

DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes for November 1, 2021
7:00pm Regular Council Meeting

Council Members Present: Tom Hayes, Beaty Jackson, Robert Van de Vuurst, Mitchel Greer, and Susan Coleman

Absent: Tony Doss

Also Present: Katie Lamb, Mayor
Eva Meyer, Town Treasurer
Trent Crewe, Legal Counsel
Kermit Turner, Police Captain & Fire Chief
Gavin Blevins, Town Manager
Tuesday Pope, Town Clerk

7:00pm: Mayor Lamb called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance; Mr. Van de Vuurst gave the invocation.

Mayor Lamb asked for approval of the October 7, 2021 Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes, with one (name) correction.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Mayor Lamb asked for approval of the agenda, as presented.

- Mr. Hayes made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

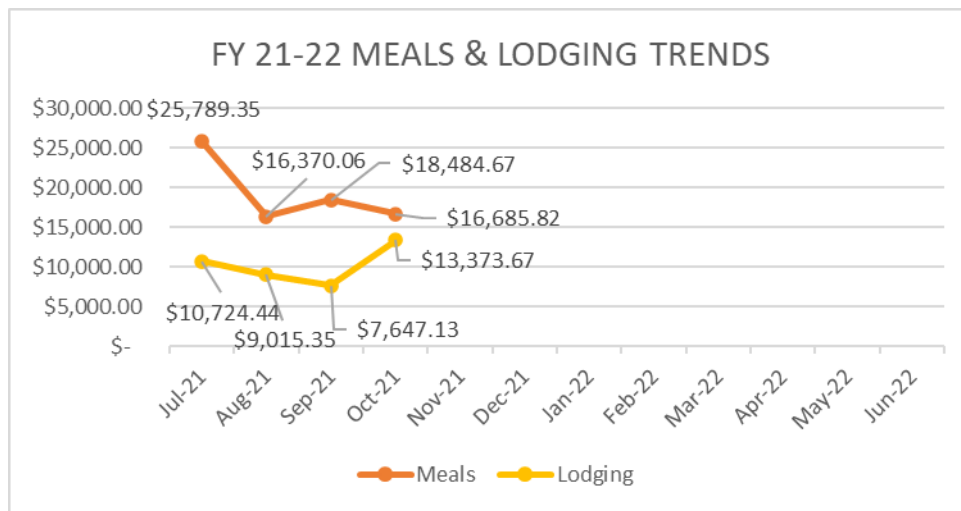
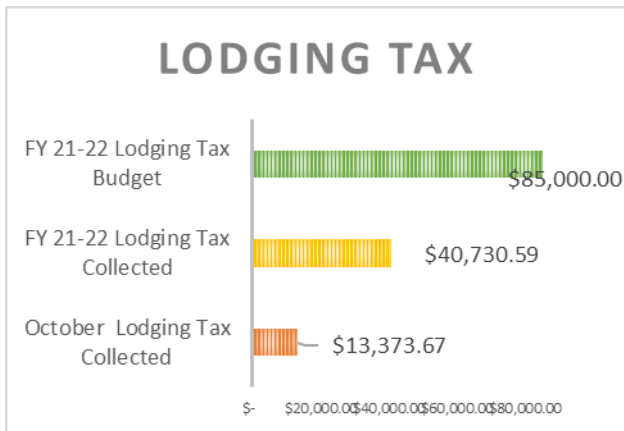
Committee Reports

Budget, Finance, and Administration:

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

***Real Estate & Personal Property Taxes:** Our 2021 personal property and 2021 2nd half real estate tax tickets were mailed out in early October and are due on November 20, 2021. We have been steadily receiving payments, with a 39.17% collection rate for 2021 personal property and 58.14% for 2021 real estate so far. Keep in mind the real estate collection rate is for the total billed for 2021 rather than just the 2nd half. We will have a more accurate collection rate following the due date at next month's meeting.*

Meals & Lodging Tax: We collected \$13,373.67 in lodging tax and \$16,685.82 in meals tax during the month of October, reflecting sales for the prior month.



