

DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes for June 1, 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
Tuesday Pope, Town Clerk
Gavin Blevins, Town Manager
Eva Meyer, Town Treasurer

Notices posted prior to the June 1st meeting included:

Due to Executive Orders 53 and 55, persons allowed to gather within the building is limited to 10, so the Town Hall isn't open to the public but Residents can tune in to the meeting by phone and/or computer audio (links/instructions were included).

Due to the capacity limit of persons allowed in the building, citizens wishing to participate in the public hearing in person will be assisted in and out of the building to voice comments and concerns. Additionally, citizens that can or would prefer to voice comments or concerns remotely can send comments in advance or can request to sign up to speak remotely during the meeting.

Town Officials are requesting Citizens' Comments in advance of the meeting in order to stay under 10 in gathering and still allow public voice. Anyone wishing to participate in Citizens' Comments are instructed to provide full name and address for comments to be added to the record, and send via email townofdamascus@gmail.com before noon on May 28th. Be advised that only comments from citizens will be recognized.

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 May 4, 2020 Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes, as presented.

- Mr. Williams made motion to approve the Minutes as presented, 2nd by Ms. Seymore.
The motion passed (6-0).

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the agenda as presented.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the agenda, with one addition as requested. Ms. Van de Vuurst 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Mayor McCrady stated for the listeners that all Council members were present, as well as the Town Manager Gavin Blevins, the Town Clerk Tuesday Pope, and introduced the new Town Treasurer Eva Meyer with a warm welcome.

Ms. Meyer replied that she is very happy to be the Town's new Treasurer, and will do her best to fill Linda's shoes.

7:05 Public Hearing for the purposes of public information and fiscal planning regarding the proposed Town Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

Mayor McCrady presented the proposed budget synopsis for the 2020-21 fiscal year, as read:

REVENUE Sources	BUDGET 2019-2020	BUDGET 2020-2021
Lodging Tax	\$ 55,000	\$ 41,500
Meals Tax	\$ 185,000	\$ 140,000
Real Property Tax	\$ 209,450	\$ 207,950
Personal Property/License Fees/DMV Stop Fees/State Car Tax Refund	\$ 34,000	\$ 33,000
Other Taxes	\$ 220,250	\$ 192,200
Trail Days	\$ 68,000	\$ 60,000
Downtown Revitalization/Trail Center Grants	\$1,623,258	\$1,490,750
Reserves	\$ 485,965	\$ 298,413
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 130,095	\$ 75,069
TOTAL	\$3,011,018	\$2,538,882
EXPENDITURES Activity	BUDGET 2019-2020	BUDGET 2020-2021
Administration	\$334,675	\$ 314,133
Downtown Revitalization/Trail Center Grants	\$1,862,238	\$1,565,750
Police	\$325,855	\$ 275,472
Fire & Rescue	\$ 21,000	\$ 21,000
Public Works	\$318,100	\$ 228,767
Parks & Recreation	\$117,180	\$ 107,440
Pool	\$ 31,970	\$ 26,320
TOTAL	\$3,011,018	\$2,538,882

Mayor McCrady asked if there were any questions or comments from citizens participating in the meeting via phone or computer audio to be heard.

Damascus resident Anthony Westmoreland, speaking remotely, stated his name and address for the record and said that he was calling representing the non-profit organization Hike for Mental Health.

Mayor McCrady reminded everyone that this Public Hearing is only for questions/concerns/info on the proposed 2020-21 Town budget.

There were no other Citizens' Comments on the proposed 2020-21FY budget.

Mayor McCrady closed the Public Hearing and asked for any questions or comments from the Council Members.

Mr. Greer asked to verify the real estate tax rate will remain .46 per \$100.

Mayor McCrady stated that yes, both real estate (.46 per \$100) and personal property (.52 per \$100) taxes will remain the same.

Mr. Blevins stated that a Special Called Council Meeting will have to be held no sooner than 7 days after today's Public Hearing, and before July 1st, to adopt the 2020-21 budget.

Committee Reports

Budget, Finance, and Administration:

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

Taxes: The First Half Real Estate tax collection rate is at 84.46% as of Friday, May 29, 2020. The penalty date has been changed to June 20, 2020, so we are expecting more taxes to come in throughout the month of June.

Virginia Investment Pool: The total balance in the VIP Liquidity Pool is \$151,499.48. A new account was set up under Trail Days Reserve in which \$11,000.00 was transferred from the General Fund.

