

DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes for November 7, 2022
7:00pm Regular Called Council Meeting

Council Members Present: Mitchel Greer, Tony Doss, Susan Coleman, Beaty Jackson and Charles Fields

Absent: Tom Hayes

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

7:00pm: Mayor Lamb called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance; Ms. Coleman gave the invocation.

Mayor Lamb asked for approval of the October 3, 2022, Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the Minutes, with one typo correction under the Manager's Report. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Mayor Lamb asked for approval of the agenda.

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

Mayor Lamb opened a Public Hearing regarding a proposed ordinance to amend the Town's purchase procedures regarding procurement of goods and services. The proposed ordinance follows:

- Town of Damascus, Virginia -

An ORDINANCE Amending Section 22-91 of the 2002 CODE OF DAMASCUS, And Enacting Section 22-93 as Part of
ARTICLE 2 DIVISION 3 - PURCHASES AND CONTRACTS

WHEREAS the Mayor and Town Council conducted a public hearing regarding the proposed adoption of this ordinance at 7:00 PM on Monday, November 07, 2022; and

WHEREAS, on October 19, 2022, notice of such public hearing was published in the Washington County News, a newspaper of general circulation in the Town of Damascus, Virginia; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it hereby ORDAINED that

1. Section 22-91 of the 2002 Code of the Town of Damascus, Virginia shall be and hereby is amended to provide as follows:

- (a) All purchases made in the name of the town shall be made by invoice and entered into the town’s contract services system as accounts payable. Invoices shall be logged into the system by date, vendor name, budget line item, and as otherwise specified. All invoices for budgeted expenditures over \$2,500.00 *(increase from \$500)* shall be approved by the council and authorized by signatures of the mayor and treasurer. All invoices for budgeted items of \$2,500.00 *(increase from \$500)* or less shall be authorized by the signature of the mayor. No purchases over \$2,500 *(increase from \$500)* may be made for goods or services without prior approval of the council.
 - (b) Gasoline, oil and emergency repairs for all town vehicles and equipment are exempt from the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, but such purchases must be signed for by the person making the purchase; and in case of emergencies necessitating repairs, the repairs shall not exceed that which will put the vehicle or equipment in use until permission can be obtained for complete repair.
 - (c) For the purpose of state and federal grants and/or loans, all purchases of goods and services estimated to be less than eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000.00) *(increase from \$30,000)*, for the sum of all phases, shall not be subject to the requirements of the competitive bidding or negotiation process, provided that the purchasing agent shall, whenever the amount thereof exceeds thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00), secure three (3) or more written informal solicitations. Written quotations from vendors shall be obtained where practical, although verbal quotations will be permitted, provided that the purchasing agent shall cause a written record of all such verbal quotations to be made and filed with the records of the transaction.
2. Section 22-93 of the 2002 Code of the Town of Damascus, Virginia shall be and hereby is enacted to provide as follows:

Sec. 22-93. - Exemptions.

The following transactions are hereby exempt from the provisions of this division:

- 1. Legal services associated with actual or potential litigation;
- 2. Purchases from the state penitentiary or a state contract from the state purchasing department warehouse;
- 3. Purchases for special police work when the chief of police certifies to the purchasing agent that items are needed for undercover police operations.

This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

There were no public comments to be heard.

Mayor Lamb closed the Public Hearing and asked for Council input.

- Ms. Coleman made a motion to accept the ordinance amending Section 22-91 of the 2002 CODE OF DAMASCUS, And Enacting Section 22-93 as Part of ARTICLE 2 DIVISION 3 - PURCHASES AND CONTRACTS, as presented. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, and the Council certified individually.

Member:

Ms. Coleman

Attendance:

Present

Vote:

Aye

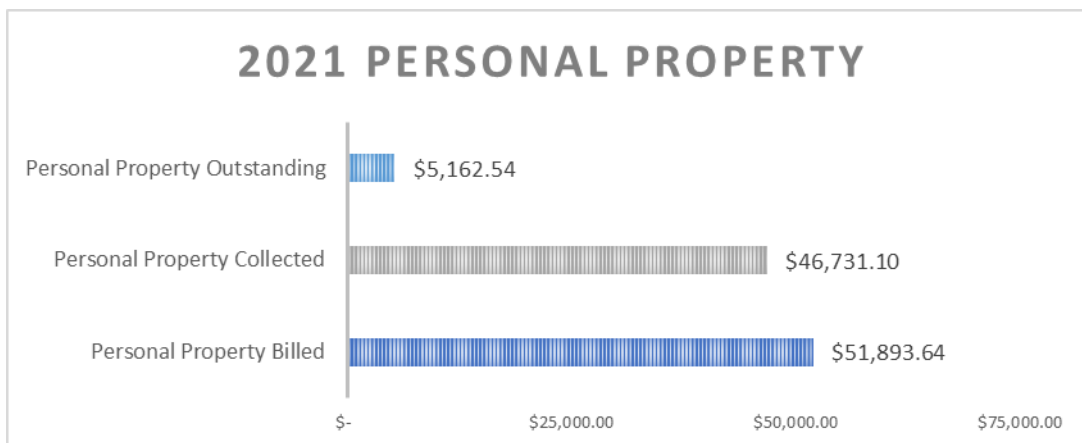
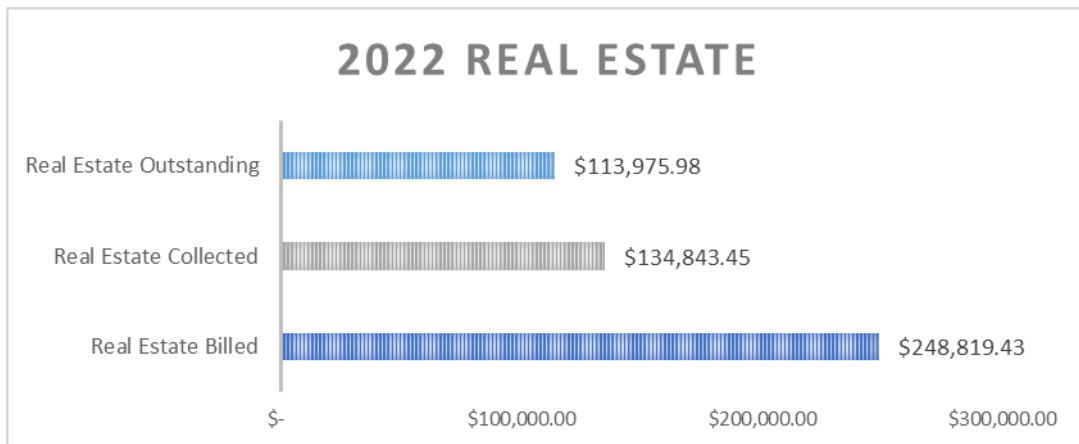
Mr. Greer	Present	Aye
Mr. Hayes	Absent	
Mr. Doss	Present	Aye
Mr. Fields	Present	Aye
Mr. Jackson	Present	Aye

Committee Reports

Budget, Finance, and Administration:

Town Treasurer, Elena Smith, submitted the following report for the previous month, which was read by Mr. Blevins:

Real Estate & Personal Property Taxes: The collection rate for 2022 Real Estate taxes is at 54.19% (this reflects amounts not due until November 30th) and the collection rate for 2021 Personal Property is at 90.05%.