Virginia Investment Pool: The total balance in the VIP Liquidity Pool is \$550,369.15

FYTD Interest

General Reserve	\$ 53,882.23	\$ 12.15
Police Vehicle Fund	\$ 15,246.65	\$ 3.59
Sewer CD Fund	\$ 26,192.98	\$ 5.98
Anthem Recovery	\$ 43,776.42	\$ 9.79
Trail Days Reserve	\$ 7,428.20	\$ 1.42
Additional Working Capital	\$ 1,713.25	\$ 0.17
TOD ARPA 2021	\$402,129.42	\$91.42
Total	\$550,369.15	\$124.52

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

Mr. Greer reported that the flat bed to replace the damaged truck bed will be \$4995 from Modern Chevrolet, plus \$600 for installation, totaling \$5595. \$2933 of this will be covered with the reimbursement from our insurance company, and the remaining \$2662 will need to be paid out of the General Fund using the Capital Outlay line item. He also stated that he has found a 72in

grapple bucket attachment for the tractor, which is priced at \$2249 and will also need to be paid out of Capital Outlay.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to purchase both of the aforementioned items, 2nd by Mr. Jackson. The motion passed (5-0).

Parks and Recreation:

Ms. Coleman presented some design options for a 'Welcome to Damascus' mural that she would like to have painted on the back wall of the restroom building in the Town Park, which is facing the highway. There is a local artist willing to do this for \$750, and can get started right away.

The Mayor and Council Members discussed the designs and decided to table the project until a remake of the proposed design can be done to include the compass rose and colors from the Town's branding package.

Planning Commission:

Mr. Blevins reported on the status of the vacant commission seat, stating the Planning Commission has decided to table making a recommendation to Town Council until members can learn more about the candidates. At this point the candidates for consideration are Scott Smith, Tony Bebbber, Elizabeth McCartin, and Elena Smith.

Mr. Greer agreed that the Council should wait to make an appointment until the candidates can be considered further, and Mayor Lamb mentioned that the Council has a list of these candidates that includes their phone numbers so they can reach out to them for discussion.

Police and Fire Advisory:

Captain Turner presented the following P.D. activity report for the previous month, as submitted by Chief Hounshell:

Operations: October 2021, Damascus Officers had 106 calls for service. We have taken 10 investigative reports and made 2 arrests.

Traffic Enforcement Activities: We issued 12 citations along with 18 warnings.

Speeding complaint areas include: North Beaverdam, Laurel Ave

Special Report: We completed our National Drug take Back and Damascus PD turned in 28.5 lbs. of unwanted/unused drugs between 10am until 2pm . There were 149 agencies participating with 207 collection sites and the total turned in between everyone is 18,326.2 lbs.

Special Notes:

Police Vehicles: No issues.

Auxiliary: No new action

Captain Turner read the following letter of resignation/retirement from Chief Hounshell:

October 14, 2021

Mayor, Town Manager and Honorable Council Members,

It is with mixed emotions and after great thought, I would like to announce my retirement as Chief of Police effective November 14, 2021.

After thirty-three years in law enforcement the changes in my profession have been unnerving and unbelievable the last couple of years. It is time for me to pursue other opportunities away from the profession I dedicated my life to.

I would like to thank the Town for the opportunity, and I have made lifelong friends here. The staff should be commended for the amazing job they do, and it was an immense pleasure working with them. I hope each of you know the treasure you have in your employees especially in the last several months and the turmoil in town. The employees that are here day to day experience the brunt of the complaints and have stayed steadfast.

I hope each of you the best and pray that the town moves forward with togetherness and not strife.

Sincerely,



Mike Hounshell

Chief-Damascus Police Department.

