

**DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes for July 13, 2020**  
**7:00pm Regular Council Meeting**

**Council Members Present:**

Tim Williams, Susan Seymore, Mitchel Greer, and Tom Hayes *(via live video feed)*

**Absent:**

Vicky Van de Vuurst

**Also Present:**

Jack McCrady, Mayor  
Tuesday Pope, Town Clerk

Gavin Blevins, Town Manager  
Eva Meyer, Town Treasurer

*\* Due to lack of a quorum, the Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Damascus Town Council scheduled for Monday, July 6, 2020, was postponed until today, Monday, July 13, 2020, at 7pm.*

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 June 1, 2020 Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes, as presented.

- Mr. Williams made motion to approve the Minutes as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Greer. The motion passed (4-0).

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the June 25, 2020 Special Called Council Meeting Minutes, as presented.

- Mr. Greer made motion to approve the Minutes as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Seymore. The motion passed (3-0-1, with Mr. Williams abstaining).

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the agenda as presented.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Seymore 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (4-0).

\* 2018-19 Audit Report – Owens CPA & Associates

Todd Owens presented the Mayor and Council with the 2018-19 Fiscal Year audit, stating the Town has a ‘no change’ audit, with a good unqualified report. The expenses were well controlled, finances were taken care of as they should have been, and everything was in good shape. Overall, it is a fantastic audit report.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to accept the 2018-19FY audit, as presented. Mr. Greer 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (4-0).

<b>Committee Reports</b>
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**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 92.4%. Penalty and interest have been accrued for taxes that have yet to be paid. Delinquent tax letters have been sent out. The following is the collection rate for real estate in prior years:*

2018 98.09%

2019 96.38%

*Virginia Investment Pool: The total balance in the VIP Liquidity Pool is \$151,568.01.*

		YTD Interest
General Reserve	\$53,786.59	\$317.10
Police Vehicle Fund	\$15,219.28	\$89.66
Sewer CD Fund	\$26,146.33	\$154.13
Anthem Recovery	\$43,698.89	\$257.52
Trail Days Reserve	\$11,006.58	\$6.58
Additional Working Capital	\$1,710.34	\$530.68
Total	\$151,568.01	\$1,355.67

*CARES Act: As discussed at the last meeting, we will be receiving \$68,453.67 from Washington County. The new checking account has been opened. We are just waiting on the check from Washington County.*

*FY 19-20: The town collected the following in the previous fiscal year:*

*Business License Fee: \$ 58,333.97*

*Lodging Tax: \$ 44,873.00*

*Meals Tax: \$190,359.19*

*All of these were on target with what was budgeted.*

Ms. Meyer also reported that the Town received Cares Act funds today, as allotted by Washington County, and a separate checking account and checks have been established for these funds.

- MRPDC Contract Updates and Renewal – Ms. Seymore asked the Town Manager to explain the changes in the Town’s annual contract with the MRPDC for Management services.  
Mr. Blevins read the contract as follows:

## **Town Management Agreement between the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and the Town of Damascus, Virginia**

The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission agrees to provide staff members for the following Town Management performance standards and objectives:

### *Town Management*

- Attend official town council meetings as required.
- Respond promptly to individual councilor requests for information and services.
- Assist with and attend public hearings as required.
- Conduct his or herself in a professional manner.
- Work closely with the mayor and council on administration of the town and direction of town staff.
- Represent the town with other public bodies, federal and state agencies, and their staff.
- Assist the mayor and council in contract negotiations.
- Assist the mayor and council in enforcing the town code, ordinances, and all applicable state codes in a fair and equitable manner.
- Assist the mayor and council in the preparation and amendments of contracts, plans, and ordinances.
- Treat council, as a group and individually, with respect at all times.
- Treat citizens in a respectful manner.
- Assist the mayor and council in responding to complaints in a timely manner.
- Assist the mayor and council when working with the town attorney on legal issues.
- Assist committees to meet their goals.
- Work with the mayor and council in obtaining funding sources for town projects.
- Assist the town with grant project administration in which a separate administration agreement has not been executed.