*Town of Damascus Virginia Investment Pool
(VIP)*

Account Balance

FYTD Income

VIP Stable NAV Liquidity Pool

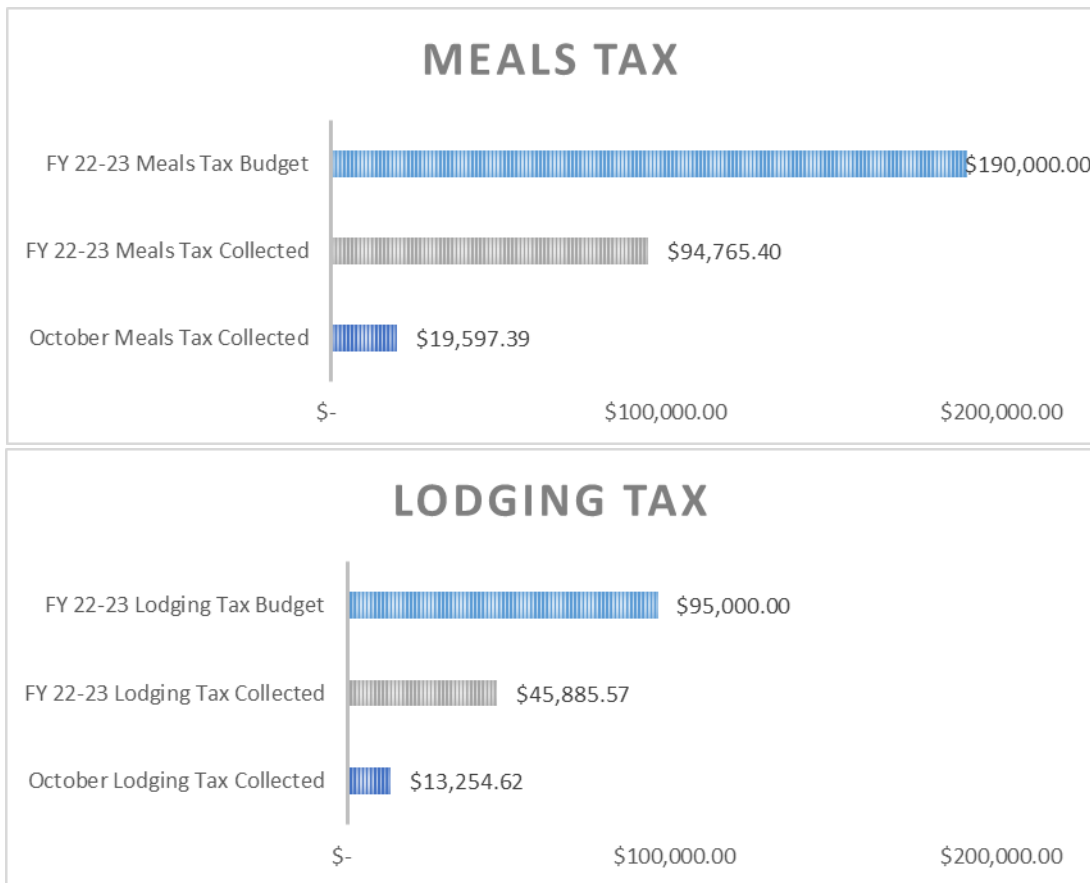
\$927,935.80

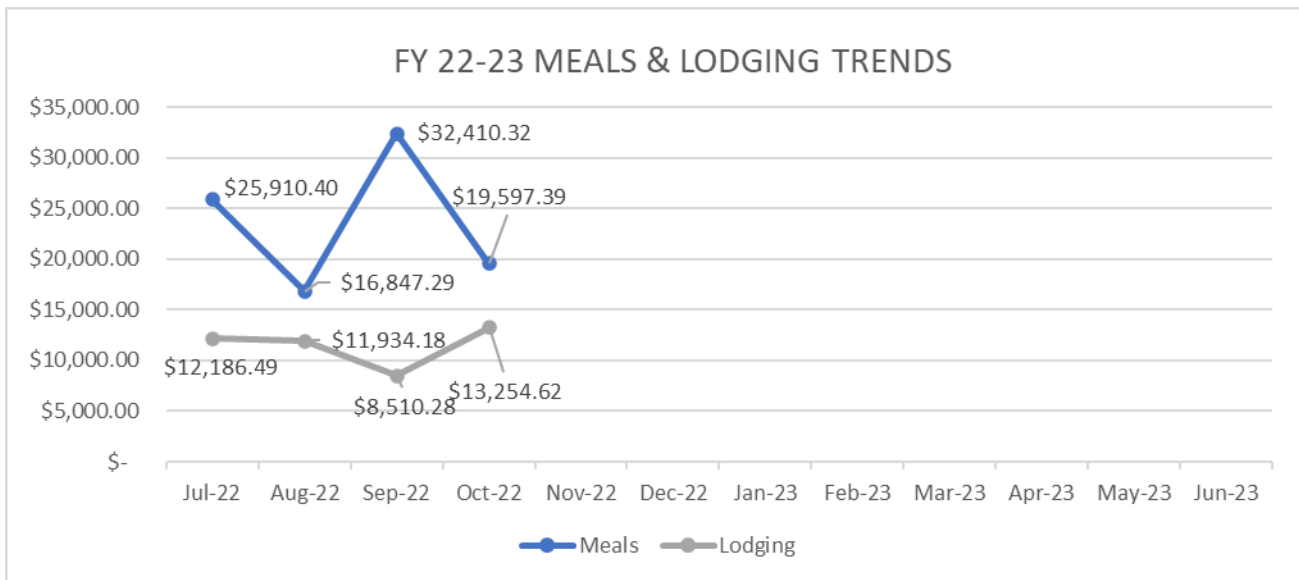
\$6,089.97

Subaccounts

<i>RESERVE FUND</i>	<i>\$54,456.82</i>	<i>\$443.45</i>
<i>EARMARK POLICE VEHICLE</i>	<i>\$15,409.25</i>	<i>\$125.50</i>
<i>SEWER FUND CD</i>	<i>\$26,472.23</i>	<i>\$215.61</i>
<i>ANTHEM RECOVERY</i>	<i>\$44,243.18</i>	<i>\$360.27</i>
<i>ADDITIONAL WORKING CAPITAL</i>	<i>\$1,731.58</i>	<i>\$14.14</i>
<i>TRAIL DAYS RESERVE</i>	<i>\$7,507.40</i>	<i>\$61.17</i>
<i>TOD ARPA 2021</i>	<i>\$778,115.34</i>	<i>\$4,869.83</i>

Meals & Lodging Tax: We collected \$19,597.39 in Meals Tax and \$13,254.62 in Lodging Tax during October, reflecting sales for September.





Announcements:

The Treasurer requests that the Town Council vote to:

- Close the Truist "PD Raffle Checking" (last deposit 03/11/20) and transfer the \$2,975.44 to the VIP account "Earmark Police Vehicle".
- Ms. Coleman made a motion to close the account and reallocate the funds as requested. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Transfer \$13,463.56 of the \$13,563.56 balance from "Program Inc/CDBG Checking" (last deposit 08/17/15) to the General Fund, reimbursing the Town for money spent on CDBG/ARC projects.
- Ms. Coleman made a motion to transfer the funds as requested. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Mr. Blevins also reported that half of our real estate tax bills were lost by the USPS so they all had to be reprinted and mailed again, and due to the delay in many residents receiving their bills, the due date has been extended until November 30th for this year.

➤ Annual Employee Christmas Bonus

- Ms. Coleman made a motion to approve the following annual bonus for 2022: \$250 for part-time employees, and \$500 for full-time employees. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

Mr. Greer reported the Public Works department has been busy picking up leaves and brush, taking down light post banners, putting up flags, etc. The truck will be going in the shop on Wednesday, so it will be out of service until the needed repairs are completed.

Parks and Recreation:

Ms. Coleman reported that the Farmers Market had a good season and profited over \$1,000. She also requested that after the Christmas tree market is finished up at the Laurel Creek Park, the porta-potty that is over there (\$85 per month) be moved to the dog park location.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to move the rented porta-potty from the Laurel Creek Park to the Dog Park. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Mayor Lamb thanked Donna Foltz for her work with the Farmers Market, as she has put in many hours and a lot of work managing the market.