		<u>YTD Interest</u>
General Reserve	\$53,762.27	\$292.78
Police Vehicle Fund	\$15,212.43	\$82.81
Sewer CD Fund	\$26,134.47	\$142.27
Anthem Recovery	\$43,679.17	\$237.80
Trail Days Reserve	\$11,001.58	\$1.58
Additional Working Capital	<u>\$1,709.56</u>	<u>\$529.90</u>
Total	\$151,499.48	\$1,287.14

Audit: I spoke with Owens CPA & Associates PC concerning the audit. They are still delayed; however, they said the audit would be completed no later than June 26, 2020.

Business Licenses: We have received 55 business licenses with a collection rate of 65% and \$49,615.17 collected in business license fees. Notices were sent out at the end of May to businesses who had not yet renewed their license.

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

Mr. Greer stated there is no monthly report for May, as Adam Hester just took over the Supervisor's position during the month, but will be submitting monthly reports starting in June.

Parks and Recreation:

Mr. Williams reported that since we will still be prohibited by the Governor's restrictions, due to COVID-19, we should not promote a few thousand people to congregate in the park for our annual Independence Day celebration on July 3rd, he has contacted Chris Manuel (Manuel's Fireworks) to start thinking about holding a Labor Day celebration in September if the restrictions are lifted. Mr. Manuel said that he would be happy to proceed with an event in the coming months, and if we can let him know at least 30 days in advance he can get the fireworks ordered.

Mr. Williams stated that he has received questions about when we will be opening the playground back up, as well as allowing gazebo reservations to resume in the Town Park. He stated that we will have to wait to do so based on guidance from the Health Dept., County, and State agencies.

Mayor McCrady commented that we will look for Phase 2 changes as well as contact the Health Dept for guidance.

Mr. Blevins stated that we will probably have to contract a cleaning service to be able to open them back up, and since he is expecting Cares Act funding, any money awarded may need to go toward that.

Planning Commission:

Mr. Blevins reported that One Way Ministries (1004 S. Shady Ave.) is planning to build a new sanctuary building and they want to make use of an alley at that location that the Town had swapped with a previous property owner back in 2006, but that transaction wasn't recorded at the County Courthouse. One Way Ministries would like for the Town to vacate the dead end alley in the future.

Police and Fire Advisory:

Mr. Hayes read the following P.D. activity report for the previous month, which was submitted by Chief Hounshell:

Operations:

May 2020, Damascus Officers had 65 calls for service. We have taken 14 investigative reports that require follow up and made 7 arrest.

Traffic Enforcement Activities:

In May we issued 16 citations along with 5 warnings.

Speeding complaint areas include:

Laurel Ave.

Special Report:

We have three of the car's radios updated and they work great. This should be a big asset to officer safety. The remaining cars should be completed this week.

We would ask for approval to purchase updated computers in the office that has been budgeted for. As of now the windows versions are no longer supported. Town Manager Blevins has the quote. These computers hold the mandated reporting systems to State Police, so they are vital to the operation. The quote sheet, including labor, from our IT guy is \$3,637.32.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to authorize up to \$3,800 for the necessary computer system upgrades for the Police Dept. Ms. Albro 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Mr. Williams also reported that after speaking with the Chief earlier today, we are going to have to upgrade the security cameras in the Town Park to replace the old ones that are currently there, and that the money for the purchase can come out of the Parks & Recreation budget line item (10-580-37).

- Mr. Williams made a motion to spend up to \$1,000 to upgrade the cameras in the Park using expense line item (10-580-37). Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

Mr. Hayes deferred reading of the following report for the previous month, which was submitted by Chief Turner, to Mayor McCrady:

Damascus Fire Department

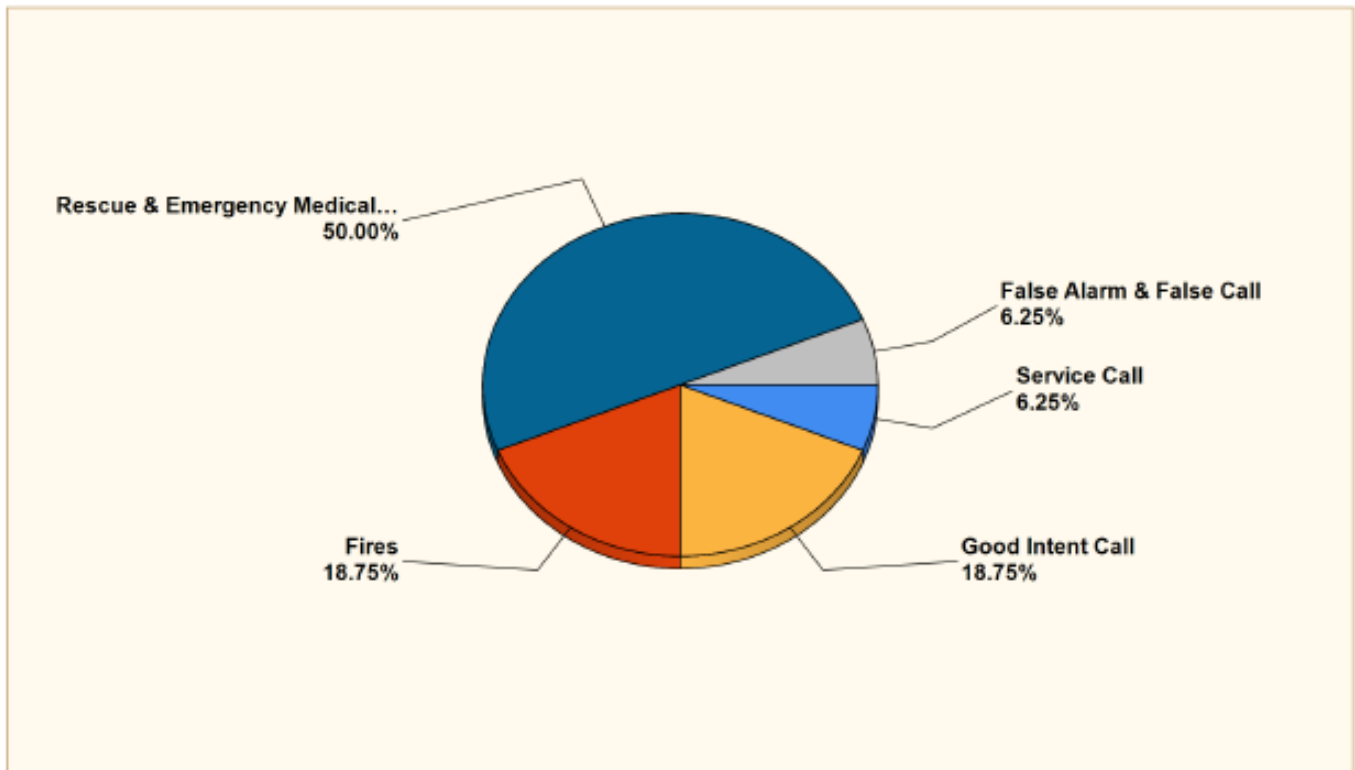


Damascus, VA

This report was generated on 6/1/2020 9:12:25 AM

Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 05/01/2020 | End Date: 05/31/2020



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	3	18.75%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	8	50.00%
Service Call	1	6.25%
Good Intent Call	3	18.75%
False Alarm & False Call	1	6.25%
TOTAL	16	100.00%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
142 - Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire	1	6.25%
151 - Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire	2	12.50%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	1	6.25%
322 - Motor vehicle accident with injuries	3	18.75%
324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	3	18.75%
341 - Search for person on land	1	6.25%
531 - Smoke or odor removal	1	6.25%
611 - Dispatched & cancelled en route	1	6.25%
622 - No incident found on arrival at dispatch address	2	12.50%
700 - False alarm or false call, other	1	6.25%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	16	100.00%