### *Damascus Website*

- Review the existing website for what works and what can be changed
- Meet with the town website team to discuss and review website needs prior to redesign(s)
- Maintain and update the existing town website until the new website is complete
- Review existing hosting package for compatibility and cost
- Review existing domain name registration and transfer if needed
- Select a content management system that will meet the town's needs
- Design and build a draft website using input from the town website team, existing content, new content, and branding materials from the Damascus Master Plan

- Amend the design as needed
- Provide training to town staff, as needed, to access the website administration
- Provide on-going updates and maintenance, as needed/requested on a timely basis

The town council agrees as part of this contract to do the following:

- Understand that the town manager's position is to provide part time administrative services to assist with town operations.
- Understand that the PDC staff member assigned to Damascus as town manager has other responsibilities pertaining to separately contracted services for project management.
- Understand that the PDC staff member assigned to Damascus has additional responsibilities within the Planning District that do not pertain to the Town of Damascus.
- Treat the town manager in a professional manner.
- Be specific in requests for information, studies, or requests for services.
- Back the town manager on issues, which have been approved by council.
- Help the town manager to perform at his or her best for the benefit of the town.
- Deal with complaints and failures in a professional and positive manner.
- Tell the town manager how he or she can improve his or her performance.
- Criticize performance when deserved, but not in a public setting.
- Clearly define results that are expected.
- To provide the town manager with adequate workspace and equipment needed to provide services.
- Agree to compensate the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission on a monthly basis for services addressed in this agreement.
- Understand additional compensation may be required for services above and beyond the services addressed in this agreement.

The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and The Town of Damascus agree that the annual compensation for Town Management services is not to exceed \$27,810, to be paid in equal monthly installments of \$2317.50 to be invoiced by the PDC.

#### AMENDMENT

This contract may be amended from time to time by written authorization of the PDC and the Town and shall be subject to renegotiation if such amendment results in the change in the scope of services, compensation, and/or method of payment.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the updated Town Management Agreement between the MRPDC and the Town of Damascus. Mr. Williams 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (4-0).

#### **Streets, Lights and Maintenance:**

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

*As the Public Works Department, we strive to keep the town looking the absolute best we can. We have been without our inmates for several months which puts a huge load on each of us. We have had many projects going on over the last month. They include replacing some of the fencing in the park, cleaning the ends of*

*several drain culverts and flushing them out, hanging the cancer banners and flags in the park, cutting a large tree that fell on the Creeper Trail, picking up brush in town, and our normal mowing and weed eating. We are also working on several areas where drainage issues are a problem by checking elevation points for new piping.*

Mr. Greer commented that the Town needs to sell the Public Works Department's older model explorer and the Dodge Ram truck as surplus equipment.

Mayor McCrady asked that Mr. Hester compile a list of all items (with details) for liquidation, and the Council can have a Special Called Meeting for approval if needed before the August meeting.

### **Parks and Recreation:**

Mr. Williams reported that the Washington County budget allocation reports have been received, and the Town of Damascus will receive \$7,897 for Parks & Recreation and \$1,316 for Trail Days, the same as the past several years. Mr. Williams suggested depositing all monies received for Trail Days fees, merch, allocations from the County, etc. into the Town's VIP Trail Days account, instead of into the General Fund account, to help ensure the 2021 festival bills and expenses can be covered.

### **Planning Commission:**

Nothing new to report at this time.

### **Police and Fire Advisory:**

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

#### **Operations:**

*June 2020, Damascus Officers had 104 calls for service. We have taken 15 investigative reports that require follow up and made 6 arrest.*

#### **Traffic Enforcement Activities:**

*In June officers issued 15 citations along with 10 warnings.*

#### **Speeding complaint areas include:**

*South Shady.*

#### **Special Report:**

*The radios are completed, and that grant is expended. We have been waiting on the Department of Criminal Justice Services website to come back online to finish request for funding.*

*The cameras we have installed are working well and have recently helped make several cases. I have the new ones in for the park and will work with Adam to try to get those up as soon as the maintenance guys have time.*

*I have reviewed policy and updated accordingly regarding the recent events involving use of force. I am comfortable with our policy we also complete Cultural Diversity training every two years as in-service that covers bias-based policing.*

*Our new officer, James Russell will begin the academy the 13<sup>th</sup>. Scheduled graduation will be December.*

*The computers in the police department have been updated. They seem to be working well.*

*The dues for the academy have been submitted for payment (the annual \$2,100 to Southwest Virginia Criminal*

Justice Training Academy), also the CapWin annual payment of \$560.00 has been submitted (this is for the laptops in the cruisers used for DMV information).

### Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

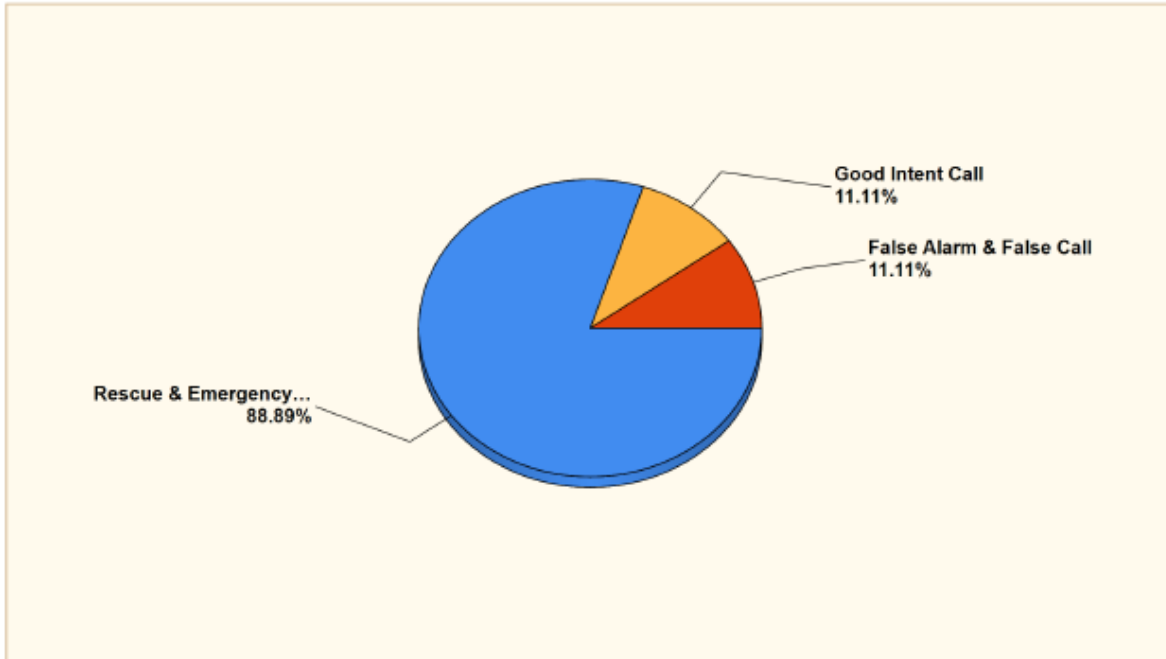
Mayor McCrady presented the following report for the previous month, which was submitted by Chief Turner:

## Damascus Fire Department

*Damascus, VA*

This report was generated on 7/9/2020 12:24:07 PM

**Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range**  
 Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 06/01/2020 | End Date: 06/30/2020



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	8	88.89%
Good Intent Call	1	11.11%
False Alarm & False Call	1	11.11%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>111.11%</b>

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	2	20.00%
322 - Motor vehicle accident with injuries	2	20.00%
324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	1	10.00%
341 - Search for person on land	2	20.00%
342 - Search for person in water	1	10.00%
631 - Authorized controlled burning	1	10.00%
745 - Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	1	10.00%
<b>TOTAL INCIDENTS:</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