Ms. Coleman also stated that as of November 3rd, the Damascus Trail Center has had 2,772 visitors, and that Damascus has been awarded 'Top Tiny Adventure Town' by Blue Ridge Outdoors for the second year in a row! Other winners are Abingdon (Small), Bristol (Medium), Asheville (Large).

Mr. Jackson reported that for the 2022 swim season, the pool netted a loss of over \$30,000 (distributed over two fiscal years). The pool always loses thousands of dollars for the swim season, which is to be expected, and this year we had a main water line burst as well as leaks in the pool, so those were big expenses that had to be taken care of in order to open the pool. Mr. Jackson stated that the pool is a great asset to the community and thinks revenues can be increased by more marketing, having the bike shops encourage their customers to use the pool, adding signage for 'public pool' along the main street, painting a mural on the facility wall that faces the road and Creeper Trail, etc. He would also like to see sponsorships for underprivileged kids, pricing adjustments for families, and identification and work on improvements done before the next season.

Planning Commission:

Mr. Blevins reported the Commission still has a seat vacancy for the term ending 2024, which was previously held by Brian Schmidt; and a seat vacancy on the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) for the term that expired July 31st for Larry Ginn).

The Planning Commission has met and recommends the Council appoint Elizabeth McCartin to the Planning Commission seat vacancy, and Jack McCrady to the BZA seat vacancy.

- Ms. Coleman made a motion to appoint Elizabeth McCartin to the Planning Commission, as recommended. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

- Mr. Fields made a motion to table the BZA appointment recommendation until the December Council meeting, after which time the election results will be in and if Jack McCrady is elected to Council he will not be eligible to serve on the BZA. Mr. Doss 2nd the motion, which failed (2-3, with Ms. Coleman, Mr. Jackson, and Mr. Greer opposed.)
- Ms. Coleman made a motion to accept the Planning Commission recommendation to suggest the court appoint Jack McCrady to the BZA. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (3-2, with Mr. Fields and Mr. Doss opposed).

