recurring revenue to cover it. What are the available cost cutting thing -- measures that would close the gap? Because you have to close the gap. And -- and one I worry about -- I'm not comfortable with that the cost coverage comes at the expense of what should be market-based wage increases for a police STEP plan or for any of our general employees and I don't think that's the intent of the ask by any stretch. This is -- we are all on the same team. So, that's not an available revenue source or it's a very difficult one. Another revenue source would come in the next collective bargaining where, you know, our fire unit says we are going to freeze or cap our wage increase to create what would otherwise be a revenue savings to pay for this. That's a big lift and a big ask. When I say I worry about our department, I worry about that. I don't know if everyone's willing to make that suggestion that says if we close it and it comes -- so, you don't have, you know, wages less than they otherwise would be, now what? If none of us are here next year -- some or all of us may or may not be here. Some of you guys might not be here. The problem -- and maybe this is just me -- my worry is I have always worried up here about 20 years, ten years down the road. I'm not here. Doesn't matter. I'm worried about making a decision that hampers the next chief, the next mayor and next council members in 2030 or 2035. So, I asked -- I put forth all those facts of the gap in the delta and I never got any information from anybody that said here is the known certain recurring available revenue source to fund it, which I think I understand, because it doesn't exist and we still -- we still can afford it; right? If you go forward with this you can pay for it, but there is one hell of a tough decision in 2028 on how we are going to bridge that gap and that's what makes me nervous. So, in light of all of that, at least, hopefully, everyone here who is in the audience, I appreciate you being here. If that informs you of my concern -- if anybody in this audience has any comments or questions or corrections to anything I said -- I mean come on up, tell me I'm misunderstanding something. Again, it very well may come forward, but I want you to know my worry is about you and about the success of the department in light of what I think might be a big problem in a few years, so -- and, again, that doesn't probably come as any surprise, but I would love to hear from anybody who knows something that I'm missing, because I will certainly keep an open mind. And, again, I -- yeah. Oh. And if you are telling me -- here is the other thing and I have done some -- some digging on the value. I don't diminish the value of the four person company and what it provides and the different service quality that it does by any stretch and you wouldn't be here -- you wouldn't have applied for the grant if it wasn't important to you, but is it more important than what could otherwise be, you know, more enhanced wages for the union or for administration, which will follow. I worry about the need of additional firefighters to cover float that aren't directly addressed in here. I worry about the added cost of it's going to be more administration personnel as well. So, all of that just sort of compounds and it's -- that's what's concerning. Oh. I also -- I worried about -- by allocating all of this labor cost revenue to this solution that it appears to eliminate the

ability to put two companies in a station. You have got all of our resources go into four man staffing. May be perfectly justified, but the alternative option of a response time solution where you might have done that in two or three or four or five years. It seems as though we are -- we are waiving that path and choosing this one. I presume that's your recommendation that this is the most -- the more important path, the better solution. So, again, it goes back to what I think is the more complete question. Can we afford it in light of the trade-offs necessary to do it and all of those trade-offs I worry for our department to make sure that we are not just, you know, lighting a fuse that blows up in four years. So, you feel free to give me your thoughts or comments on it. If you think anything's mistaken factually please correct me.

Blume: Well, Councilman Borton, I appreciate your concern. I -- I -- you have very measured and thought out concerns. They are certainly my concerns as well. But I can tell you I haven't been sitting in my office twiddling my thumbs and three years is a long runway for us to figure it out and I'm committed to the organization and the community to find that solution to bring whatever level of enhanced service that the Meridian Fire Department needs -- I'm committed to that and to the point that you made about multi-company stations, the SAFER grant requires us in our grant guidance to move toward -- to pursue a four person staffing model for the duration for the performance period of the grant. That doesn't prevent us from staffing up an engine company or a second unit of service to allow us to evaluate during those periods. What is the return on that investment? Are we getting -- is there -- is it better that we get four people on scene able to go to work? I can guarantee you from somebody having a heart attack or stroke or a house fire, the answer is unequivocally yes, but is it the best deployment model? I don't -- I don't know that. What I know is that we need to look at multiple things over the course of the next three years of the course and the period of the grant and we are intently focused on doing just that.

Borton: But -- Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Borton.

