

DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes for October 5, 2020
7:00pm Regular Council Meeting

Council Members Present:

Susan Seymore (*via live video feed*), Mitchel Greer, Vicky Van de Vuurst, Shannon Barrett (*via live video feed*), Brian Schmidt, and Tom Hayes

Absent: None

Also Present: Jack McCrady, Mayor
 Kermit Turner, Police Captain
 Eva Meyer, Town Treasurer
 Gavin Blevins, Town Manager
 Tuesday Pope, Town Clerk

7:00pm: Mayor McCrady called the meeting to order, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and gave the invocation.

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the September 8, 2020 Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes as presented.

- Ms. Van de Vuurst made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented, 2nd by Mr. Schmidt. The motion passed (5-0, Ms. Seymore was not yet in attendance).

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the agenda.

- * Mr. Hayes made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Van de Vuurst 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0, Ms. Seymore was not yet in attendance).

Public Hearing

Mayor McCrady opened a Public Hearing for the purposes of public information and fiscal planning regarding the proposed Budget Amendment for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. The budget amendment summary is proposed as follows:

TOWN OF DAMASCUS BUDGET AMENDMENT SUMMARY

REVENUE	BUDGET	Amendment*
Sources	2020-2021	2020-2021*
Lodging Tax	\$ 41,500.00	\$ 41,500.00
Meals Tax	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 140,000.00
Real Property Tax	\$ 207,950.00	\$ 207,950.00
Personal Property/License Fees/DMV Stop Fees/State Car Tax Refund	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 33,000.00
Other Taxes	\$ 192,200.00	\$ 192,200.00
Trail Days	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
Downtown Revitalization/Trail Center Grants	\$1,490,750.00	\$1,490,750.00
Reserves	\$ 298,413.00	\$ 298,413.00
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 75,069.00	\$ 109,295.83
TOTAL	\$2,538,882.00	\$2,573,108.83

EXPENDITURES	BUDGET	Amendment*
Activity	2020-2021	2020-2021*
Administration	\$ 314,133.00	\$ 348,359.83
Downtown Revitalization/Trail Center Grants	\$1,565,750.00	\$1,565,750.00
Police	\$ 275,472.00	\$ 275,472.00
Fire & Rescue	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 21,000.00
Public Works	\$ 228,767.00	\$ 228,767.00
Parks & Recreation	\$ 107,440.00	\$ 107,440.00
Pool	\$ 26,320.00	\$ 26,320.00
TOTAL	\$2,538,882.00	\$2,573,108.83

Mr. Blevins explained the reasoning behind the changes to the budget numbers.

Mayor McCrady read the original as well as the proposed amended budget totals, and asked if there were any Public comments to be heard.

1. Town resident Sam Campbell, who lives on S. Railroad Ave., sent a question online asking why one of the budget expense line items reads 'Fire & Rescue' even though the Town does not financially contribute to the Damascus Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Fire Chief Kermit Turner explained that the DVFD answers many rescue-related (non-fire) calls each month, which is why it reads that way in the budget.

Mayor McCrady closed the Public Hearing and asked the Council if they had any questions or comments before voting. There were none to be heard, and the Mayor called for a vote.

- * Mr. Greer made a motion to accept the amended budget, as presented. Ms. Van de Vuurst 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0, Ms. Seymore was not yet in attendance).

Committee Reports

Budget, Finance, and Administration:

Town Treasurer, Eva Meyer, presented the following report for the previous month:

Taxes: The collection rate for the first half of 2020 real estate is 94.65%. Personal property and real estate tax tickets will be sent out this month and are due on November 20, 2020.

Virginia Investment Pool: The total balance in the VIP Liquidity Pool is \$152,848.76.

FYTD Interest

General Reserve	\$ 53,820.44	\$39.17
Police Vehicle Fund	\$ 15,228.86	\$11.08
Sewer CD Fund	\$ 26,162.79	\$ 5.76
Anthem Recovery	\$ 43,726.35	\$ 9.68
Trail Days Reserve	\$ 12,198.96	\$ 2.75
Additional Working Capital	\$ 1,711.36	\$ 1.19
Total	\$152,848.76	\$69.54

Lodging and Meals Tax: Listed below are the total lodging and meals tax collected in the month of September and compared to what is budgeted for FY 20-21.