Mayor Lamb stated that the Virginia Municipal League and the Washington County Circuit Court Clerk have said that a resolution is not needed for a BZA appointment recommendation for the court.

Mr. Blevins replied that he has used this practice in the past under the advice of three attorneys to send the recommendation in writing to the court by way of a resolution because it provides all of the pertinent information for the court.

Mr. Crewe agreed and added that the appointment recommendation information can also be sent by way of a letter, minutes with a motion, etc, just as long as the information is relayed to the court.

- Ms. Coleman made a motion to approve the following resolution to recommend the court appoint Jack McCrady to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (4-1, with Mr. Fields opposed). The resolution for the court follows:

--TOWN OF DAMASCUS, VIRGINIA--
RESOLUTION TO REQUEST APPOINTMENT
DAMASCUS BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

WHEREAS, by order of the Circuit Court of Washington County, Virginia (“the Court”), dated May 31, 2017 (In RE: Town of Damascus, Virginia, Board of Zoning Appeals, 17-877) Mr. Ginn was appointed to the Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Damascus, Virginia (“the Board”); and

WHEREAS, the term of office of Mr. Larry Ginn on the Board expires on July 31, 2022; and

WHEREAS, by notice of resignation, given August 01, 2022, Mr. Ginn has vacated his seat on the Board; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Damascus wishes Mr. Jack McCrady to be appointed to the Board to serve for a five-year term starting on July 31, 2022, such term ending July 31, 2027; and

WHEREAS, Mr. McCrady resides at 577 Bowlin Street, Damascus, Virginia 24236; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it hereby **RESOLVED,** that the Circuit Court of Washington County, Virginia is respectfully requested to appoint Mr. Jack McCrady to the Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Damascus, Virginia, replacing Mr. Larry Ginn, said term of office to commence immediately upon court appointment and after being sworn into office.

Adopted by majority vote of the Town Council of the Town of Damascus, Virginia at their normal meeting held on November 07, 2022.

Police and Fire Advisory:

Chief Turner presented the following P.D. activity report for the previous month:

Operations:

October 2022, Damascus Officers had 100 calls for service. We have taken 7 investigative reports and made 5 arrests. We worked 2 reportable accidents.

Traffic Enforcement Activities:

We issued 2 citations along with 9 warnings.

Speeding complaint areas include:

N Beaver Dam Ave & S Shady Ave

Special Report:

I have been trying to submit the reimbursement for the LOLE FY 20 Grant, there has been an issue with the system because they changed systems, and some agencies are not being recognized in it. We have submitted to get that corrected but have not got any information back from them.

Special Notes:

Officer Price will be going to Morristown, Tn. November 28 – December 2 for drivers training. I will need permission to get him a motel room that week while he is there.

- Ms. Coleman made a motion to expend up to \$1,000 for Officer Price's training accommodations. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

The Drug Take Back was completed on October 29, 2022, and we had 33lbs of unwanted drugs turned in.

Police Vehicles: *General Maintenance for each vehicle as needed.*

Auxiliary: *We have an open spot now and my guys have gone through the applications for*

Auxiliary and they have agreed and would like to put Blake Turner into that spot, with the approval of the council.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to authorize Chief Turner to add Blake Turner to the Damascus Police Auxiliary, as recommended. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Chief Turner also wanted to thank Sheriff Andes and the Washington County Investigations Dept. for assisting with the missing persons case, which is still ongoing.