Borton: You know, the challenge is you got to keep four person staffing; right? I mean it's -- which is fine. I mean I don't have an issue with it. But those are the -- the purposeful strings of the grant, which -- I mean I remember that language and I'm okay with that. I guess what I'm hearing -- what gives me -- said Councilman Borton, and I understand those trade-offs. I will stand at the front of that. If it means that we don't do that because the grant requires four person staffing, we are going to do it. If any of the other sacrifices that I have mentioned on the record tonight -- if you are saying any of those are off the table, say it now, because I think the difficult situation is all of those cost saving measures might be on the table. I -- that's why I don't like that. I don't like the idea of saying anyone's -- you know, what should be a market wage has to be a little less, because we overspent, whether it's Fire or IT or Parks -- anybody. That's why I say I worry -- I worry even for, you know, even our next union contract, if things are less than they otherwise might be in order to ensure that we have got the revenue to pay for

it. Unintended consequences of something so big that we have never done, that's what keeps me up at night and I might not even be here. Still freaks me out, so --

Simison: I will just give you my two cents. And I have -- you know, I have communicated this to the department and others as well. I'm going to enter facts into evidence that are true; right? We are not going to talk about emotion. We are not going to talk about what we think. We are not going to -- the truth is we don't need to keep any of these 18 positions after the three years of the grant. So, there is no guaranteed cost for ongoing measures. We can -- we can debate about whether or not we think that's going to happen, we are only entering what is a fact -- a factual information about the grant. Actually, at the end of the grant we don't need to -- having these -- no one needs to be retained. There is no ongoing costs commitment to the city for that purpose all the other things can still be considered. I have communicated to the department, as well as others at least my intentions as Mayor about how we try to go about balancing the ongoing revenues to build up how many people are actually retained at that point in time just to alleviate those concerns that you raised about pitting only one solution versus the other. So, I think if you are asking the question -- well, if we -- what gives if we only -- if we keep all 18? There are gives. One hundred percent. Well, what if we only keep nine? Then what are those gives at that point in time? You know, that is the three year conversation about what is the revenue that will be generated. But I'm just trying to say facts in evidence. Facts in evidence to go to the point is none of the positions need to be retained, which at least in my come -- I just want to keep it not emotional, not what the likelihood is, how much they are going to come up here and talk and try to convince you and how hard it's going to be, there is a path forward to a solution. I don't know what the number is going to be in four years of that budget about how many of the 18 will be still as part of the department's overall needs. We will figure that out together and I'm committed to doing that for the next four years, even looking at other arenas. There are a lot of unknowns. A ton of unknowns. I get it.

Borton: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: My two cents.

Strader: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Borton.

Borton: Just going to close the loop on that one. I mean I thought someone would come up and provide comment in the crowd. You are all here. Love to hear from anybody. But to that point this is maybe my personal -- I would have -- if you said, like you are right now, we need these people and it makes it right for Meridian, better for everybody. I don't think I could ever let him -- I could never get rid of somebody. It might not be a technical contract, it feels like a moral contract for me, that if we bring folks in that you say are critical for our city, they are in and it's not changing. So, that's probably why I don't even perceive that as a viable solution, it might be a technical

solution, but, man, you get into family based on what you are sharing is the reason why,
I --

Simison: Just doing facts. Not what I would prefer, just the facts.

Borton: Yeah.

Simison: Council Woman Strader.

Strader: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I view it as an historic opportunity and I do think there is a challenge and there is no doubt that it's a stretch. I view it a little differently. I view having a runway of, you know, a few years to build up the sources of ongoing revenue is a very important component of this and so, you know, I consider a combination of property tax increases even -- even if we did use a foregone and, then, I get comfort from, you know -- and no offense, Todd, but Finance has consistently overshot the mark on our revenue projections and I think that they are appropriately conservative, but I view that as a good indication that we will find a way to find those sources of revenue and, then, the chief has found I think some creative -- although, you know, as Joe points out, uncertain potential sources of ongoing revenue to help offset and I sort of view it more as, you know, we have a ton of people approaching retirement as well and there will be future attrition I think in the coming years and so this to me just gives us an amazing bandwidth to, you know, staff workers and companies, to give the chief the flexibility to play around with staffing and figure it out and so I echo Joe's comments. I would love to hear from people, hear that it's important to them. I think that just helps to validate it, but I don't -- I don't view with the same heartburn the financial setup here. I think we have the ability -- there are times when you stretch. This is an historic opportunity and we should take it and we will find a way and I think through that combination it is possible to pay for it, so I didn't come to the same conclusion.

Overton: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Overton.