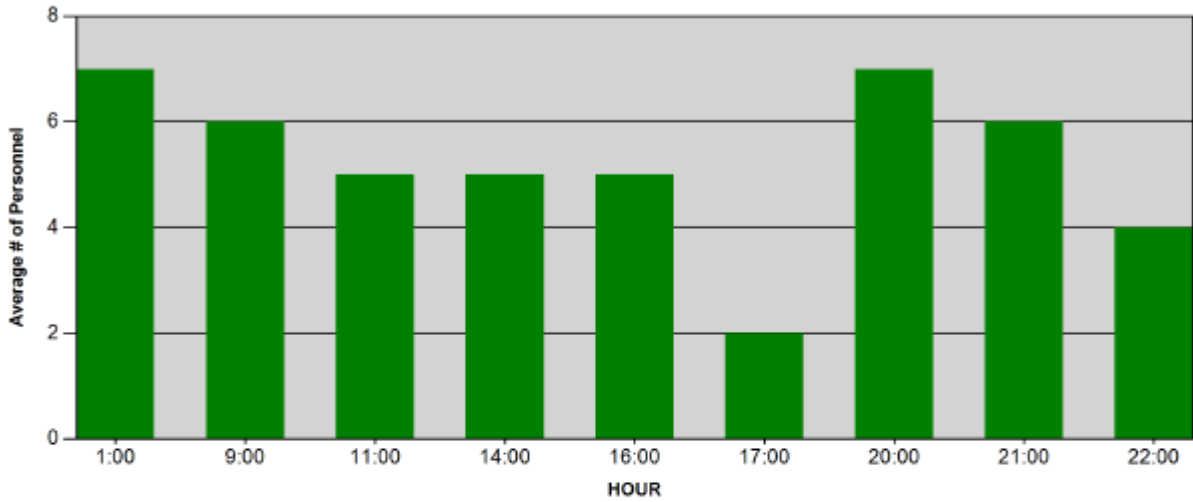
INCIDENT COUNT			
INCIDENT TYPE		# INCIDENTS	
EMS		8	
FIRE		2	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</b>	
TOTAL TRANSPORTS (N2 and N3)			
APPARATUS	# of APPARATUS TRANSPORTS	# of PATIENT TRANSPORTS	TOTAL # of PATIENT CONTACTS
<b>TOTAL</b>			
PRE-INCIDENT VALUE		LOSSES	
\$0.00		\$0.00	
CO CHECKS			
<b>TOTAL</b>			
MUTUAL AID			
Aid Type		Total	
OVERLAPPING CALLS			
# OVERLAPPING		% OVERLAPPING	
0		NaN	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:15:01	0:13:21	
<b>AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS</b>		<b>0:14:58</b>	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME (Dispatch to Enroute)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:04:49	0:01:00	
<b>AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS</b>		<b>0:04:26</b>	
AGENCY		AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE (MM:SS)	
Damascus Fire Department		36:58	

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

Start Date: 06/01/2020 | End Date: 06/30/2020

PERSONNEL	TIME SPENT ON INCIDENTS (Hours:Minutes Dispatched to Cleared Scene)
Feliciano, Yamil	2:35
Finley, Will	1:58
Hurd, Emilee	2:48
McVey, Alex L	2:31
Minton, Jared	1:03
Mullins, Troy	2:30
Phipps, Jennifer N	2:20
Phipps, Michael	6:38
Prator, Daniel J	2:18
Reid, Michael D	0:46
Turner, Kermit	4:41
Turner, Walter B	8:23
Widener, Alex	2:20
Widener, Anthony	7:48
Widener, Jacob	4:20
<b>Total:</b>	<b>52:56</b>

**Average Number of Responding Personnel per Hour for Date Range**  
 Start Date: 06/01/2020 | End Date: 06/30/2020



HOUR	AVG. # PERSONNEL
01:00 - 01:59	7.00
09:00 - 09:59	6.00
11:00 - 11:59	5.00
14:00 - 14:59	5.00
16:00 - 16:59	5.00
17:00 - 17:59	2.00
20:00 - 20:59	7.00
21:00 - 21:59	6.00
22:00 - 22:59	4.00

**Response Percentage per Station per Personnel for Incident Types for Personnel**

Personnel: All Personnel | Incident Type(s): All Incident Types | Start Date: 06/01/2020 | End Date: 06/30/2020

