

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

Council Members Present: Susan Seymore, Mitchel Greer, Vicky Van de Vuurst, Shannon Barrett, Brian Schmidt, and Tom Hayes

Absent: None

Also Present:

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

7:00pm: Mayor McCrady called the meeting to order, led the Pledge of Allegiance, gave the invocation, and asked for remembrance of Pearl Harbor on this day.

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the November 2, 2020 Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes as presented.

Mr. Schmidt requested a minor wording adjustment to his Council Member report in the Minutes.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the Minutes with the wording adjustment as requested by Mr. Schmidt. Ms. Van de Vuurst 2nd the motion passed, which passed (6-0).

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the Minutes for the November 18, 2020 “Dually Advertised, Special Called, ‘Secret’ Meeting of the Town Council of Damascus”.

- Ms. Seymore made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Ms. Van de Vuurst 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the agenda.

- Mr. Schmidt made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Committee Reports

Budget, Finance, and Administration:

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

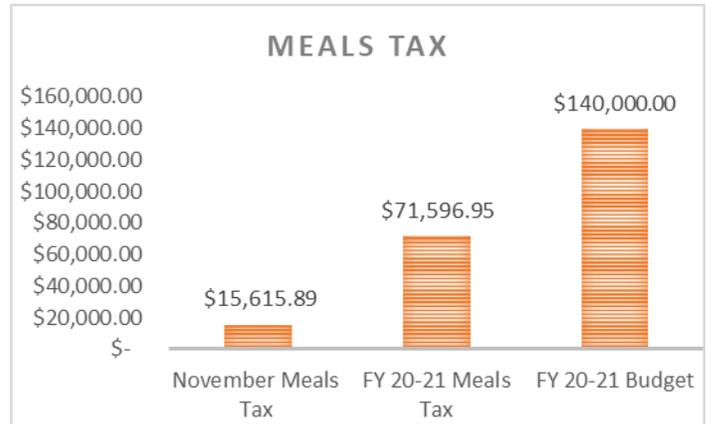
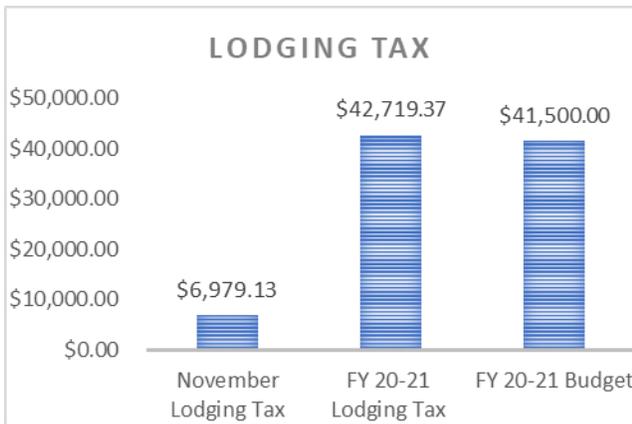
***Taxes:** 2020 2nd Half Real Estate and 2020 Personal Property taxes were due on November 20, 2020. I will start sending out delinquent notices this month. Our collection rate for 2020 Real Estate is at 91.66%, and the rate for 2020 Personal Property is 74.62%. For comparison, the 2019 Real Estate and Personal Property collection rates were 97.28% and 83.35%, respectively.*



Virginia Investment Pool: The total balance in the VIP Liquidity Pool is \$153,224.34. The \$329.00 allocation from Washington County has been added to the Trail Days Reserve.

		FYTD Interest
General Reserve	\$ 53,836.79	\$53.52
Police Vehicle Fund	\$ 15,233.45	\$15.11
Sewer CD Fund	\$ 26,170.79	\$26.08
Anthem Recovery	\$ 43,739.61	\$43.42
Trail Days Reserve	\$ 12,531.74	\$11.84
Additional Working Capital	<u>\$ 1,711.94</u>	<u>\$ 1.71</u>
Total	\$153,224.34	\$151.68

Lodging and Meals Tax: In the month of November, we collected \$6,979.13 in lodging tax and \$15,615.89 in meals tax.



Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

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

Hello everyone, I just wanted to bring each of you all up to date on things that the department have been working on. We have got the concrete poured in the bottom of the troughs in front of BB&T and the other in front of the old Quincy's restaurant. We have been working on picking up leaves and brush as the weather allows us to do so. We have also been having an issue with our bucket truck boom, but we were able to find the parts we needed and have since got it resolved as well as getting the generator serviced. Now that we have it fixed, we hope to get started hanging Christmas lights in the morning. We have also installed the new salt spreader on the Chevy truck along with the snow blade. We are now ready for Mother Nature!