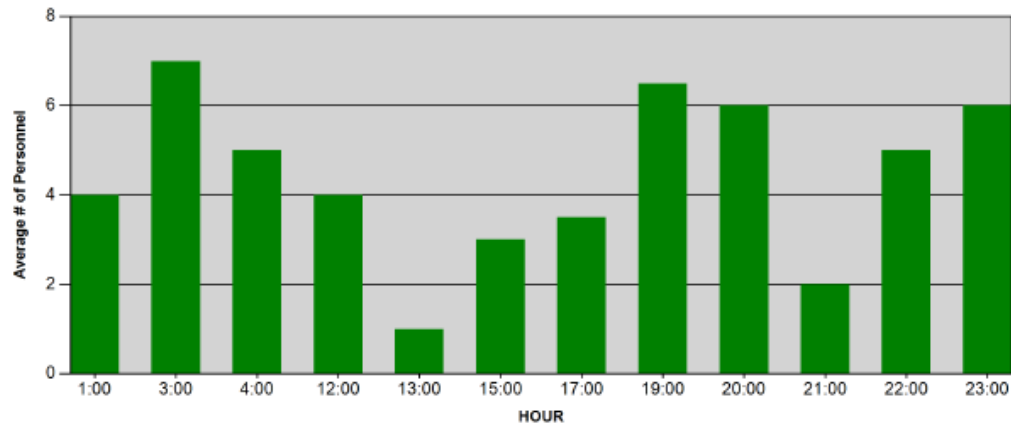
Incident Statistics

Start Date: 05/01/2020 | End Date: 05/31/2020

INCIDENT COUNT			
INCIDENT TYPE		# INCIDENTS	
EMS		8	
FIRE		8	
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	1		
OVERLAPPING CALLS			
# OVERLAPPING	% OVERLAPPING		
0	NaN		
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:10:34	0:16:23	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:12:29	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME (Dispatch to Enroute)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:03:56	0:05:49	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:04:46	
AGENCY	AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE (MM:SS)		
Damascus Fire Department	48:21		

Average Number of Responding Personnel per Hour for Date Range

Start Date: 05/01/2020 | End Date: 05/31/2020



HOUR	AVG. # PERSONNEL
01:00 - 01:59	4.00
03:00 - 03:59	7.00
04:00 - 04:59	5.00
12:00 - 12:59	4.00
13:00 - 13:59	1.00
15:00 - 15:59	3.00
17:00 - 17:59	3.50
19:00 - 19:59	6.50
20:00 - 20:59	6.00
21:00 - 21:59	2.00
22:00 - 22:59	5.00
23:00 - 23:59	6.00

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

Start Date: 05/01/2020 | End Date: 05/31/2020

PERSONNEL	TIME SPENT ON INCIDENTS (Hours:Minutes Dispatched to Cleared Scene)
Blackburn, Douglas	3:06
Feliciano, Yamir	4:36
Harter, Chuck	2:17
Hurd, Emilee	4:35
McNiell, George BANJO	3:18
McVey, Alex L	3:37
Mullins, Troy	7:17
Phipps, Michael	8:18
Prator, Daniel J	3:35
Turner, Kermit	7:27
Turner, Walter B	9:33
Widener, Alex	1:28
Widener, Anthony	10:53
Widener, Jacob	8:16
Total:	78:17

Response Percentage per Station per Personnel for Incident Types for Personnel

Personnel: All Personnel | Incident Type(s): All Incident Types | Start Date: 05/01/2020 | End Date: 05/31/2020

Personnel	Calls Attended	% of Calls for Selected Incident Types
Station: Station 1400		
Blackburn, Douglas	4	25.0%
Feliciano, Yamir	3	18.8%
Finley, Will	4	25.0%
Hand, Devon J	4	25.0%
Harter, Chuck	5	31.3%
Hurd, Emilee	14	87.5%
McNiell, George BANJO	4	25.0%
McVey, Alex L	4	25.0%
McVey, Mickie	1	6.3%
Minton, Jared	2	12.5%
Mullins, Troy	9	56.3%
Phipps, Michael	8	50.0%
Prator, Daniel J	10	62.5%
Reid, Michael D	2	12.5%
Riendeau, Logan	1	6.3%
Turner, Kermit	9	56.3%
Turner, Walter B	16	100.0%
Widener, Alex	4	25.0%
Widener, Anthony	13	81.3%
Widener, Jacob	15	93.8%
Total Incidents for Station Station 1400	16	

Total Incidents for all Stations 16

Special Committees

Damascus Business Group – Ms. Albro had nothing to report at this time.

Damascus History Tour – Richard Smith displayed two of the most recent signs outside Town Hall before the meeting began, and distributed a list of the signs and other proposed signs (see below).

Existing (or almost existing) signs and suggested sequence

- 1 - Water Tanks
- 2 - Founders of Damascus
- 3 - Electricity Comes to Damascus
- 4 - The Train Depot and Hassinger Lumber
- 5 – Rock School
- 6 – Beaverdam Chemical
- 7 – Virginia Creeper Trail
- 8 – Trails of Damascus
- 9 – Legion Island
- 10 - Churches of Damascus
- 11 - Laurel Avenue
- 12 – Damascus Old Mill

Location for numbers 7 and 9 not determined yet.

