

DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes for February 3, 2020
7:00pm Regular Council Meeting

Council Members Present: Tim Williams, Vicky Van de Vuurst, Mitchel Greer, Tom Hayes, Susan Seymore, and Sean Albro

Absent: None

Also Present: Jack McCrady, Mayor
Gavin Blevins, Town Manager
Mike Hounshell, Police Chief
Linda Rouse, Town Treasurer
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 January 6, 2020 Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes, as presented.

- Ms. Albro made motion to approve the Minutes as presented, 2nd by Ms. Van de Vuurst. The motion passed (6-0).

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the agenda as presented.

- * Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the agenda, 2nd by Ms. Seymore. The motion passed (6-0).

Mike Rush, Washington County Board of Supervisors Member, spoke to the Mayor and Council about some of the current points of interest he is working on in relation to Damascus and Washington County.

The economy of Damascus is something that he wants to have some impact on from the County government. It is a fragile economy due to the seasonal/8 month nature and the Town needs continued success for its businesses and overall sustainability.

Supervisor Rush stated that he would like to see the development of a Recreation Development Authority (RDA), which could hopefully offer the Towns in Washington County access to millions of dollars to utilize in their communities. Emergency Services for the Whitetop community, which is partially in Washington (with Damascus addresses) as well as Grayson and Smith Counties, must be improved. The Green Cove area has a 50.5% response rate from the Mt. Rogers Fire & Rescue Departments, which is the closest. The other 49.5% was responded to by Damascus Fire & Rescue Departments, which is too far/long for those people to have to wait for help, so the Wash. Co. B.O.S. is having a building constructed in that community that they are going to staff and equip with an ambulance and fire-truck. RDA funds can be used in supporting these types of programs

Another point of interest is improving the broadband/fiberoptics/high-speed internet access reach in our area. Washington County ranks in the top 3 for agriculture in the State of Virginia and it is increasingly important for farmers to readily have access to the internet, as well as the improvements in overall efficiency, as seen by 'smart farms'. High speed internet is also needed for improving tourism, improving safety and emergency response on the Creeper Trail, and ensuring vital educational needs for the children in our area.

The Mayor and Council expressed their appreciation for Rush's representation of Damascus on the BOS; and Supervisor Rush thanked Town Officials for the efforts they put forth on behalf of the Damascus community.

Committee Reports

Budget, Finance, and Administration:

Ms. Seymore deferred to the Town Treasurer, Linda Rouse, who presented the following report for the previous month:

TAXES: The collection rate for 2019 Real Property Taxes improved to 93.44% and all years to 97.53%. Past due notices will be mailed in February. All years Personal Property rate improved to 87.37%.

VIRGINIA INVESTMENT POOL: The total balance in the VIP Liquidity Pool is \$289,634.35. The yield is 1.76%.

<i>General Reserve Fund</i>	<i>\$ 53,547.51</i>
<i>Earmark Police Vehicle Fund</i>	<i>15,151.70</i>
<i>Sewer Fund CD</i>	<i>26,030.13</i>
<i>Anthem Recovery</i>	<i>43,504.74</i>
<i>Additional Working Capital</i>	<i><u>151,400.27</u></i>
	<i>\$289,634.35</i>

AUDIT: Per email from Claude @ Owens CPA & Associates, the audit should be completed in February and they plan to present it at our March council meeting.

VRSA: The request has been made to add the Builder's Risk coverage required for the Trail Center. The 2020-2021 Renewal Questionnaire and Risk Management Assessment are in process. The completion due date is March 15, 2020. (Also, the rate will increase by 1.3% due to claims filed in 2017-18.)

* Reminder – Budget meetings begin Monday, Feb. 10th, at 4pm.

Mayor McCrady mentioned the Council's previous interest in switching Workers Comp liability insurance providers, due to unsatisfactory service by VML/VRSA, and suggested checking with VaCorp to see how their rates compare. The Council agreed, and Ms. Rouse agreed to check on the details and report back to them.

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

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

January was a very mild month. So we had no expense for weather issues. We did continue brush pickups almost daily. We had a few minor issues with the Dump truck and Backhoe, but both are resolved. We also worked on drain issues and on possible methods to solve some old issues.

We removed the old dead tree and stump near the Old Mill, along with several other such issues at other locations. All remaining items stored at the old car lot building were also removed. There are no major mechanical issues to report. Problems were resolved with little expense or delay. Though, the Dump truck awaits minor repair at the welding shop, (broken pin in tailgate).