Parks and Recreation:

The Council discussed whether to schedule or cancel the annual Appalachian Trail Days festival for May of 2021 since there is no way to know what the state of the COVID-19 pandemic/restrictions/vaccination progress will be in five months. The 2020 Trail Days was cancelled, after 33 consecutive years of having the festival, due to the pandemic which negatively affected the Town and its businesses. There was also concern that cancelling the event two years in a row would diminish the bedrock of what Trail Days has grown to become.

- Ms. Seymore made a motion to move forward with planning the 2021 Appalachian Trail Days Festival at its established time of the weekend after Mother's Day in May (14th-16th). Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Planning Commission:

Mr. Blevins stated there is a Planning Commission meeting scheduled for 6pm tomorrow evening (Dec. 8th).

Police and Fire Advisory:

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

Operations: November 2020, Damascus Officers had 75 calls for service. We have taken 18 investigative reports that require follow up and made 11 arrests.

Traffic Enforcement Activities: Officers issued 8 citations along with 5 warnings.

Speeding complaint areas include: Laurel Ave.

Special Report: Officer J. Russell has completed the academy and graduated top of the class. Due to personnel restraints right now due to the mandated COVID-19 quarantine guidelines, we have an officer that could lose vacation time at the end of the month because of not being able to use any at this time. Could the council give an extension so there is no time lost for them?

- * The Council had no objections to allowing an extension due to the circumstances.

Special Notes:

Police Vehicles: Chief Hounshell is having to drive the Chevrolet Tahoe due to the Dodge Charger being down, we want to wait for the new truck to come in and then get the charger checked to see what is wrong with it.

Auxiliary: We will be conducting in-service training to be completed by the end of December. The dates have been scheduled.

Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

Chief Turner presented the following report for the previous month:

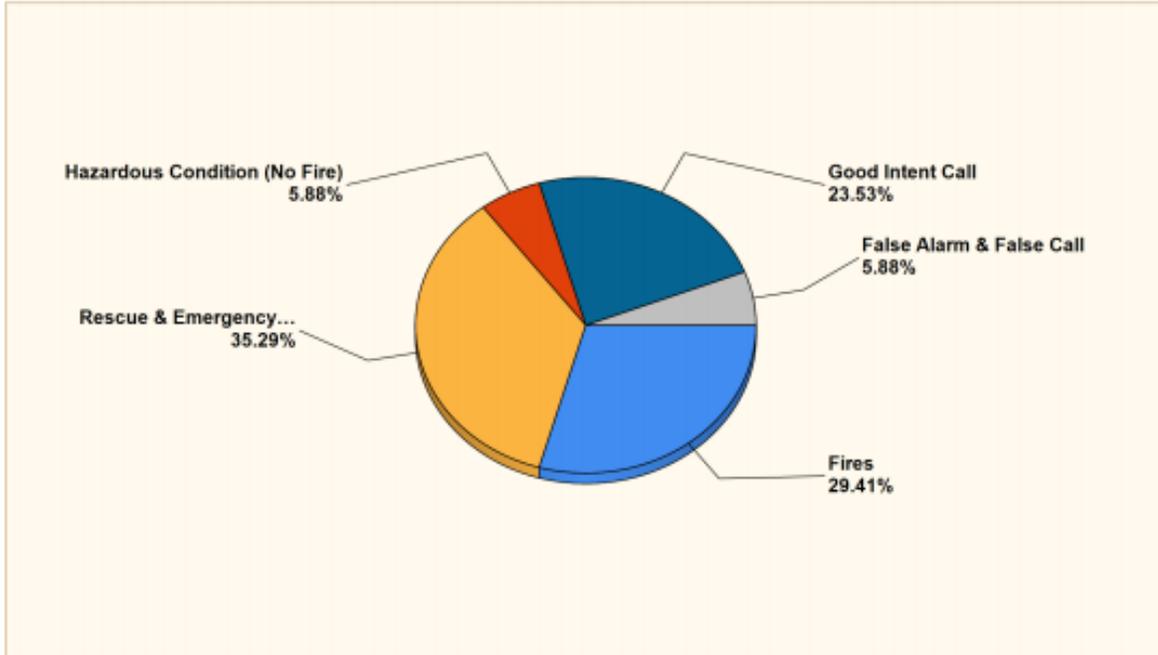
Damascus Fire Department

Damascus, VA

This report was generated on 12/2/2020 2:06:59 PM

Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 11/01/2020 | End Date: 11/30/2020