- Mr. Hayes made a motion to accept the resignation of Chief Mike Hounshell, effective November 14, 2021. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Captain Turner asked for the Council's approval to award Chief Hounshell with his duty weapon upon his retirement, using the assignment of ownership below:

ASSIGNMENT OWNERSHIP OF ISSUED AGENCY FIREARM TO RETIRED MEMBER

RE: Michael Brown Hounshell, Retiree – Town of Damascus Police Department

Pursuant to allowances as set forth under Code of Virginia 59.1-148.3 governing the awarding of an agency-issued service weapon to retiring officers, the following conditional award is made:

I, Katie Lamb, mayor of Town of Damascus, Virginia do hereby award to Town of Damascus Police Department retiring member, Michael Brown Hounshell, the following described firearm: One (1) Glock Model 22 40 caliber, Serial No. PXB572, previously agency-issued to Michael Brown Hounshell and carried in the performance of his official duties.

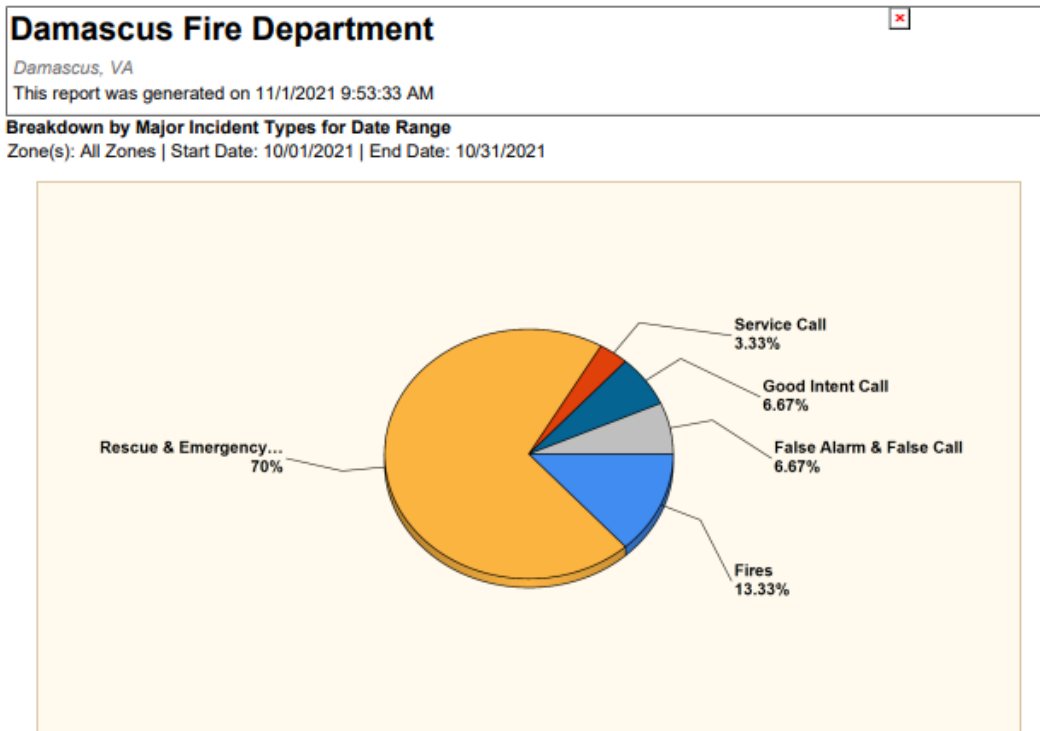
It is further understood and evidenced through this Agreement of Award that henceforth the awardee named herein shall have the sole ownership of said firearm, and is solely responsible regarding its legal possession, effective as of the date of this document reflected below. The Town of Damascus assumes no further responsibility for this firearm.