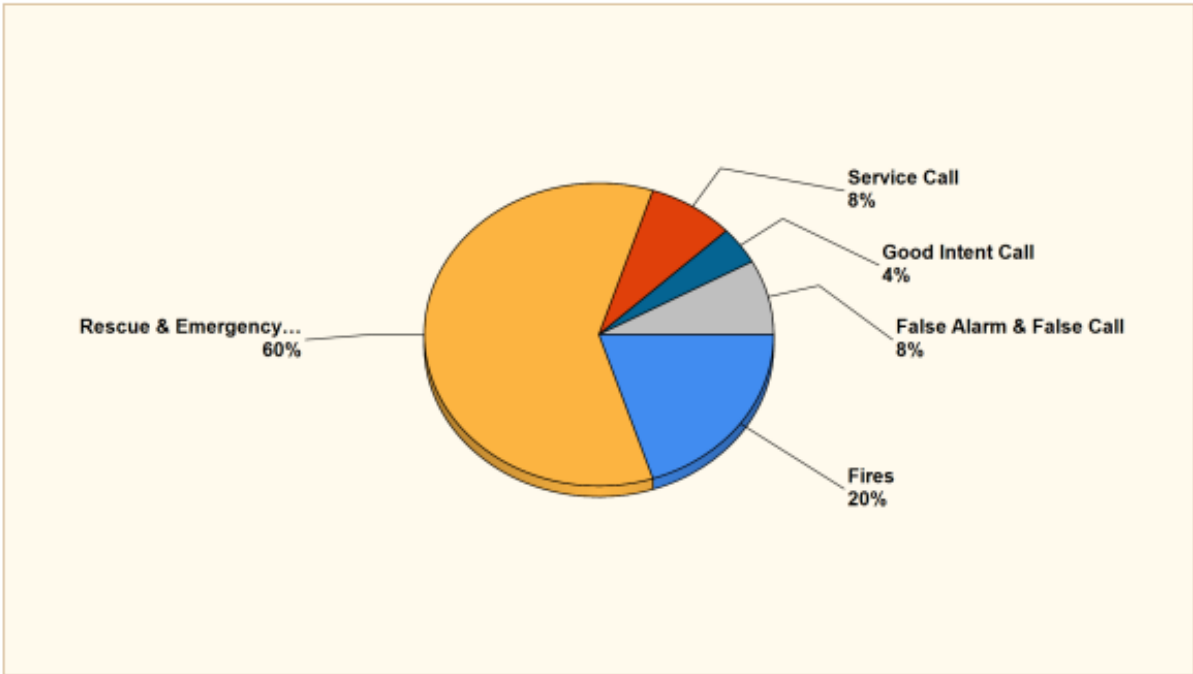
Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

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

Damascus Fire Department

Damascus, VA
This report was generated on 11/4/2022 11:35:32 AM

Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range
Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 10/01/2022 | End Date: 10/31/2022

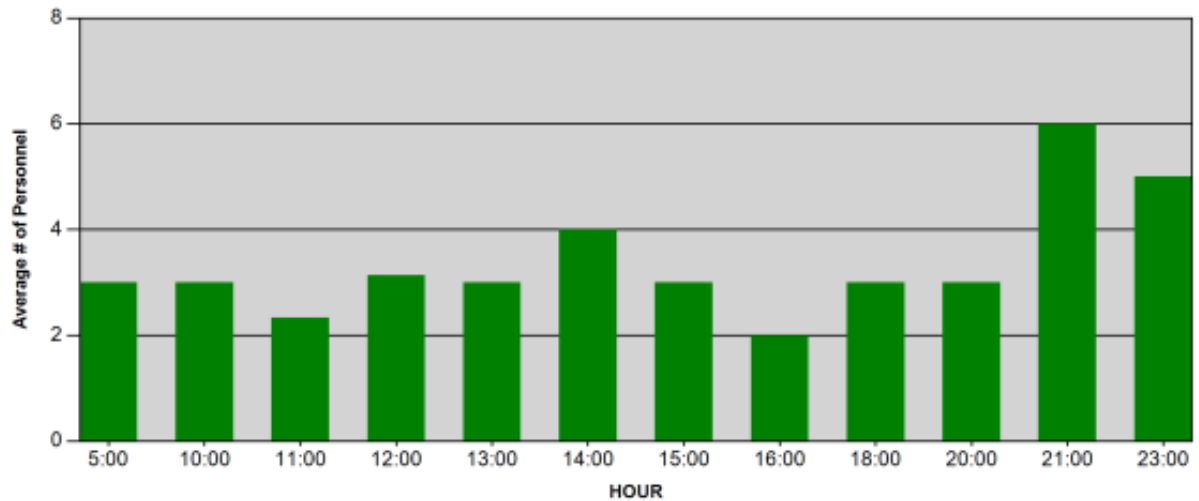


MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	5	20%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	15	60%
Service Call	2	8%
Good Intent Call	1	4%
False Alarm & False Call	2	8%
TOTAL	25	100%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
131 - Passenger vehicle fire	1	4%
140 - Natural vegetation fire, other	1	4%
153 - Construction or demolition landfill fire	1	4%
154 - Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire	1	4%
160 - Special outside fire, other	1	4%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	15	60%
542 - Animal rescue	1	4%
551 - Assist police or other governmental agency	1	4%
611 - Dispatched & cancelled en route	1	4%
743 - Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional	1	4%
745 - Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	1	4%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	25	100%