<i>Lodging tax collected in September:</i>	<i>\$ 8,440.92</i>
<i>Lodging tax collected in FY20-21</i>	<i>\$27,507.49</i>
<i>Budgeted:</i>	<i>\$ 41,500.00</i>
<i>Meals tax collected in September:</i>	<i>\$ 11,634.05</i>
<i>Meals tax collected in FY20-21</i>	<i>\$36,550.09</i>
<i>Budgeted:</i>	<i>\$140,000.00</i>

On another note, we have received the annual United Healthcare Renewal for the Life + AD&D policy provided to all full-time employees. There has been no increase, so the rates will remain the same for 2021.

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

Mr. Greer presented the following monthly report as submitted by Public Works Supervisor, Adam Hester:

Hello everyone, again I want to start by saying Thank You to our Beautification Committee for the awesome job you all have done. Everyone has been a big help with everything. As you all know we have had a lot going on in town. To bring you up to date, we have completed the installation of the drain basin and piping on North Shady Avenue. The project went very smooth and everything seems to be working well. We have bushhogged the scouts new camping area, cleaned out a spot for the porta-pottie, cut out bushes from road signage, and put down gravel to make it easier to access and exit the camping area. We had a couple pole lights in the park that were bad and replaced them with led's instead of the old mercury vapor bulbs. Saving the town money by using less wattage. As the weather is beginning to get cooler the leaves are beginning to change colors and starting to fall so we have been servicing our leaf vacuum equipment and are ready to go. Also our curbs are poured along West Laurel Avenue and we are currently in the process of getting the bottom of the 2 troughs one in front of the old Quincy's restaurant and the other in front of the BB&T bank ready to pour.

Mayor McCrady commented that the Council needs to come to a decision on how to cover the troughs we have cut in the curb crossings because the initial ideas have turned out to be priced too high.

Mr. Blevins responded that he is conferring with project engineers on the matter and will let the Council know what they recommend.

Parks and Recreation:

Halloween is on Saturday, October 31st, and the Town Council agreed that it will be up to individuals if they wish to participate in any holiday activities, such as trick-or-treating. They will monitor the CDC and Governor's websites and confer back on October 20th to see if guidance has changed.

- * On the 20th the Council agreed that since the Town Hall is closed to the public, candy will not be handed out at the Police Department like they usually do, but Officers will still monitor the crosswalks from 5:30-7:30 on the 31st for the safety of those who wish to trick-or-treat.

Planning Commission:

Nothing new to report.

Police and Fire Advisory:

Captain Turner gave the following P.D. activity report for the previous month, which was submitted by Chief Hounshell:

Operations:

September 2020, Damascus Officers had 78 calls for service. We have taken 11 investigative reports that require follow up and made 8 arrest.

Traffic Enforcement Activities:

Officers issued 10 citations along with 6 warnings.

Speeding complaint areas include:

South Shady.

Special Report:

We will be conducting the drug take back event at the Town Park on October 24th from 10am and until 2pm.

Social distancing will be practiced, and mask used.

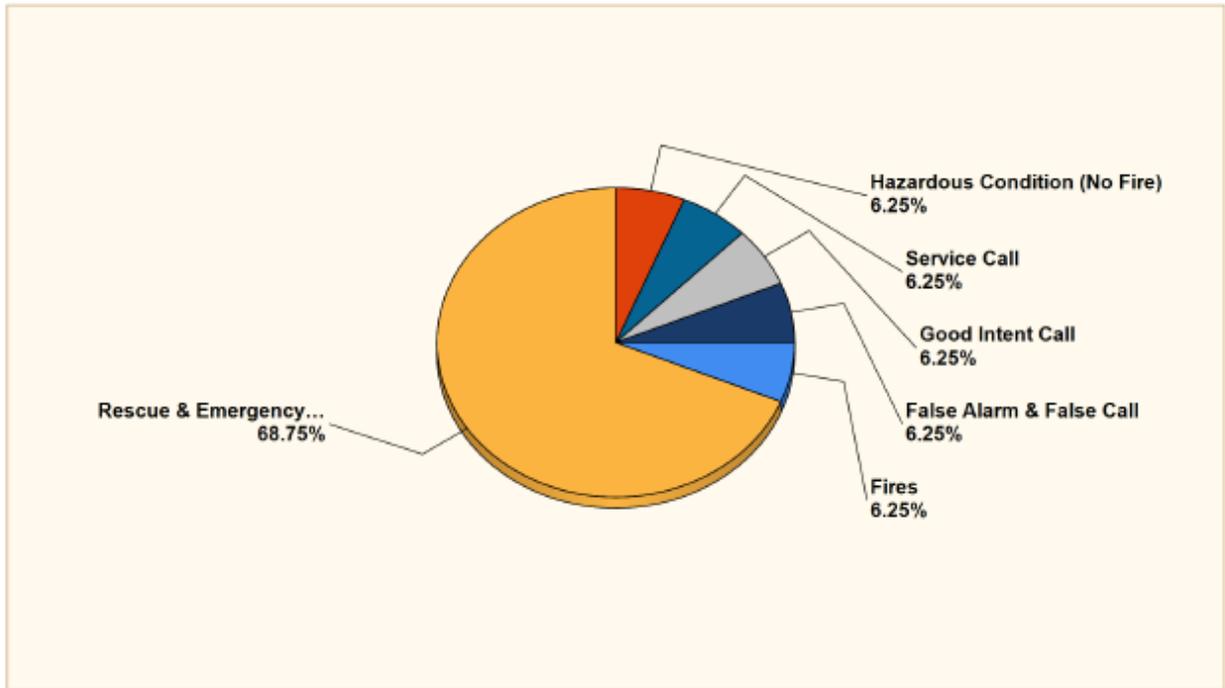
Officer Russell is near the top in his class in all phases. The graduation date is November 25th.

Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

(Police) Captain Turner, who is Chief of the Fire Department, presented the following report for the previous month:

Damascus Fire Department x
Damascus, VA
This report was generated on 10/1/2020 6:28:25 PM

Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range
Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 09/01/2020 | End Date: 09/30/2020



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	1	6.25%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	11	68.75%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	1	6.25%
Service Call	1	6.25%
Good Intent Call	1	6.25%
False Alarm & False Call	1	6.25%
TOTAL	16	100%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
111 - Building fire	1	6.25%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	6	37.5%
324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	2	12.5%
341 - Search for person on land	3	18.75%
440 - Electrical wiring/equipment problem, other	1	6.25%
553 - Public service	1	6.25%
622 - No incident found on arrival at dispatch address	1	6.25%
735 - Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	1	6.25%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	16	100%

Incident Statistics

Start Date: 09/01/2020 | End Date: 09/30/2020

INCIDENT COUNT			
INCIDENT TYPE		# INCIDENTS	
EMS		11	
FIRE		5	
TOTAL		16	
TOTAL TRANSPORTS (N2 and N3)			
APPARATUS	# of APPARATUS TRANSPORTS	# of PATIENT TRANSPORTS	TOTAL # of PATIENT CONTACTS
TOTAL			
PRE-INCIDENT VALUE		LOSSES	
\$0.00		\$0.00	
CO CHECKS			
TOTAL			
MUTUAL AID			
Aid Type	Total		
Aid Received	2		
OVERLAPPING CALLS			
# OVERLAPPING	% OVERLAPPING		
0	NaN		
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:23:56	0:14:24	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:20:08	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME (Dispatch to Enroute)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:05:04	0:05:15	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:05:12	
AGENCY	AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE (MM:SS)		
Damascus Fire Department	67:18		

Personnel Hours for Incidents for Date Range (Not Payroll Related)

Start Date: 09/01/2020 | End Date: 09/30/2020

PERSONNEL	TIME SPENT ON INCIDENTS (Hours:Minutes Dispatched to Cleared Scene)
Allen, Gavin	11:06
Allen, Tristan	14:04
Berry, Austin	8:24
Feliciano, Yamir	8:24
Hand, Devon J	2:06
Hurd, Emilee	8:58
McVey, Alex L	14:28
Minton, Jared	8:24
Mullins, Troy	12:38
Phipps, Michael	1:36
Reid, Michael D	0:14
Remine, Jeremy	0:44
Turner, Kermit	13:51
Turner, Walter B	11:26
Widener, Alex	4:25
Widener, Anthony	12:11
Widener, Jacob	17:44
Total:	150:41

Response Percentage per Station per Personnel for Incident Types for Personnel

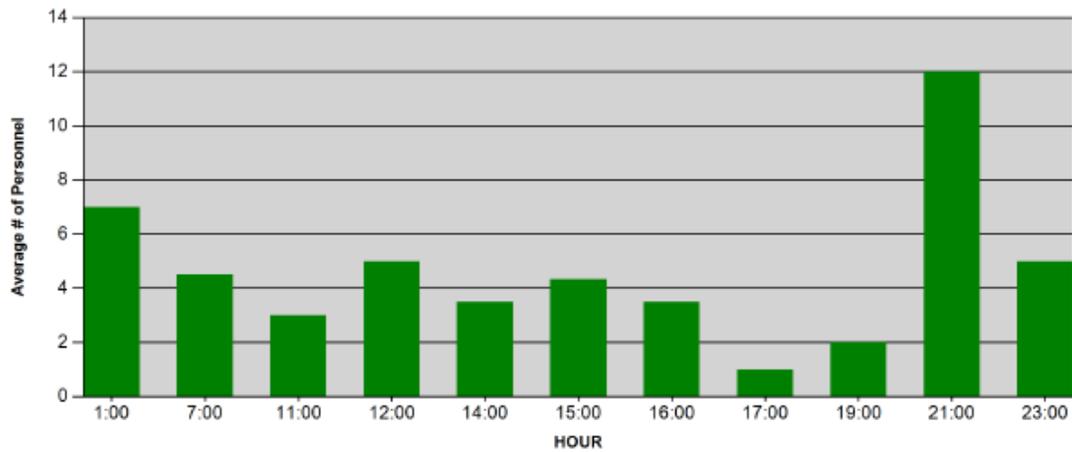
Personnel: All Personnel | Incident Type(s): All Incident Types | Start Date: 09/01/2020 | End Date: 09/30/2020