I, Michael Brown Hounshell, do hereby receive the aforementioned firearm, and assume all conditional responsibilities and conditions of said receipt as stated herein and as evidenced by my signature affixed below.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to award the firearm to Chief Hounshell as requested. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

Chief Turner presented the following report for the previous month's activities :



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	4	13.33%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	21	70%
Service Call	1	3.33%
Good Intent Call	2	6.67%
False Alarm & False Call	2	6.67%
TOTAL	30	100%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
100 - Fire, other	1	3.33%
121 - Fire in mobile home used as fixed residence	1	3.33%
131 - Passenger vehicle fire	1	3.33%
151 - Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire	1	3.33%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	14	46.67%
322 - Motor vehicle accident with injuries	2	6.67%
324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	2	6.67%
341 - Search for person on land	3	10%
551 - Assist police or other governmental agency	1	3.33%
611 - Dispatched & cancelled en route	2	6.67%
700 - False alarm or false call, other	1	3.33%
735 - Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	1	3.33%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	30	100%

Incident Statistics

Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 10/01/2021 | End Date: 10/31/2021

INCIDENT COUNT			
INCIDENT TYPE		# INCIDENTS	
EMS		21	
FIRE		9	
TOTAL		30	
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		1	
OVERLAPPING CALLS			
# OVERLAPPING		% OVERLAPPING	
6		20	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:14:17	0:14:19	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:13:04	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME (Dispatch to Enroute)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:03:21	0:03:22	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:03:12	
AGENCY		AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE (MM:SS)	
Damascus Fire Department		41:56	

Response Percentage per Station per Personnel for Incident Types for Personnel

Personnel: All Personnel | Incident Type(s): All Incident Types | Start Date: 10/01/2021 | End Date: 10/31/2021

Personnel	Calls Attended	% of Calls for Selected Incident Types
Station: Station 1400		
Berry, Austin	8	26.7%
Blackburn, Douglas	1	3.3%
Burnett, Michael	1	3.3%
Feliciano, Yamir	7	23.3%
Fletcher, James R	9	30.0%
Gilbert, Justin	10	33.3%
Hand, Devon J	4	13.3%
Hurd, Emilee	8	26.7%
Johnson, Amie	3	10.0%
Johnson, Michael	17	56.7%
Jones, Andrew	2	6.7%
Jones, Dave	15	50.0%
Justice, Jason	14	46.7%
McVey, Alex L	3	10.0%
Minton, Jared	3	10.0%
Mullins, Troy	13	43.3%
Phipps, Jennifer N	8	26.7%
Phipps, Michael	6	20.0%
Reid, Michael D	1	3.3%
Remine, Jeremy	9	30.0%
Stewart, Timothy	6	20.0%
Turner, Kermit	20	66.7%
Turner, Walter B	26	86.7%
Widener, Alex	14	46.7%
Widener, Anthony	1	3.3%
Widener, Jacob	6	20.0%
Total Incidents for Station Station 1400	30	

Total Incidents for all Stations 30

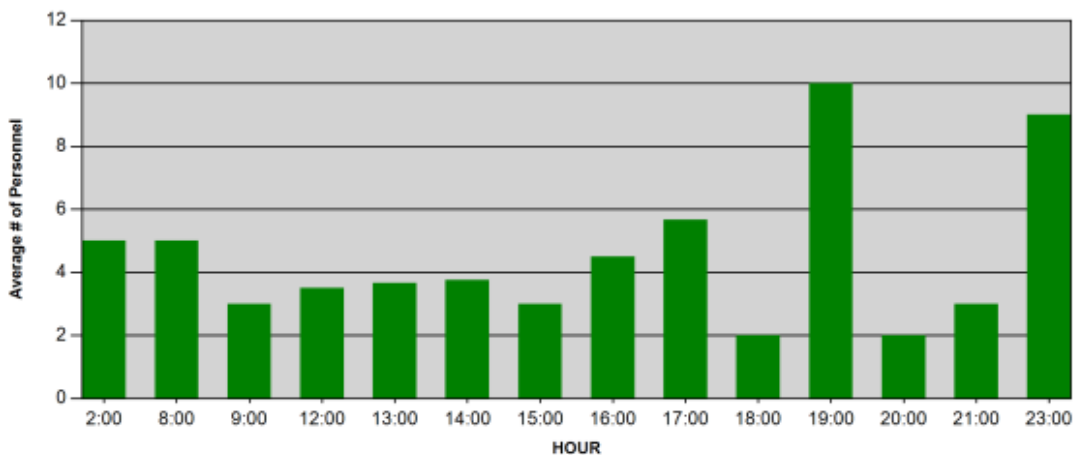
Personnel Hours for Incidents for Date Range (Not Payroll Related)