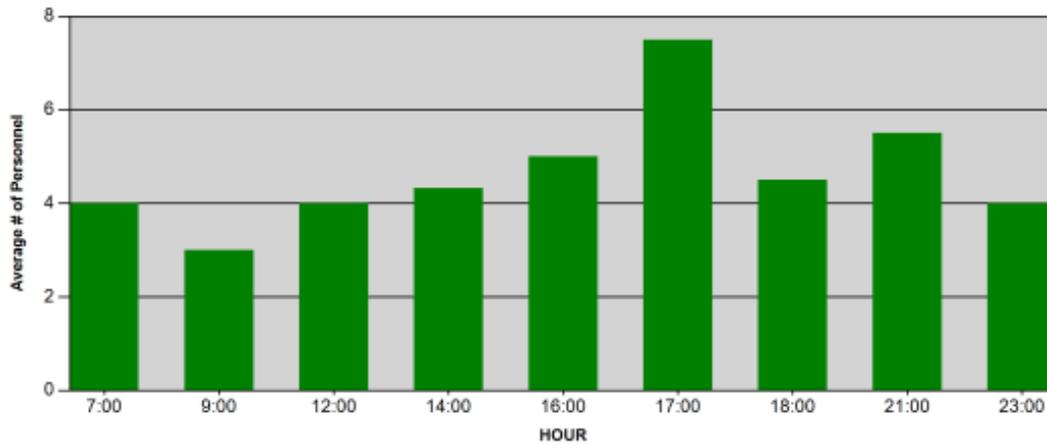


MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	5	29.41%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	6	35.29%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	1	5.88%
Good Intent Call	4	23.53%
False Alarm & False Call	1	5.88%
TOTAL	17	100%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
140 - Natural vegetation fire, other	1	5.88%
141 - Forest, woods or wildland fire	2	11.76%
143 - Grass fire	1	5.88%
150 - Outside rubbish fire, other	1	5.88%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	3	17.65%
322 - Motor vehicle accident with injuries	2	11.76%
324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	1	5.88%
445 - Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	1	5.88%
611 - Dispatched & cancelled en route	3	17.65%
651 - Smoke scare, odor of smoke	1	5.88%
743 - Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional	1	5.88%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	17	100%

Average Number of Responding Personnel per Hour for Date Range

Start Date: 11/01/2020 | End Date: 11/30/2020



HOUR	AVG. # PERSONNEL
07:00 - 07:59	4.00
09:00 - 09:59	3.00
12:00 - 12:59	4.00
14:00 - 14:59	4.33
16:00 - 16:59	5.00
17:00 - 17:59	7.50
18:00 - 18:59	4.50
21:00 - 21:59	5.50
23:00 - 23:59	4.00

Incident Statistics

Start Date: 11/01/2020 | End Date: 11/30/2020

INCIDENT COUNT			
INCIDENT TYPE		# INCIDENTS	
EMS		6	
FIRE		11	
TOTAL		17	
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 Given		1	
Aid Received		2	
OVERLAPPING CALLS			
# OVERLAPPING		% OVERLAPPING	
0		NaN	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:10:03	0:12:50	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS			0:11:33
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME (Dispatch to Enroute)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:04:29	0:03:13	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS			0:03:50
AGENCY		AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE (MM:SS)	
Damascus Fire Department		50:51	

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

Start Date: 11/01/2020 | End Date: 11/30/2020

PERSONNEL	TIME SPENT ON INCIDENTS (Hours:Minutes Dispatched to Cleared Scene)
Allen, Tristan	11:47
Berry, Austin	0:51
Finley, Will	0:52
Hurd, Emilee	6:30
Justice, Jason	4:34
McVey, Alex L	8:03
Mullins, Troy	6:28
Phipps, Michael	3:57
Prator, Daniel J	3:32
Turner, Kermit	7:13
Turner, Walter B	8:37
Widener, Alex	6:35
Widener, Anthony	6:51
Widener, Jacob	6:18
Total:	82:08

Response Percentage per Station per Personnel for Incident Types for Personnel

Personnel: All Personnel | Incident Type(s): All Incident Types | Start Date: 11/01/2020 | End Date: 11/30/2020