Average Number of Responding Personnel per Hour for Date Range

Start Date: 10/01/2022 | End Date: 10/31/2022



HOUR	AVG. # PERSONNEL
05:00 - 05:59	3.00
10:00 - 10:59	3.00
11:00 - 11:59	2.33
12:00 - 12:59	3.14
13:00 - 13:59	3.00
14:00 - 14:59	4.00
15:00 - 15:59	3.00
16:00 - 16:59	2.00
18:00 - 18:59	3.00
20:00 - 20:59	3.00
21:00 - 21:59	6.00
23:00 - 23:59	5.00

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

Start Date: 10/01/2022 | End Date: 10/31/2022

PERSONNEL	TIME SPENT ON INCIDENTS (Hours:Minutes Dispatched to Cleared Scene)
Berry, Austin	8:09
Campbell, Dalton	0:30
Hurd, Emilee	0:46
Johnson, Michael	17:42
Justice, Jason	3:19
Minton, Jared	2:09
Mullins, Troy	8:20
Phipps, Michael	13:09
Reid, Michael D	1:16
Turner, Kermit	14:00
Turner, Walter B	13:13
Widener, Alex	9:02
Widener, Anthony	2:10
Total:	93:45

Incident Statistics

Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 10/01/2022 | End Date: 10/31/2022

INCIDENT COUNT			
INCIDENT TYPE		# INCIDENTS	
EMS		15	
FIRE		10	
TOTAL		25	
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	
OVERLAPPING CALLS			
# OVERLAPPING		% OVERLAPPING	
4		16	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:19:09	0:13:41	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:16:55	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME (Dispatch to Enroute)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:05:30	0:06:19	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:05:25	
AGENCY		AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE (MM:SS)	
Damascus Fire Department		43:21	

Mr. Albro also mentioned that when the Council was discussing recommending that the court appoint Jeff Buckley to the BZA, it was brought up that he shouldn't be put ahead of the people on the waiting list to serve, but as a member of the BZA he doesn't know of any such list and would like to know where that is.

Manager's Report

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

Downtown + Laurel Creek Park & Trail

- *We continue to work on the bathroom finishes in house and are still waiting for the dry riverbed along N Shady Ave to be installed in coordination with Trail Center landscaping, along with relocation of post office drop box.*
- *Julie is coordinating designing and ordering the final furnishings for the LCP.*

TRRC – Trail Center

- *Final plans for the rain garden are complete and the ATC has a contractor lined up to complete the site work, but they are still coordinating some final pieces before releasing that work construction.*
- *The garage doors are still pending delivery, estimated in the next 60 days based on most recent production schedule received, and the siding we special ordered is still pending delivery.*
- *The electricians have been working throughout the month but are still trying to get finished up with the garage.*
- *We've got drywall work on the schedule, cost for that labor is \$2,600 (need approval).*
 - Ms. Coleman made a motion to approve the labor expense as requested. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Scattered Site Housing Rehab Project

- *Demolition of two blighted structures completed, and contract signed for demolition of a third.*
- *Contracted signed for substantial reconstruction of two houses.*

Creeper Trail

- *Temporary repairs have been completed for trestles 30, 31, pending substantial reconstruction of both trestles over the winter – currently working on permitting prior to releases request for bids.*
- *Caboose repairs are still underway, and the trail managers continue to meet regarding long term trail policies and maintenance needs.*

Miscellaneous

- *I'm still trying to coordinate engineering for Beaverdam Creek bank stabilization but working on the right scope and process to permit, design, and potentially complete in a phased approach that will be manageable for the town.*
- *Julie and I are coordinating with Washington County and the ATC to resurface the section of Beaverdam Creek trail through the Town Park, complete phase 3 of the trail from Backer Park to Beaverdam Creek Ballfield, and landscape the trail appropriately all the way through – this would complete the 20+ year vision for this trail.*

Also, the original \$5,500 asked for by the First Baptist Church to assist with paying to have paving work done to their parking lot and across Trestle St.