Personnel	Calls Attended	% of Calls for Selected Incident Types
Station: Station 1400		
Allen, Gavin	5	31.3%
Allen, Tristan	9	56.3%
Berry, Austin	2	12.5%
Blackburn, Douglas	2	12.5%
Feliciano, Yamir	2	12.5%
Finley, Will	4	25.0%
Hand, Devon J	6	37.5%
Hurd, Emilee	8	50.0%
Justice, Jason	4	25.0%
McVey, Alex L	8	50.0%
Minton, Jared	1	6.3%
Mullins, Troy	5	31.3%
Phipps, Jennifer N	4	25.0%
Phipps, Michael	2	12.5%
Prator, Daniel J	4	25.0%
Reid, Michael D	3	18.8%
Remine, Jeremy	2	12.5%
Turner, Kermit	8	50.0%
Turner, Walter B	8	50.0%
Widener, Alex	7	43.8%
Widener, Anthony	8	50.0%
Widener, Jacob	14	87.5%
Total Incidents for Station Station 1400	16	

Total Incidents for all Stations 16

Average Number of Responding Personnel per Hour for Date Range

Start Date: 09/01/2020 | End Date: 09/30/2020



HOUR	AVG. # PERSONNEL
01:00 - 01:59	7.00
07:00 - 07:59	4.50
11:00 - 11:59	3.00
12:00 - 12:59	5.00
14:00 - 14:59	3.50
15:00 - 15:59	4.33
16:00 - 16:59	3.50
17:00 - 17:59	1.00
19:00 - 19:59	2.00
21:00 - 21:59	12.00
23:00 - 23:59	5.00

- * Chief Turner also reported that the CARES Act fund purchases for the department have been ordered.

Special Committees

Nothing at this time.

Manager's Report

Downtown Revitalization (CDBG) & Waterfront Development Initiative (ARC)

- *Construction began on August 31st, and the project is moving forward along South Shady Avenue, getting ready to pour concrete before switching to N Shady; the idea is to pave everything at once – that said, grading around to the park is ongoing as well.*
- *The compass rose for the park center and concrete layouts are being set, and the contractor has ordered the stage and pavilion supplies for construction. We are currently coordinating the bathroom building renovation between the contractor and our local crews. I've engaged Adams Tree Service to remove the big maple in the park to save money, which we can reinvest in the bathrooms. (Mr. Blevins also reported that the soil at that location is not completely suitable for foundations to be set, so some of what is there may have to be removed and more soil brought in.)*
- *Mitchel and Jack have been getting quotes for the plumbing and roofing, and Adam and I have been coordinating the interior demolition schedule and the relocation of the electrical.*
- *I am working with Friends of SWVA to set up three (3) zoom meetings for economic assistance resources, social media/marketing, and facilities programing later in the Fall.*
- *Next steps include procurement of materials for remaining facades, securing the facade easements, and designing and contracting out new gateway signs.*
- *Pay Application #1 is ready for payment (attached).*

ARC POWER & TRRC – Trail Center +

- *Cabling installation is mostly complete and will be completed once the walls are finished. Electrical and plumbing are nearly finished also and will be awaiting inspection soon.*
- *Siding has been going on last week and this week, the deck piers have been poured, the lattice will be installed around the building foundation, and the roof should be going on this week. We have been coordinating the window installation as well.*
- *Substantial construction completion of the building is still scheduled for completion on October 30th, but that seems aggressive at this point– additional site and training room improvements are planned following the construction completion. The site work, demolition and paving for the parking is slated to be complete by November 30th.*
- *Looks like we are going to have to approve Change Order #4 for topsoil to be brought in, they have determined that the existing earth isn't suitable for even grass to meet the Erosion Soil Commission requirements.*