Personnel	Calls Attended	% of Calls for Selected Incident Types
Station: Station 1400		
Allen, Tristan	10	58.8%
Berry, Austin	2	11.8%
Blackburn, Douglas	1	5.9%
Feliciano, Yimir	3	17.6%
Finley, Will	2	11.8%
Hurd, Emilee	12	70.6%
Justice, Jason	7	41.2%
Lewis, Randy	1	5.9%
McVey, Alex L	8	47.1%
McVey, Mickie	5	29.4%
Minton, Jared	1	5.9%
Mullins, Troy	7	41.2%
Norris, Ralph	1	5.9%
Phipps, Michael	5	29.4%
Prator, Daniel J	6	35.3%
Reedy, Tony Mitchell	1	5.9%
Reid, Michael D	4	23.5%
Remine, Jeremy	1	5.9%
Turner, Kermit	8	47.1%
Turner, Walter B	12	70.6%
Widener, Alex	10	58.8%
Widener, Anthony	11	64.7%
Widener, Jacob	8	47.1%
Wingler, David	1	5.9%
Total Incidents for Station Station 1400	17	

Total Incidents for all Stations 17

Ms. Seymore asked how the additional station in Green Cove is impacting the Department. Chief Turner responded that the Department is not impacted at this time. He is in the process of getting ready to purchase an older model, used truck for the Green Cove Fire Station. The contractors will be finishing the interior of the building as well as the parking lot, soon, so it is closer to being a functioning Fire Station.

Special Committees

Richard Smith reported that all 12 signs for the Damascus History Tour are in place. He is in the process of working with others to develop a paper map, Facebook page, website, etc.... which will all be ready by Spring. Mr. Smith then presented Mayor McCrady with two framed photos (caboose in the Summer/caboose in the Winter) as a token of appreciation for his service to the Town over the past 30+ years. Mayor McCrady thanked Mr. Smith for the photos, stating they are very special as his Uncle was the last Conductor of the train.

Manager's Report

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

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

- *The compass rose is in construction after the concrete benches were poured, and the trail has been graded out, pending some realignments. Some of the guy wires have been removed from utility poles along the greenway, but the proximity to the spring outlets at the end of Shady Ave is close, so we may have to build in a short retaining wall to support the edge of the trail from giving way over the years due to the loose soil type - we are waiting on a revised cost on this additional scope item from the contractor currently. We had intended on paving the trail before Thanksgiving, but there were too many hurdles, and we thought best to get everything figured out rather than rush the completion, so paving is now on hold until Spring. The sidewalk in front of the pharmacy is complete, and we are now planning to add in the section of sidewalk that ties into the corner of Shady Avenue as well to help with grade and water shedding. All the pavers have been set in the sections of the verge that will not be receiving Eastern redbud trees in the Spring (when all the landscaping will be completed). Adams Tree Service has already cut the big maple in the park that was half dead – I'm still coordinating with a carver.*
- *Plumbing and concrete for the floor is progressing and should be done this month. We are being forced to upgrade to a 4" sewer line out of the building though and increase the water meter size (to 1in).*
- *Still working with façade program participants to get materials lists ready and procurement complete for purchase; still finalizing purchases for facades at 108 and 110 W Laurel Ave and preparing 205 W Laurel Ave for purchase of windows.*

ARC POWER & TRRC – Trail Center +

- *Siding installation/painting is at 95% complete; deck framing is 99% complete; hanging of drywall is substantially complete, and much of the casework for the interior is more than 80% complete, being built off site; the roof is complete, minus the gutter downspouts. Other than finishing current steps, Wallberg will begin sitework this week, preparing to complete the sidewalks and parking at the back of the site.*
- *Additional marketing targeted toward the Center is being planned for, as well as renovation needs of the two-car garage building for training demands of ATC's programs that will be offered.*
- *Substantial construction completion of the building and site is now scheduled for Dec. 18 – punch-list items will be set for completion following that. I've been coordinating with Emily Mayo, the new ATC site supervisor, regarding a virtual walkthrough to be planned for the current project leadership as a sort of soft opening – this will most likely be the week after Christmas (29th or 30th).*

Town-wide Housing Assessment

- *The plan is 95% ready for review, and I'll send everyone a copy for final thoughts prior to approval at a meeting to follow on another date. It will go to planning commission tomorrow for review.*