The Council also continued their discussion on purchasing an additional truck for the Public Works Department. Mr. Greer reported that he found a 2019 Dodge RAM 2500, which had previously been a fleet vehicle, with 15,482 miles for \$36,000, at Blue Ridge Auto Group in Abingdon.

Mr. Williams suggested using \$20,000 from the department's capital outlay line item to use for a down payment and borrow/finance the remaining \$16,000 to purchase the truck.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to put \$20,000 down on the 2019 Dodge RAM Big Horn L0557, as discussed, and finance the remaining cost with the institution that has the best finance rate. Ms. Seymore 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Parks and Recreation:

Mr. Williams reported that playground preparations and repairs for this year are underway. He also reported speaking with two of the pool co-managers from the 2019 swim season and they have come up with a recommendation for the Council to consider, which is to increase the price of pool parties from \$100 to \$125. Doing so could apply \$50 to the lifeguard who works the party, \$50 to the pool manager on duty, and \$25 to the Town for other expenses.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to increase the price for pool parties from \$100 to \$125, as discussed. Mr. Hayes 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Planning Commission:

Mr. Blevins reported receiving an update on new construction on one of the last remaining undeveloped residential lots in Town.

Police and Fire Advisory:

Mr. Hayes deferred to Chief Hounshell, who presented the following P.D. activity report for the previous month:

Operations: January 2020, Damascus Officers had 62 calls for service. We have taken 9 investigative reports and made 5 arrest.

Traffic Enforcement Activities: We issued 10 citations along with 6 warnings.

Speeding complaint areas include: Douglas drive.

Special Report: We have moved the speed sign up to the 25 zone on Douglas Drive at Wicked Chicken. This seems to be helping some. It still is an issue as the cars slow for the 25 they are approaching the sharp curve so it appears they are traveling much faster. The court system would frown on tickets only feet into the speed change so it is a challenge but we are trying things to help.

We are working to start the ordering process for the radios. We are currently just waiting on some verification from DCJS.

Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

The following report for the previous month was submitted by Chief Turner:

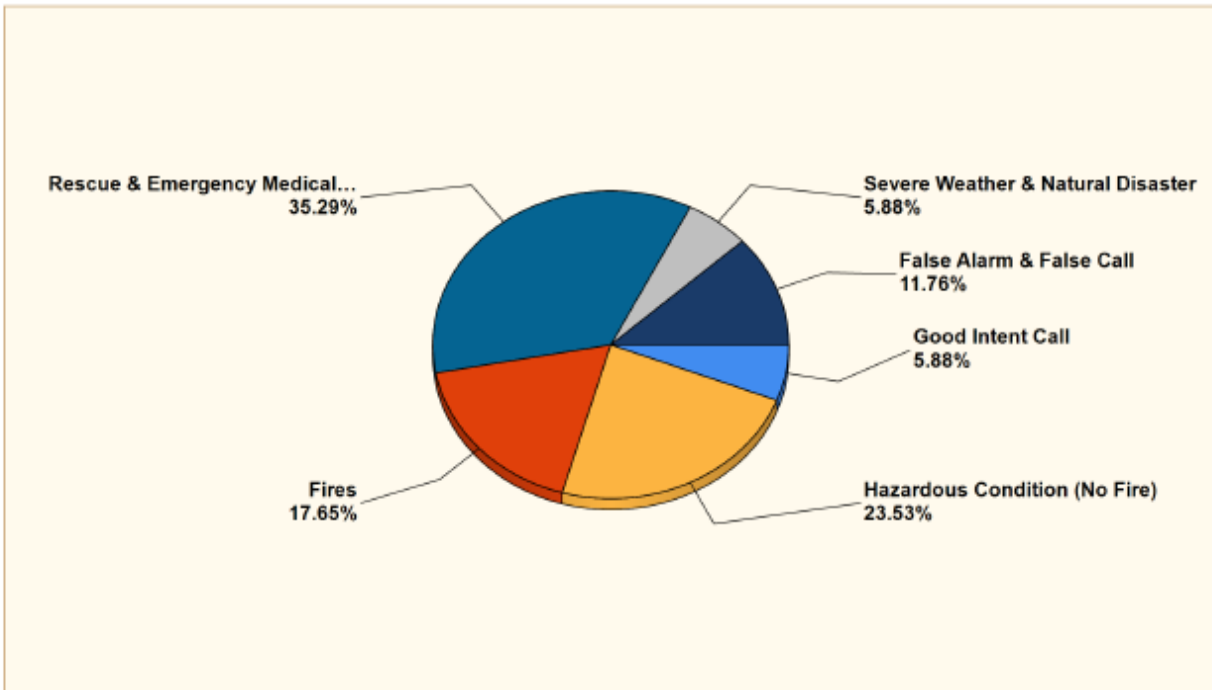
Damascus Fire Department

Damascus, VA

This report was generated on 1/31/2020 1:59:22 PM

Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

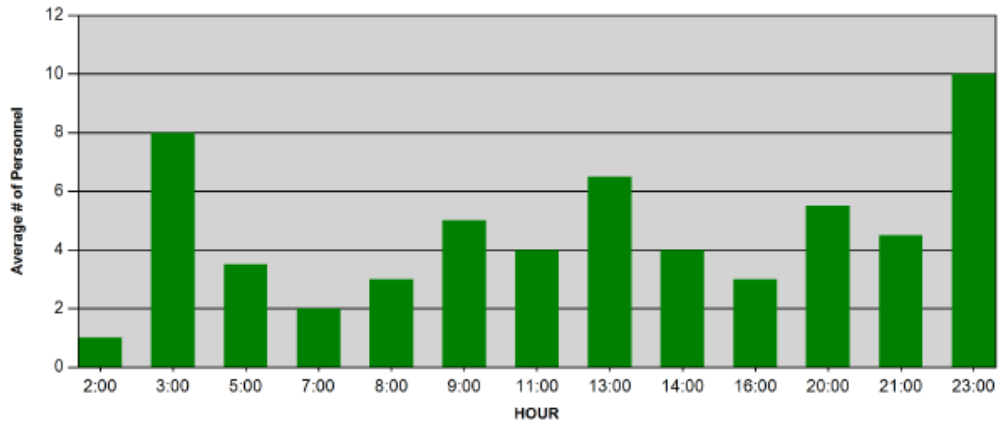
Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 01/01/2020 | End Date: 01/31/2020



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	3	17.65%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	6	35.29%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	4	23.53%
Good Intent Call	1	5.88%
False Alarm & False Call	2	11.76%
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	1	5.88%
TOTAL	17	100.00%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
111 - Building fire	1	5.88%
114 - Chimney or flue fire, confined to chimney or flue	2	11.76%
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%
411 - Gasoline or other flammable liquid spill	1	5.88%
444 - Power line down	2	11.76%
445 - Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	1	5.88%
651 - Smoke scare, odor of smoke	1	5.88%
735 - Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	1	5.88%
745 - Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	1	5.88%
800 - Severe weather or natural disaster, other	1	5.88%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	17	100.00%

Average Number of Responding Personnel per Hour for Date Range
 Start Date: 01/01/2020 | End Date: 01/31/2020



HOUR	AVG. # PERSONNEL
02:00 - 02:59	1.00
03:00 - 03:59	8.00
05:00 - 05:59	3.50
07:00 - 07:59	2.00
08:00 - 08:59	3.00
09:00 - 09:59	5.00
11:00 - 11:59	4.00
13:00 - 13:59	6.50
14:00 - 14:59	4.00
16:00 - 16:59	3.00
20:00 - 20:59	5.50
21:00 - 21:59	4.50
23:00 - 23:59	10.00

Response Percentage per Station per Personnel for Incident Types for Personnel

Personnel: All Personnel | Incident Type(s): All Incident Types | Start Date: 01/01/2020 | End Date: 01/31/2020

Personnel	Calls Attended	% of Calls for Selected Incident Types
Station: Station 1400		
Blackburn, Douglas	5	29.4%
Faris, Hunter	1	5.9%
Feliciano, Yamir	5	29.4%
Finley, Will	6	35.3%
Fletcher, James R	1	5.9%
Harter, Chuck	2	11.8%
Jones, Andrew	2	11.8%
McNiell, George BANJO	3	17.6%
McVey, Alex L	7	41.2%
McVey, Mickie	5	29.4%
Mullins, Troy	9	52.9%
Phipps, Jennifer N	5	29.4%
Phipps, Michael	14	82.4%
Prator, Daniel J	8	47.1%
Reid, Michael D	3	17.6%
Riendeau, Logan	5	29.4%
Romans, Dominick	2	11.8%
Turner, Kermit	14	82.4%
Turner, Walter B	13	76.5%
Widener, Alex	4	23.5%
Widener, Anthony	9	52.9%
Widener, Jacob	13	76.5%
Total Incidents for Station Station 1400	17	