- Ms. Coleman made a motion to approve the \$5,500 expense. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Legal Matters

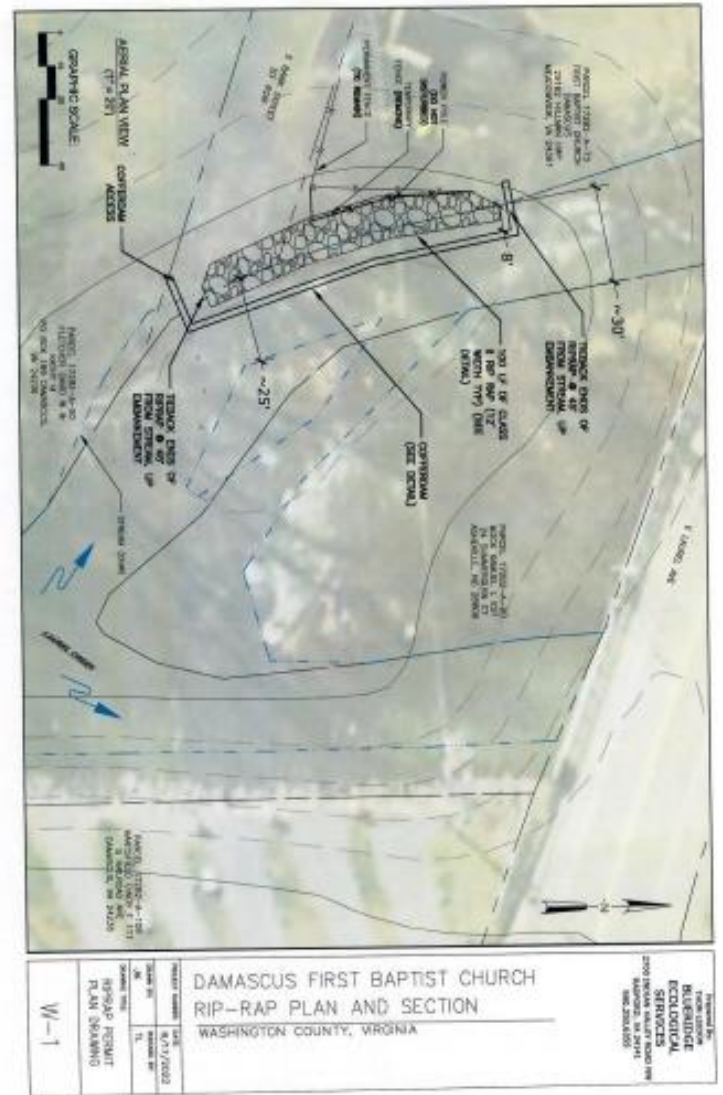
Nothing at this time.

Old Business

Nothing at this time.

New Business

James Blevins presented the First Baptist Church's Joint Permit Application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for a streambank reclamation/stabilization project on the Laurel Creek. Mr. Blevins asked that the Town provide a letter of support for the project because the Marine Resources Commission has advised that they cannot approve the application without confirmation from the Town of Damascus that it is OK with the work that will be done to that portion of the riverbank where the Town's alleyway behind the church (the continuation of E. Bank St.) goes into the creek.



- Ms. Coleman made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to formulate a letter of support for the Damascus First Baptist Church streambank stabilization project, as requested. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Consent Agenda

- Mr. Greer made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$500, 2nd by Mr. Jackson. The motion passed (5-0).
- Ms. Coleman 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).

Mayor & Council Members Reports

Mayor Lamb reported that Steve Ahn will be bringing some Holston High School students to town for some volunteer work projects; VDOT's Water Street bridge has now been reopened; prayers

are being sent for the missing person; and we have an important election tomorrow, so be sure to go vote.

Mr. Hayes and Mr. Greer agreed that we have an important election and encouraged residents to go vote.

Mr. Jackson mentioned what a great service Stone Mtn Health Center provides for the Damascus Community.

Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

November 8th – Town Hall CLOSED for Election Day – Don't forget to vote!

November 11th – Town Hall CLOSED in Observance of Veterans Day

November 23rd – Town Hall CLOSES at 1pm

November 24th and 25th – Town Hall CLOSED in Observance of Thanksgiving

November 26th – Tree lighting ceremony at Laurel Creek Park at 6pm, Santa 1-4, and music 6-9

November 26 – December 2nd (or until sold out) - Christmas Tree Sales and holiday vendors at Laurel Creek Park

December 1st-25th – Holiday lights tour throughout Damascus

December 2nd – First Fridays with participating businesses, extended hours and holiday specials

December 2nd – Damascus Christmas Parade, 7pm

December 2nd – 4th – Shop 'Til You Drop at the Trail Town Event Center

December 3rd – Chestnuts roasting at the Damascus Trail Center, 5-7pm

*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** and **Instagram**!*

- Ms. Coleman made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Mr. Jackson. The motion passed (5-0).

Katie Lamb, Mayor

Tuesday Pope, Clerk