Overton: Chief, I'm a huge fan of grant opportunities when it can bring extra personnel to Fire and Police. Most of my experience, of course, was with the smaller COPS grants over the years that we got in the Police Department and even those, as I remember councils past having to deal with the real concern of whether -- when we entered into those and they were five officers at a time, we were going to have that funding down the road to cover those costs, but they were small and one of the first things I stressed about on this one -- and it wasn't just because you are firemen, it had to do with the size of a one-time grant. It's huge. And that's what brings a lot of this concern is it's such an enormous grant at one time, it can't be split up over time, which would have been nice, but I'm committed to it. I know it creates concern, but I think it's the right thing to do and I do believe that there is always times with past councils, present councils and future councils where we have got to make decisions and hope for that solution is going to be there in three years. We don't know what that solution is

going to look like right now. We have talked about worst case scenario and I hope that's not the case. But I think in three years we will have a scenario that the city can move forward on and not sacrifice increases to the Police Department and pay increases to all the city staff and trying to move forward with every part of our city at the same time we increase your staffing. So, I'm supportive of this, but that's not without the same concerns that have been expressed.

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: I just want to ask Councilman Borton a question and I'm hearing everything -- all those concerns -- all those concerns. I have asked and asked our team -- as you know we had a team of about six or seven of us that met five to six times to discuss all these pros and cons. Can we do this? Is this worth doing? What happens if we don't do this? What does that look like? So, I'm curious, the grant was accepted by the Mayor's office I think on October 31st. I'm wondering if you had had a chance to chat with any members of the team to talk about some of the solutions that we discussed or some of their thoughts and if that had alleviated any of your questions or if -- if none of the questions -- if you feel like none of those questions have really been answered, do you propose or are you proposing that we delay a decision on the budget amendment, so that you can get those answers? I'm just curious if -- if there is -- is there an answer that can be found or -- or the question is being asked as a matter of just more of putting them out there, so that we all are really chewing on them and -- and think about can we afford to do this, can we not afford to do this.

Borton: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Borton.

Borton: Thank you. I really appreciate that. So, there is nothing that's unanswered. I just -- everyone it seems acknowledges that there is that delta between revenue and -- and expense that will exist. It's a real thing. It's seven figures and -- and we are going to figure it out in three, four or five years and there is a variety of tools in the toolbox to do it. I like any of them, but there is tools. I mean it's going to be a funky discussion in four years -- three or four years. We always find a way. I agree. I think that's glass half full. There is always a way and -- I just don't like -- I don't want -- the reason I brought it up is to be very transparent in my concerns, see if I'm misunderstanding any underlying facts and to see if there is anyone who is unwilling to accept those known risks of the solutions all hurt. They all hurt potentially and love to be wrong and maybe something changes down the road, that's -- but -- but as far as data and underlying information I think I have got it. Just concerned. I would, Mr. Mayor, if it's okay --

Simison: Councilman Borton.

Borton: Derek, do you want to come forward? You are here, doggone it. I want you to just -- that's okay. Jordan. Tyler. Any -- I mean just great. I -- Council Woman Strader brings up a good point. That would be great. It's a big deal. This is -- we have not done something like this of this magnitude. So, hearing your thoughts on it is important to us.

Nelson: Well, I mean -- am I close enough? Closer still? Okay. I mean it's huge. I don't disagree and I see what you, you know, folks, as Council, as -- as keepers of, you know, the public trust, what the position this puts you in to make these grand decisions like this. I respect that a hundred percent. You know, as just representing, you know, the hundred and some odd just personnel -- line personnel out there, but -- so -- so, I understand where you are at. This -- this is a big long-term consideration, things we don't know. I get it, but the world that I live in -- that I have lived in for the last 16 years for the city, for this community is one of we don't know. I don't know what that next call is going to be. I don't know what the next, you know, worst case -- worst day of somebody's life is going to be and how am I best to serve them? I do know this. There are better ways to serve them and this is one of those better ways to serve this community is through the SAFER grant action that allows us to get up to a four person staffing model. Will this be where we end up in three years? I don't know. Is this the best model? Right now this is the best model per NFPA. This is the best model that we know to get the right number of people to an emergency to affect, you know, somebody's worst day. So, from that perspective I have been part of the same working group. We struggled. I know Todd has done some great work, you know, putting some numbers together, helping us to try and digest them. Some are really tough to swallow for sure. I don't -- you know, I know what a position this puts you in, but I do think this is for the benefit of those folks out there and I do think to your point, like I could come up here and we could make this emotional, you know, because it is. For me that's all it is. I'm not a numbers guy. I'm more on the emotional side. And I think this is a really important thing to do and I think it's the right decision to do and I know that the people, you know, that I'm representing are very much in support, because they are out there every day and seeing how important it is. Like to our police friends as well, you know, I don't want this to come at the expense of anything else either in the city. I want this to come at the benefit to the city and rise all boats. But, you know, I work for the Fire Department and so I'm here representing them. But I do think it's important. Thank you for asking me up here. I mean being in part of those -- being part of the working group, thank you to the Mayor and the team for being part of that. We, you know, as a local also appreciate that, because being inside that door and having those conversations is important and I look forward to sharing our point of view. So, thank you.