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Proposed signs

- Old Neighborhoods of Damascus
- Classic Damascus Homes
- Douglas Saw Mill
- Lincoln Industries
- History of Bike Shops

Manager’s Report

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

- *I’m expecting a contract from Inland Construction any day, and we will want to immediately proceed with Change Order #1 to cut some additional costs. Materials need to be purchased for the bathroom building and work completed there.*
- *The audit extension requested from DHCD has been approved through July.*
- *The requested extension on our CDBG and ARC contracts for an additional nine (9) months is still pending.*
- *I’m working with façade participants to take care of the 50:50 renovation program as soon as we can.*
- *The “Pay for Performance” schedules as part of the contract with the PDC for these projects both need to be approved as the project activities have changed somewhat since the beginning – no additional costs are included.*

**Management Agreement For
Damascus Downtown Revitalization CDBG**

Performance Budget

Compensation for these tasks will be released upon successful completion of each task noted in the amount noted.

Task	Percent	Amount
Under Contract with DHCD	10%	\$6,200.00
Successfully Award A/E Services Contract	5%	\$3,100.00
Façades Construction Contract Bidding	5%	\$3,100.00

Compliance Review #1	5%	\$3,100.00
Compliance Review #2	5%	\$3,100.00
Project Monitoring – (files, meetings, etc...)	15%	\$9,300.00
Labor Compliance - Streetscape	17.5%	\$10,850.00
Program Admin/Materials Procurement - Facades	17.5%	\$10,850.00
Construction Completion	10%	\$6,200.00
Closeout of Project and Achieving Administrative Closeout	10%	\$6,200.00
Total CDBG Budget	100%	\$62,000.00

- Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Performance Budget for the Management Agreement as presented, as it relates to the Damascus Downtown Revitalization /CDBG grant. Ms. Albro 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

**Management Agreement For
Damascus Downtown Waterfront Asset Development ARC**

Performance Budget

Compensation for these tasks will be released upon successful completion of each task noted in the amount noted.

Task	Percent	Amount
ARC and DHCD Contract Award	10%	\$3,000.00
A/E Services Contract Award	10%	\$3,000.00
Construction Contract Award	10%	\$3,000.00
Final Compliance Review	10%	\$3,000.00
Project Monitoring – (files, meetings, reporting, etc...)	20%	\$6,000.00
Labor Compliance	15%	\$4,500.00
Construction Completion	10%	\$3,000.00
Project Closeout	5%	\$1,500.00
Achievement of Benefits	10%	\$3,000.00
Total ARC Administration Budget	100%	\$30,000.00

- Ms. Albro made a motion to approve the Performance Budget for the Management Agreement as presented, as it relates to the Damascus Downtown Waterfront Asset Development/ARC grant. Mr. Williams 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

ARC POWER & TRRC – Trail Center +

- *We have included an additional \$111,601.00 to the project in additional costs related to bringing the square footage of the building back to 2,200 (+ exterior decking). This does not utilize all of the awarded Tobacco Commission funding, however, so I am working with TRRC to allow me to utilize some*

of the remaining funds for the garage building (which will be utilized as an indoor/outdoor training space).

- o The foundation piers will be poured after the first week in June, and the floor system materials are already on hand for installation.*
- o Easement request on site for installation and maintenance of windows on the building next door: the ATC has no issue with the Town approving the easement request.*

** It was the consensus of the Council to authorize the Town Manager to schedule a Public Hearing for consideration of approval for a construction/installment/maintenance/upkeep easement of the Trail Center side of the Waters' building at 205 W. Laurel Ave.*

Town-wide Housing Assessment

- The rehab specialist contracted with is beginning work, and the PDC will begin to put the plan together shortly, after collecting some additional information.*

Miscellaneous

- o Comprehensive Plan Update – Basic maps for the plan have been updated and initially approved to be included by the Planning Commission.*
- o VA Creeper Trail Conservancy – I've assisted the Conservancy with preparing an updated Request for Proposals to be advertised as soon as accepted by Friends of SWVA.*
- o CARES Act – Washington County has been awarded \$4.6 million in funds through the Act, and is interested in sharing these funds to the towns within the county. I've been appointed to the Task Force established to coordinate and manage these funds. At this point we are unsure how much money the Town will receive and there will be ongoing meetings with further details and discussions.*
- o VDOT Easement – the Rte 58 VDOT easement is included in your packets for the portion of the Creeper Trail jointly owned by the Towns of Damascus and Abingdon. Abingdon approved this at their May 18th meeting of the Town Council. (see under Old Business)*

Old Business

Mr. Blevins presented the following *revised* Perpetual Easement Deed regarding a VDOT Hwy. 58 project which includes a bridge, street, and drainage on, across or near a jointly owned section of the Virginia Creeper Trail:

TAX MAP # Virginia Creeper National Recreation Trail ROW

SF-38
Revised 9/16
UPC 16382

**PREPARED BY VDOT
UNDER SUPERVISION OF THE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

Exempted from recordation taxes
and fees under Sections 58.1-811(A)(3),
58.1-811(C)(5), 58.1-3315, 25.1-418,
42.1-70, 17.1-266, and 17.1-279(E)

THIS DEED, made this _____ day of _____, 2020, by and between **the TOWN OF ABINGDON, VIRGINIA and the TOWN OF DAMASCUS, VIRGINIA**, Grantor, and the **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, acting by and through its Department of Transportation, Grantee, 870 Bonham Road, Bristol, Virginia 24201.