Total Incidents for all Stations

17

Incident Statistics

Start Date: 01/01/2020 | End Date: 01/31/2020

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		1	
OVERLAPPING CALLS			
# OVERLAPPING		% OVERLAPPING	
2		11.76	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:10:55	0:18:19	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:15:46	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME (Dispatch to Enroute)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:04:23	0:05:37	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:05:11	
AGENCY	AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE (MM:SS)		
Damascus Fire Department	53:10		

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

Start Date: 01/01/2020 | End Date: 01/31/2020

PERSONNEL	TIME SPENT ON INCIDENTS (Hours:Minutes Dispatched to Cleared Scene)
Blackburn, Douglas	3:05
Feliciano, Yamir	3:05
Finley, Will	4:57
Harter, Chuck	2:56
McNiell, George BANJO	2:26
McVey, Alex L	10:00
McVey, Mickie	2:26
Mullins, Troy	5:13
Phipps, Jennifer N	0:43
Phipps, Michael	15:37
Prator, Daniel J	7:15
Reid, Michael D	3:02
Riendeau, Logan	4:16
Turner, Kermit	13:52
Turner, Walter B	13:46
Widener, Alex	2:31
Widener, Anthony	9:16
Widener, Jacob	14:22
Total:	118:48

Special Committees

Damascus Business Group – Ms. Albro reported the next meeting will be mid-March, and there are at least 4 DBG members that wish to sponsor the HHS Spring Senior Athlete light-post banners, so they are in contact with Ms. Steele about that project.

Manager's Report

ARC – Damascus Waterfront Development Initiative

- *Following the bid opening on January 23rd, the low bidder for the project was \$682,000 by Inland Construction – we are not going to have the budget to do most of the bid alternates that were part of the bid package (some nice “extras”), but I am currently negotiating prices to get a contract within budget.*

CDBG – Downtown Revitalization

- *As with the ARC project, I'm currently negotiating a contract price with Inland Construction for the trail and park.*
- *Unfortunately, DHCD would not approve a project area expansion for the façade program, but I do have a couple new buildings that will apply to the façade program for remaining funding. I've got quotes for materials for the Damascus Diner façade ready for purchase prior to installation on the building by the owner's contractor (including 3 awnings from Interstate Awning & Sign Co. (who had the lowest quote at \$1,250), and miscellaneous materials from The Home Depot (who had the lowest quote at \$1,125.16).*
- *Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the purchase of the specified materials from Interstate Awning & Sign and The Home Depot, as discussed, for the Damascus Diner's façade project. Ms. Seymore 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).*

ARC POWER Initiative – Trail Center

- *Following the preconstruction meeting, notice to proceed has been issued, and permits have been obtained for construction – contract ready for execution.*
- *The groundbreaking ceremony for the Trail Center will take place at 11:00 AM on February 4th at the site – all are welcome.*

Miscellaneous

- *Laurel Avenue Sidewalks – Still working on estimates and a timetable for next phase of sidewalk reconstruction, but I'm waiting on additional quotes prior to award late winter/early spring.*
- *DHCD Planning Grant – We've received the award letter for the \$30,000 to complete the a plan, and have scheduled the facilitated planning session with DHCD to kick off the process. MRPDC staff and I have also been out around the community getting income surveys at strategic areas to prepare for a potential application for housing rehabilitation due the end of March.*
- *Comprehensive Plan Update – If you haven't already, please make sure everyone you know has taken the Community Survey – the plan is still underway, but is unfortunately not proceeding as quickly as we had originally planned.*
- *TRRC Application – We've been awarded \$150,000 from the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission to complete construction of additional square footage onto the current Trail Center design – I'll need to complete a contract addendum with McCarty Holsaple McCarty soon to put new bid documents together for the Trail Center addition.*
- *Damascus Mesh – I've been working with Meraki to get an estimate to replace, upgrade, and expand our current network where possible – this proved more expensive than practicable in my opinion with devices nearly \$1,000 each. I'm getting a referral for a different manufacturer (called Juniper Mist) of access points that may suit our needs.*

Old Business

- i. Scouts camping area relocation – The current area on Imboden St. used by the Town to accommodate Scout groups' camping will soon be unavailable because it will be the site of the proposed Laurel Creek Trail Park grant project.
Mr. Williams suggested rebuilding a bridge and steps to the island behind the Town Pool, to utilize it again for camping. There are old bathrooms on the outside of the pool facility building that can be rehabbed for use also.
Mr. Blevins stated that the Town would need to contact the Army Corps of Engineers for consultation before deciding what can be done to access and utilize the island.
The Council also discussed using the land near the bottom of Trestle 16, the side farthest from the pool, as a better option for Scouts/camp groups. The same outside bathrooms at the pool would be used for this proposed site also. They agreed to go take a closer look at this area and then decide.
- ii. BZA Appointments/Reappointment Resolutions:

--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 June 22, 2015 (In RE: Town of Damascus, Virginia, Board of Zoning Appeals, Case Number CL15000754) Mr. Van de Vuurst was appointed to the Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Damascus, Virginia ("the Board"); and

WHEREAS, the term of office of Mr. Robert Van de Vuurst on the Board expired on July 31st, 2019; and

WHEREAS, by written consent, dated January 21, 2020, Mr. Van de Vuurst has agreed to continue serving the Board for an additional term; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the town of Damascus wishes Mr. Van de Vuurst to be appointed to the Board to serve an additional five (5) year term ending July 31, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Van de Vuurst resides at 210 Legion Street, Damascus, Virginia 24236; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it hereby **RESOLVED**, that the Circuit Court of Washington County, Virginia is respectfully requested to reappoint Mr. Robert Van de Vuurst to the Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Damascus, Virginia, for an additional five year term, said term of office to commence immediately upon court appointment and after being sworn into office.

- Ms. Albro made a motion to reappoint Mr. Van de Vuurst to the Board of Zoning Appeals, 2nd by Ms. Seymore. The motion passed (6-0).

--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 February 19, 2019 (In RE: Board of Zoning Appeals For The Town of Damascus, Virginia) Mr. Cartwright was appointed to the Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Damascus, Virginia (“the Board”); and

WHEREAS, the term of office of Mr. James Cartwright on the Board expires on July 31, 2023; and

WHEREAS, by notice of resignation, on or about August 15, 2019, Mr. Cartwright has vacated his seat on the Board; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the town of Damascus wishes Mr. Ward Albro to be appointed to the Board to serve the remaining term of James Cartwright expiring on July 31, 2023, and thereafter; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Albro resides at 215 east Laurel Avenue Damascus, Virginia 24236; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Albro has agreed to serve on the Board by written consent on January 21, 2020; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it hereby **RESOLVED**, that the Circuit Court of Washington County, Virginia is respectfully requested to appoint Mr. Ward Albro to the Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Damascus, Virginia, for the remaining term of Mr. James Cartwright, said term of office to commence immediately upon court appointment and after being sworn into office.

- Mr. Hayes made a motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Jim Cartwright, and appoint Mr. Ward (Buddy) Albro to the remainder of the term on the Board of Zoning Appeals, 2nd by Ms. Van de Vuurst. The motion passed (6-0).

New Business

i. Insurance Renewal – Anthem/The Local Choice, 4.8% price increase for 2020-2021.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to renew the Town employees’ group health insurance policy with Anthem/TLC for the 2020-21 fiscal year. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

- ii. Land Use Permit Application – Iron Mountain Trail Run, Gazebo reservation for Sept. 4 & 5, 2020.
 - Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the land use application, as requested. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
- iii. Funding Request – Friends of SWVA, 2020-21 SWVA Partnership Program Allocation, \$2,500.
 - Ms. Seymore made a motion to deny the \$2,500 funding request. Mr. Hayes 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Legal Matters

Nothing at this time.

Council Members Reports

Ms. Albro asked if there was any update on the sidewalk repair/tree replacement project.

Mr. Blevins replied there is no update at this time.

Ms. Seymore stated that the Chamber of Commerce may ask to partner with Damascus and Glade Spring on an upcoming grant.

Mr. Blevins reported meeting with the Chamber a couple of weeks before, and is hoping to work out a partnership.

Mr. Williams stated that VDOT has asked about funding/compensation for the land abutments required for building the bridge on the Hwy. 58 expansion into Damascus. Mr. Williams recommends giving any compensation received to the Creeper Trail Club/Conservancy.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to accept compensation from VDOT, in relation to the Hwy. 58 expansion project bridge, and donate it to the Creeper Trail Conservancy. Mr. Hayes 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Mr. Hayes stated that work needs to be done on the alley behind Brook St. and Mr. Greer replied that he will let the Public Works Department know.

Citizens Comments

None at this time.

Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Trail Center Groundbreaking Ceremony, February 4th at 11am
- Town Hall will be **CLOSED** on February 17th, in observance of George Washington Day

** For information on upcoming events, visit our website www.visitdamascus.org as well as our social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter!*

Consent Agenda

- Ms. Albro 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. Mr. Hayes 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
- Mr. Williams made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Mr. Greer. The motion passed (6-0).

Jack McCrady, Mayor

Tuesday Pope, Clerk