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Hoaglund.

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor. Yeah, just a couple of thoughts and maybe some -- maybe some questions in here. But, you know, chief, when -- when you first went after this there was -- it was -- it wasn't just a nice thing to do -- being part of discussions and whatnot, this

was something that we needed to do. I think the argument has been made. It's been accepted. This was something for the benefit of our community, for the well-being of our citizens and also the well-being of our firefighters, people who are responding for their safety and well-being, this was something we needed to do and from that discussion -- and there was an opportunity to have a bigger grant, to have more firefighters and that was really uncomfortable, not from that standpoint of, oh, is this a good thing? It's a good thing, but it was so big -- it's like how in the world do we do this? It's like the car that chased -- the dog that chased the car and finally caught it, now what? So, I think with the Mayor's work and Finance and the work with the firefighters and your staff, you know, coming to that 18 number I think put us in an area where that made it go, okay, we think we can manage. There are areas that we can make this work. There are still - - and Councilman Borton brings up very good questions. I mean those are questions that, yeah, they do give us pause and go what will happen here? How are these scenarios -- how does this work through? You know, we don't know what property tax -- the legislature will do to property tax in the future or what happens to foregone and all these things that we don't control, but for what the opportunity presents itself with this number of firefighters, what we need to do, it's the right thing to do and it certainly will be I'm sure for Finance and all the Council that's up here in the next coming years, every budget session this is going to be the what if scenario, how will we -- how will we - - and every year it's going to be a year closer and I think that -- that will get a little less cloudy, but it also comes to a point where Council does have to make possibly some tough, tough decisions on, okay, if we want to keep that and how do we do it and what does that impact and, again, to Councilman's point, you know, that's -- there is kind of a moral issue here, too, about when we hire people and they are on and they are doing what needs to be done, we don't want to hire people to not do what needs not to be done. But, yeah, do we -- we will have to make that -- that decision down -- down the road if it comes to that and, hopefully, it won't. I think that 18 number was -- was the right number. You have committed -- we have talked about this -- to looking at models and different things. We have got software in place to -- to measure and see what the best way it is for things to happen. So, yes, there is always fear and trepidation with something this large, but at the same time I'm confident that we are taking the right step in the right way and everyone in this room and beyond is approaching it the right way, recognizing there are factors that we really have to pay attention to and maybe tough decisions have to be made. Hope not, but it's the right thing to do right now and I think we can -- we can make it happen.

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: Of all the decisions that I have had the opportunity to be a part of, this one caused the most stomach aches and sleepless nights and sometimes I talked with the chief three times a day and can we afford to do it, can we not afford to do it was the question that just really resonated and I think it depended on the day that you asked me whether I would say yes or no, until I got clear in my head each of the elements of affording to do it or not and one of the things that it really came down to for me is as the

-- as the fire liaison I have had the opportunity to learn from Chief Blume and the local about fire response at every level from personnel to timing, to just everything in between, multiple companies, all the different advantages and disadvantages of things and the thing that really struck me the most was the conversation about our multi-story buildings and our ability to respond to those and currently I really do feel like we have one hand tied behind our back. We have approximately 27 buildings right now that cause concern over our ability to respond to those from a staffing standpoint and that for me was really the thing that had me the most concerned of all of the factors that we discussed and, you know, we had -- I know the chief has been available to answer any questions regarding those responses to any of the Council Members and still is, but that ultimately was the thing for me that caused me to say we can't afford not to do it.

Borton: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Borton.

Borton: Chief, it sounds like you have got support. Clearly. Not complicated to read the room here. So, can you -- can you ensure that this process going forward there is not a standard we have that will be lowered to try and onboard so many so quick? And one of the things that's so precious is how we cultivate, select and train and protect those we bring on board and it may be tempting or even required to reduce standards to do big things quick, but I'm telling you if it means we hire at a lower standard or we don't hire, then, we don't hire and if it means this doesn't happen then it doesn't happen, but are you comfortable given that -- call it a promise, call it whatever you want, we are not doing that period, hard stop.