Miscellaneous

- *Comprehensive Plan Update – The housing chapter will be completed soon now that we have compiled all the housing data from our town-wide assessment.*
- *VA Creeper Trail Conservancy – I am still assisting the Conservancy with contract negotiations for the selected firm who will complete the Master Plan & Economic Impact Analysis.*
- *CARES Act – All of the county's funds (including those granted to the towns) have now been dispersed throughout the county or spent on COVID mitigation.*
- *Website(s) – We are still working on the new tourism-focused website but will launch as soon as it is mostly functional, and we will continue to make tweaks until it is complete. Minor tweaks have been made to the citizen-focused website based on user feedback.*

- Curbs – The troughs of the curb cuts have been poured, and we are currently just waiting on the supplier to provide the covers for us to install. Once that is complete, we will move on to completing modifications to the remaining curbs.
- VFW Property – I have finally been able to coordinate an appraisal of the Town’s investment in the former VFW property purchased outside town, and beyond securing the property to prevent urban sprawl which would be detrimental to the downtown, the land investment for our \$53,000 is valued at \$195,000.
- Water Street Bridge – Unfortunately, VDOT has postponed bidding the Water Street bridge for construction until December 2021 due to state budget shortfalls, however, they will be completing tree cutting in the construction zone this winter to comply with environmental regulations.

Mr. Blevins also reported that the Washington County Service Authority’s waterline project is supposed to begin in a couple of weeks, but they won’t start in Town limits until Spring.

Old Business

Nothing at this time.

New Business

1. Mayor McCrady stated that 2020 has been a hard year and he appreciates the Town Employees working throughout the pandemic. He suggested raising the annual Christmas bonus by \$100 this year, in appreciation of the Town’s essential workers.
 - Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the bonus, at a rate of \$250 each for full-time employee, and \$175 for part-time. Mr. Barrett 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
2. Mayor McCrady presented a labor estimate of \$650, by Blackburn Concrete, for work needed on the Imboden St. bathroom building.
 - Mr. Schmidt made a motion to accept the bid from Blackburn Concrete, 2nd by Ms. Van de Vuurst. The motion passed (6-0).

Legal Matters

- Mr. Greer made a motion to, at the appropriate time, recess into Closed Session for the following:
 - i. Discussion and Consideration of Personnel Matters, per VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1).
 - ✓ The motion was 2nd by Mr. Barrett and passed (6-0).

Council Members Reports

Mr. Barrett announced that the Damascus Senior Center hands out free food boxes from 10-11am on the first, second, and fourth Saturdays of each month.

Ms. Van de Vuurst thanked the community and her fellow Council members for letting her serve the Town for the past four years.

Mr. Schmidt thanked the community and his fellow Council members for letting him serve on the Town Council for the past four months, and stated that it has been an education.

Ms. Seymore complimented Ms. Meyer on the graphics used in her Treasurer’s report, and thanked Kermit Turner for all he does for the Police Dept., the Fire Dept., and the community as a whole. Ms. Seymore also stated that it has been a great honor to serve alongside Jack McCrady and Vicky Van de Vuurst for the past several years.

Mayor McCrady stated that he was first elected to the Town Council in 1986, and it has been a wonderful run. He is very proud to serve the Town of Damascus, and thanked the staff and Council members for creating a family atmosphere. Also, he asked the new Mayor and Council members who begin on January 1st to safeguard the assets of the Town.

Citizens Comments

Via electronic attendance, Town citizens Maggi Hand and Anthony Westmoreland both thanked Mayor McCrady for his years of service to the Town.

Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Damascus, VA will conduct a **Special Called Council Meeting and Public Hearing** at 6:00 PM on Monday, December 21, 2020 at the Damascus Town Hall to entertain public comment regarding disposition of real property, specifically narrowing the width of the VA Creeper Trail from 80 feet in a specific section through the former lumber yard area around what is known as the previous McBee Industrial site/Lincoln Furniture factory property. For further information please contact Gavin Blevins at (276) 475-3831.

Town Hall will be CLOSED the following days in December:

- December 24th and 25th in observance of the Christmas holiday
- Also on January 1st in observance of New Years

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

Consent Agenda

- Ms. Seymore made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$500, 2nd by Ms. Van de Vuurst. The motion passed (6-0).
- Ms. Seymore 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 a motion to go into Closed Session for items listed previously, under 'Legal Matters'. Mr. Schmidt 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
- Mr. Schmidt made a motion to return to Open Session, 2nd by Ms. Seymore. The motion passed (6-0).
- Mr. Greer made a motion to certify. Ms. Seymore 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
- Ms. Seymore made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Mr. Greer. The motion passed (6-0).