WITNESSETH: For and in consideration of the sum of \$5,000 paid by the Grantee to the Grantor, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, the Grantor doth hereby grant and convey to the Grantee, the perpetual right and easement to construct, reconstruct, alter, operate and maintain a bridge which is part of a public street or highway, including any necessary appurtenances thereto, drainage and/or utilities, over, and across the lands and property of the Grantor, the area embracing the easement being situated in the County of Washington and described as follows:

Parcel 099:

Being as shown on Sheets 6, 6RW, 7, and 7RW of the plans for Route 58, State Highway Project 0058-095-108, R201, and beginning on the right side and lying on both sides of the Route 58 Construction Baseline from the lands now or formerly belonging to Washington County Service Authority, opposite Station No. 66 + 29.70 to the lands now or formerly belonging to the Town of Damascus, Virginia, opposite approximate Station No. 70 + 50, and containing 1.09 acres more or less, of land.

Being a part of the same land acquired by the landowner from the Norfolk and Western Railway Company, by Deed dated January 4, 1982, and recorded in Deed Book 652, at Page 74, in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Washington County. This easement is subject to all matters of record affecting the easement area, and can be made expressly subject to the Agreement dated April 11, 1989, and recorded in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Washington County, Virginia, in Book 777, at page 762. The easement includes the right to cross, and as necessary to provide for safe operation and maintenance of the bridge, periodically close the Virginia Creeper National Recreation Trail in a manner, which includes a good faith effort to minimize the amount of closure of the Virginia Creeper National Recreation Trail.

For a more particular description of the land herein conveyed, reference is made to a photocopy of Sheets No. 6, 6RW, 7, and 7RW showing outlined in GREEN the land conveyed in perpetual easement which photocopies are hereto attached as a part of this conveyance and recorded simultaneously herewith in the State Highway Plat Book _____, Page(s) _____.

The Grantor by the execution of this instrument acknowledges that the plans for the aforesaid project as they affect its property have been fully explained to its authorized representative.

The Grantor covenants and agrees for itself, its successors and assigns, that the consideration hereinabove mentioned and paid to it shall be in lieu of any and all claims to compensation for the easement, and for damages to the value of the lands of the Grantor not encumbered by such easement, if any, which may result by reason of the use to which the Grantee will put the same.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the revised Easement Deed, as presented. Ms. Van de Vuurst 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

New Business

Nothing at this time.

Legal Matters

Nothing at this time.

Council Members Reports

Ms. Albro reported being asked if the Town has preparations in place for emergency flooding at the new Scouts camping area below trestle 17.

Mr. Williams replied that the current/previous Scouts camping area is also very much in the flood plain, and the plan is the same – if flooding is in the immediate forecast, then the reservations are cancelled.

Mr. Williams also stated that the flower box at the front of Town Park is now looking bright and colorful, and

wanted to thank Sean & Buddy Albro, Linda Rouse, and Tuesday Pope for meeting him in the park to get it planted and mulched a couple of weeks before.



Mayor McCrady stated he has received a request for Damascus to participate in a hiking community webinar, and to contact local resident Anthony Westmoreland for more info.

Mr. Blevins responded that himself, Mr. Williams, and Anne Maio have already been working on putting the info, pictures, and slides together in preparation for the Damascus segment of the 'We are the A.T. – Home Hiking Series', after being contacted by the Northeast TN Regional Economic Partnership (who is spearheading the series).

Citizens Comments *(solicited beforehand via email)*

Mr. Blevins reported that no Citizens' Comments were received ahead of time this month.

Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

❖ Town Hall will be CLOSED on July 3rd in observance of Independence 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

- Mr. Hayes made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$500, 2nd by Mr. Greer. The motion passed (6-0).
- Ms. Albro 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).

Mayor McCrady thanked the listeners who had tuned in for the meeting.

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

Jack McCrady, Mayor

Tuesday Pope, Clerk