Blume: Councilman Borton, I'm glad that you brought that up. We have our ops chief here, George Reese, who is also our division chief of training and I can guarantee you that the Meridian Fire Department has a standard and it is unshakable. It is not amendable. It is the standard. You either perform to that standard or you do not work here and I can tell you on a personal note, public safety, police and fire specifically, we are the guardians of a very sacred public trust. I take that and I know my staff takes that very very solemnly and importantly and we are the ones as administrators for that -- the city's agency, we are the gatekeepers to that. No one is entitled to a job with the Meridian Fire Department. They earn it. And it is a standard and we will not deviate from that.

Borton: Okay.

Blume: That is a solemn promise.

Borton: Okay. Thank you.

Simison: Council, any additional questions, comments, or motions?

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: If there are no additional questions, I would like to make a motion. I move that we approve the fiscal year 2024 budget amendment in the amount of 1,736,714 dollars for the Meridian Fire Department SAFER grant.

Hoaglund: Mr. Mayor, second the motion.

Strader: Second.

Simison: I have a motion and a second to approve Item 13. Is there further discussion -- or discussion? If not, Clerk will call the roll.

Roll Call: Hoaglund, yea; Borton, yea; Cavener, absent; Perreault, yea; Strader, yea; Overton, yea.

Simison: All ayes. Motion carries and the item is agreed to.

MOTION CARRIED: FIVE ALL AYES. ONE ABSENT.

Simison: Okay. Thanks, chief and team.

Blume: Thank you.

Simison: Look forward to working on the hard work now.

Blume: It is, indeed, the hard work begins.

Perreault: We are holding your feet to the fire.

- 14. Ordinance No. 23-2041: An Ordinance (Promenade Cottages Subdivision H-2022-0013) for rezone of a portion of a parcel of land located in the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 7, Township 3 North, Range 1 East, Boise Meridian, City of Meridian, Ada County, Idaho, more particularly described in Exhibit "A," rezoning approximately 6.61 acres of land to the R-40 (High-Density Residential) zoning district and approximately 0.535 acres of land to the C-G (General Retail and Service Commercial) zoning district in the Meridian City Code; directing city staff to alter all applicable use and area maps as well as the official zoning maps and all applicable official maps depicting the boundaries and the zoning districts of the City of Meridian in accordance with this ordinance; providing that copies of this ordinance shall be filed with the Ada County Assessor, the Ada County Treasurer, the Ada County Recorder, and the Idaho State Tax Commission, as required by law; and providing an effective date.**

Simison: Okay. With that we will move on to Item 14, which is Ordinance No. 23-2041. Ask the Clerk to read this ordinance by title.

Lomeli: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. An Ordinance, Promenade Cottages, Subdivision H-2022-0013, for rezone of a portion of a parcel of land located in the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 7, Township 3 North, Range 1 East, Boise meridian, City of Meridian, Ada county, Idaho, more particularly described in Exhibit "A," rezoning approximately 6.61 acres of land to the R-40, High-Density Residential zoning district and approximately 0.535 acres of land to the C-G, General Retail and Service Commercial zoning district in the Meridian City Code; directing city staff to alter all applicable use and area maps as well as the official zoning maps and all applicable official maps depicting the boundaries and the zoning districts of the City of Meridian in accordance with this ordinance; providing that copies of this ordinance shall be filed with the Ada County Assessor, the Ada County Treasurer, the Ada County Recorder, and the Idaho State Tax Commission, as required by law; and providing an effective date.

Simison: Thank you. Council, you have heard this ordinance read by title. Is there anybody that would like it read in its entirety? If not, do I have a motion?

Perreault: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Council Woman Perreault.

Perreault: I move that we approve Ordinance No. 23-2041

Overton: Second.

Simison: Have a motion and a second to approve Item 14, Ordinance No. 23-2041. Is there discussion? If not, Clerk will call the roll.

Roll Call: Hoaglund, yea; Borton, yea; Cavener, absent; Perreault, yea; Strader, yea; Overton, yea.

Simison: All ayes. Motion carries and the item is agreed to.

MOTION CARRIED: FIVE AYES. ONE ABSENT.

Simison: Council, we have reached the end of our session.

Borton: Mr. Mayor?

Simison: Councilman Hoaglund.

Hoaglund: I move that we adjourn our work session.

Simison: Have a motion to adjourn. All in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed nay?
The ayes have it. We are adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED: FIVE AYES. ONE ABSENT.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:33 P.M.

(AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE OF THESE PROCEEDINGS)

_____ MAYOR ROBERT SIMISON	_____ DATE APPROVED
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ATTEST:

CHRIS JOHNSON - CITY CLERK