Start Date: 10/01/2021 | End Date: 10/31/2021

PERSONNEL	TIME SPENT ON INCIDENTS (Hours:Minutes Dispatched to Cleared Scene)
Berry, Austin	7:01
Blackburn, Douglas	1:27
Burnett, Michael	0:33
Feliciano, Yamir	2:25
Gilbert, Justin	8:41
Hurd, Emilee	9:49
Johnson, Amie	3:21
Johnson, Michael	10:08
Jones, Andrew	2:29
Jones, Dave	3:09
Justice, Jason	8:54
McVey, Alex L	0:00
Minton, Jared	3:06
Mullins, Troy	5:00
Phipps, Jennifer N	2:04
Phipps, Michael	6:46
Remine, Jeremy	9:18
Stewart, Timothy	7:15
Turner, Kermit	20:38
Turner, Walter B	22:27
Widener, Alex	6:10
Widener, Anthony	1:55
Widener, Jacob	5:51
Total:	150:26

Average Number of Responding Personnel per Hour for Date Range

Start Date: 10/01/2021 | End Date: 10/31/2021



HOUR	AVG. # PERSONNEL
02:00 - 02:59	5.00
08:00 - 08:59	5.00
09:00 - 09:59	3.00
12:00 - 12:59	3.50
13:00 - 13:59	3.67
14:00 - 14:59	3.75
15:00 - 15:59	3.00
16:00 - 16:59	4.50
17:00 - 17:59	5.67
18:00 - 18:59	2.00
19:00 - 19:59	10.00
20:00 - 20:59	2.00
21:00 - 21:59	3.00
23:00 - 23:59	9.00

Special Committees

- Christmas Market & Shop Till You Drop Event Updates – Tom Foltz reported that the 'Shop Till You Drop' event will be held on December 11th at the Rock School Auditorium, and the money raised by selling vendor spots at the event will be donated to the Damascus Volunteer Fire Department. The vendor spots have been filled, and there will be a silent auction for local businesses to donate to. Nancy Lamb will also be there with her new book and doing signings, so that is very exciting as well.

As for the Christmas tree sale, finding wholesale trees has been hard at this time of year, but have been secured. The trees will be sold from November 27th until December 4th at the Laurel Creek Park, and an estimate sheet for expenses (\$1,463.85) was presented.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the proposed expenses for the tree sales, up to \$1,463.85, to be paid out of the events committee line item. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

- Damascus Dog Park Committee - Susan Seymore reported that the property survey has been completed, and clearing is underway. The Dog Park Committee paid \$2,250 for the survey, and is asking for reimbursement from the Town.
- Ms. Coleman made a motion to reimburse the Dog Park Committee for the survey expense, as requested. Mr. Van de Vuurst 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Manager's Report

Mr. Blevins presented the following report for the previous month:

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

- *Annotated plans have been sent to WCSA's selected road striping contractor for specific pricing, and we will be breaking out costs to be shared between WCSA and the Town; road striping should take place within the month for areas of N Reynolds St and N Shady Ave.*
- *Bathroom: Installation of doors remains incomplete to finish the interior; gutters have been installed.*
- *Facades: This is the final push on materials ordering for the façade program.*
- *Laurel Creek Park: Working on construction of the memorial for the park dedication.*
- *Trash cans and dog waste station are in place, still need to order benches, picnic tables, pole banners, stage backdrops, and other decorations.*