Personnel	Calls Attended	% of Calls for Selected Incident Types
<b>Station: Station 1400</b>		
Blackburn, Douglas	1	10.0%
Feliciano, Yamir	2	20.0%
Finley, Will	4	40.0%
Hurd, Emilee	6	60.0%
Jones, Andrew	2	20.0%
McVey, Alex L	3	30.0%
McVey, Mickie	1	10.0%
Minton, Jared	3	30.0%
Mullins, Troy	4	40.0%
Phipps, Jennifer N	5	50.0%
Phipps, Michael	7	70.0%
Prator, Daniel J	6	60.0%
Reid, Michael D	2	20.0%
Turner, Kermit	5	50.0%
Turner, Walter B	9	90.0%
Widener, Alex	4	40.0%
Widener, Anthony	8	80.0%
Widener, Jacob	5	50.0%
<b>Total Incidents for Station Station 1400</b>	<b>10</b>	

**Total Incidents for all Stations 10**



## Special Committees

Damascus History Tour – Richard Smith displayed the 12<sup>th</sup> sign ‘Virginia Creeper Trail’, which has been recently completed and is ready for installation (see list below). He asked that the Maintenance Dept. meet him in front of Ms. Lamb’s house with the auger one day this week to get the post holes ready. Mr. Smith stated that he is concerned that the initial amount of funds allotted for this project won’t cover some of the final expenses, and asked the Council for approval to go over the budgeted amount by a few hundred dollars, if needed. Also, he stated that Ms. Meyer has agreed to create/manage a Facebook page for the project, which is a huge help.

### Damascus History (Walking) Tour 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

Mayor McCrady thanked Mr. Smith for all that he has done, and continues to do, for the Town of Damascus.

## Manager’s Report

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

- *The contract for construction is with the attorney for signature of approval, and I’m finalizing paperwork for the official Notice of Award, and have scheduled the Pre-construction Conference for the morning of July 21<sup>st</sup> at 9:30am.*
- *Once the Pre-construction Conference has been held, I’ll issue formal Notice to Proceed with construction.*
- *I’ve been contacted by VDOT, funding has been allocated this year to complete the ADA curb crossings that were planned for last year and the contractor actually started work on them today – I’ll be coordinating to attempt to make sure all improvements function with the downtown projects.*
- *I’ve been delayed working with façade participants to take care of the 50:50 renovation program, but I am waiting on a few last material specifications, then I hope to get final approval and start procurement for several at once.*

- *After construction begins, and since wayfinding sign redesigns have altered for budget, I'd like to utilize a separate pool of funding to have new gateway signs constructed.*

The Laurel Creek Park pavilion/stage roof is currently designed to be 26 gauge 5V (tin) metal, which is fairly expensive, but there is a note that it can be swapped for 29 gauge imperial ribbed (steel) metal, which is less expensive. The money saved by changing the roofing material can be converted over for redoing the roof on the bathroom facility as well. It will not be an exact match to the Trail Center roof, but being positioned at different angles and spaced a considerable distance apart, it shouldn't be a problem. If approved, this could be added to an official change order for the project, along with eliminating some trench drains, and substituting pressure treated Pine boards for the decking material in place of Douglas Fir.

\* It was the consensus of the Council to approve these three cost saving items for a change order on the project(s).

#### **ARC POWER & TRRC – Trail Center +**

- *I'm still working with the Tobacco Commission to utilize all of the awarded funds, and as we move forward, I'd like to utilize those funds to pay for IT infrastructure on site, and renovations to the garage/training building.*
- *I've worked with the ATC to apply to Virginia Tourism Corporation for \$10,000 toward the exhibitry and marketing of the Center.*
- Mr. Williams made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to expend up to \$10,000 for IT and infrastructure at the Damascus Trail Center as requested, to be reimbursed by Tobacco Commission grant funds. Ms. Seymore 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (4-0).

#### **Town-wide Housing Assessment**

- *The rehab specialist is gearing up to begin work as restrictions decrease and folks become more willing to interact at home.*
- *We had anticipated having the plan complete by November 2020, but even so, the PDC will be setting aside time to put a scattered-site application together for a housing renovation/reconstruction project for submission in November 2020.*

\* Mr. Blevins reported that he and an associate will be conducting a walk around on the 14<sup>th</sup> to look at prospective houses again and narrow down the scope for the project.