Town-wide Housing Assessment

- *The Mount Rogers PDC has been out surveying around Rambo and Rutledge Streets, and have nearly concluded that the Town is most likely going to have to apply for a scattered site project – this will have to wait until the March 2021 application deadline though due to time constraints of the surveying and application requirements.*
- *We should have the plan finalized by late October and reviewed by the housing committee prior to approval by the Town Council in November.*

Miscellaneous

- Comprehensive Plan Update – The plan update is still delayed due to other project and grant deadlines.
- VA Creeper Trail Conservancy – I’m assisting the Conservancy with contract negotiations for the selected firm who will complete the Master Plan, Impact Analysis and Toolkit, etc. for the Creeper Trail.
- CARES Act – The task force approved purchase of new turnout gear for the VFD, additional uniforms for the Police Department, and various other items for Administration and office supplies. We are working on additional IT infrastructure, plus upfitting the building and bathrooms.
- Iron Mtn Trail Parking Lot – This has been set aside for application another year due to delays with the hydraulic engineers.
- Douglas Avenue Sidewalk – I’ve been getting letters of support from businesses to assist with a VDOT application for construction of a new sidewalk along Douglas Drive from the car wash corner to the parking lot next to the Creeper Trail – this should be submitted by Oct. 15.
- Website(s) – we launched the new citizen-focused website at Damascus.org on Sept. 23, and we are currently working on launch for the new tourism-focused website to replace the current/outgoing visitdamascus.org. We believe that separating the one into two will help clean up the layout and make it easier for citizens and visitors to get the information they need.
- Street Trees – I’ve coordinated with Brian Schmidt to do the brunt of the work on the Laurel Avenue street tree replacement so that we can get those in the ground before the end of October. We’ll be coordinating on this as best we can to get it completed in a timely and satisfactory manner.
- Curbs – We’re getting ready to pour the inner runs of the curb cuts and fill in the section beside the bank after the piping is installed – coordinating with the contractor on grates.

Old Business

The Town has received a \$1,500 (labor and materials) estimate from Doug Neely for electrical upgrades to the wiring at the Imboden Street bathhouse.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to accept the bid from Doug Neely as presented, 2nd by Mr. Hayes. The motion passed (6-0).

New Business

1. Mr. Greer has found an 8ft. stainless steel salt spreader, which is a \$6,000 unit, for sale from James Walls for \$2,500.
 - Mr. Schmidt made a motion to purchase the salt spreader for \$2,500, 2nd by Ms. Van de Vuurst. The motion passed (6-0).
2. Ms. Seymore stated that there is considerable interest in the community to establish a dog park. The Council agreed, and the Mayor said the Town is all for it if an appropriate plot can be identified.

Legal Matters

None at this time.

Council Members Reports

Mr. Barrett stated the next Damascus Business Group meeting will be scheduled for mid-November or early December.

Ms. Van de Vuurst wanted to give a special ‘thank you’ to the Town’s volunteer beautification committee for putting out the fall décor along the sidewalks.

Mr. Schmidt stated that he has joined the Town Manager for two meetings on the Damascus Trail Center and waterfront projects, and compliments Mr. Blevins for the amount of details and specifics that he manages on these projects.

Ms. Seymore stated that there have been discussions about honoring Tim Williams' volunteer work for the Town, and she would like to see the section of the Trail Days campground named in recognition of the time and hard work he put in to clearing it out for campers.

It was the consensus of the Council to move forward with this suggestion, and Ms. Seymore reported that the newspaper will be doing a story about it.

Mayor McCrady commented that someone reported to him that some of the Town's files are able to be accessed via the website or wi-fi.

Mr. Blevins said that he will get some more information and make sure the Town's IT security measures are not being breached.

Mr. Hayes stated that there is still a concern that a tree in the alley behind Brook Street may fall.

Mr. Blevins replied that he has contacted Adams' Tree Service to go look at it and provide a quote to remove the tree, and is waiting for their response.

Citizens Comments

None at this time.

Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

** For information on upcoming events visit our website www.visitdamascus.org, and for citizen info visit www.damascus.org, and don't forget our social media presence on **Facebook**, **Instagram**, and **Twitter!***

Consent Agenda

- Ms. Van de Vuurst made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$500, 2nd by Mr. Greer. The motion passed (6-0).
- Mr. Greer made a motion to pay the bills presented as well as the standard and/or recurring bills that will come in before the next Council meeting. Ms. Van de Vuurst 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
- Mr. Hayes made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Ms. Van de Vuurst. The motion passed (6-0).

Jack McCrady, Mayor

Tuesday Pope, Clerk