TRRC – Trail Center

- *Coordination continues with ATC staff and volunteers to design and install the landscape elements, including path; get additional railing designed, manufactured, and installed; rehabilitate the garage.*
- *Currently working with East TN Metal to finish mockup of the front railing design for manufacturing, along with an additional side railing.*
- *Interior removal of old shelving, lights and conduit in the garage is complete, pending painting and new electrical install.*
- *New doors and windows are being spec'd and priced for order. (Mayor Lamb estimated the cost for these will be \$3,905).*
- *Grand Opening is being scheduled by the ATC for Trail days 2022.*

Miscellaneous

- *Comprehensive Plan Update – MRPDC will resume the comprehensive planning process for the town starting in January 2022.*
- *VA Creeper Trail – The strategic planning process is in the final draft stages now and should be complete this month.*

- o *VDOT has issued the task order for replacement and modification of certain curb crossings on Laurel Ave to be completed.*

Mr. Blevins also reported that Damascus Police Department Officers each received Certificates of Appreciation in Oct. along with a bonus from Police Retention Funding.

Old Business

Laurel Avenue Tree Replacement – Ms. Coleman presented a quote from Thomas Hollow Nursery for planting Black Gum and Serviceberry trees along Laurel Ave. The quote, including labor, is \$2,273.50.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the tree estimate, including labor, as presented. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

New Business

Nothing to report at this time.

Legal Matters

At the appropriate time, motion to Recess into Closed Session for Discussion and Consideration of Police Department, Public Works, and Administration Personnel Matters, per VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1).

Mayor & Council Members Reports

Mayor Lamb thanked Chief Hounshell for his service to Damascus, and wished him the best of luck on his future endeavors. She also stated that she hates to see him go, and that he will be missed.

Mayor Lamb expressed her gratitude for Delegate O'Quinn's help with the VDOT progress in Town.

Mr. Greer thanked Chief Hounshell for his service to the Town; and encouraged everyone to go vote tomorrow.

Ms. Coleman stated that she has received complaints about the condition of the surface of the Creeper Trail.

Mr. Blevins replied that it needs to be retreaded, which is being planned for by the Creeper Trail Conservancy along with Damascus and Abingdon as partners.

Mr. Van de Vuurst expressed his appreciation for the excellent job done by Chief Hounshell, and wished him nothing but the best going forward.

Mr. Van de Vuurst thanked Ms. Pope for coordinating the Beaverdam Friday Jams music series, which he was very pleased with. The expenses for this first-time Town event came in way under budget, and Mr. Van de Vuurst said he would like to start making plans for the series in 2022.

Citizens Comments

None at this time.

Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- i. November 2nd – Town Hall will be Closed for Election Day
- ii. November 11th - Town Hall will be Closed in Observance of Veterans Day
- iii. November 14th – Veterans Day Program at the Wheel of Freedom in Town Park
- iv. November 24th (half day), 25th, and 26th - Town Hall will be Closed in Observance of Thanksgiving
- v. December 4th – Trail Town Christmas Parade at 7pm

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

Consent Agenda

- Mr. Hayes made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$500, 2nd by Ms. Coleman. The motion passed (5-0).
- 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. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Mr. Greer made a motion to Recess into Closed Session for the items listed previously under 'Legal Matters'. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Mr. Greer made a motion to return to Open Session, 2nd by Mr. Van de Vuurst. The motion passed (5-0).
- We Certify that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such matters identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting.

Tom Hayes - Yea

Beaty Jackson - Yea

Robert Van de Vuurst - Yea

Mitchel Greer - Yea

Susan Coleman - Yea

- Ms. Coleman made a motion to promote Captain Kermit Turner to Police Chief, effective November 15, 2021, subject to his acceptance, and allowing the Town Manager to negotiate the wage offering. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Mr. Hayes made a motion to hire a Police Officer. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Ms. Coleman made a motion to make Ralph Lane the point of contact for the Public Works Department. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Mr. Jackson made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Ms. Coleman. The motion passed (5-0).

Katie Lamb, Mayor

Tuesday Pope, Clerk