#### **Miscellaneous**

- *Comprehensive Plan Update – With the changing of the fiscal year, reporting, and grant applications, June didn't provide for very much progress on the plan .*
- *VA Creeper Trail Conservancy – Proposals for the Conservancy's Master Plan and Economic Impact Study have been received, and the team will begin the scoring process shortly.*
- *CARES Act – Washington County has set aside a budget for the \$4.6 million received from the state, and the Town should be getting it's part of the allocation this month (this was actually received today - see the Treasurer's report). The Business Relief Grant went live on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the first round of applications for funding are due on July 31<sup>st</sup> – eligible applicants may receive up to \$20,000.*

➤ Wallberg Construction Application for Payment:



July 13, 2020

Mr. Gavin Blevins  
Town of Damascus  
208 W. Laurel Ave.  
Damascus, VA 24236

**DAMASCUS TRAIL CENTER  
APPLICATION AND CERTIFICATE FOR PAYMENT NO. 004 (Contractor Designation No. 426)**

Dear Gavin,

Attached is a copy of Application and Certificate for Payment No. 004 (Contractor designation 426), as submitted by Wallberg Construction, for the period ending July 8, 2020, together with the listed attachments.

Based on our periodic visits to the construction site and our on-site inspections of the construction, the Application and Certificate for Payment, and the representations contained herein, to our knowledge, information, and belief, the work for which payment is recommended appears to be in accordance with the Contract Documents. Therefore, we recommend that the Contractor be paid the requested amount of \$86,744.50 (Eighty Six Thousand, Seven Hundred Forty Four & 50/100 Dollars).

We have not made an independent examination of the Contractor's records to determine the status of payments under this contract, and our recommendation of payment of this application does not constitute a representation that such accounts have in fact been paid. All our information as to the amount requested by the Contractor is taken from the attached Application and Certificate for Payment.

Sincerely,  
**MCCARTY HOLSAPLE MCCARTY, INC.**

**DAVID S. COLLINS, AIA**

Attachments: Application and Certificate for Payment 004, Contractor Designation 426  
Continuation Sheet (Schedule of Values)  
Conditional Waiver of Liens

- Mr. Williams made a motion to pay \$86,744.50 (pay app #4) to Wallberg Construction for work completed on the Damascus Trail Center project (period ending July 8, 2020), as requested. Mr. Greer 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (4-0).

## Old Business

1. Easement request for window installation and maintenance at 205 W. Laurel Ave.  
\* It was the consensus of the Council to move forward with a Public Hearing at the August 3<sup>rd</sup> Council Meeting for discussion and consideration of granting the requested easement in the space between the back of the Damascus Trail Center and the building next to it, which has renovations planned that will add windows to the side of the building that faces the back of the Trail Center.

2. Alley closure request at 1004 S. Shady Ave. - One Way Ministries (1004 S. Shady Ave.) is planning to build a new sanctuary 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 officially vacate the dead-end alley again.
- Mr. Williams made a motion to move forward with the process of vacating an alley at 1004 S. Shady Ave., as requested. Ms. Seymore 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (4-0).

## New Business

1. Council Seat Resignation by Sean Albro (Term ending 12/31/2022) – On June 26<sup>th</sup> Sean Albro submitted a letter of resignation from her position on the Damascus Town Council. Ms. Albro was elected for a four-year term, ending December 31, 2022. To fill this vacancy, a Special Election will have to be added to the ballot for the upcoming General Election on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Special Election will determine who will fill the vacancy beginning January 1, 2021, and ending December 31, 2022. Mayor McCrady suggested the Council appoint Mr. Shannon Barrett, who has agreed to fill the vacancy until the newly elected member takes office.
- Ms. Seymore made a motion to appoint Shannon Barrett, 133 Imboden St., to fill the Council seat vacancy thru December 31, 2020, as suggested. Mr. Williams 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (4-0).
2. S. Alley St. 'No Parking' area suggestion – This is due to recent incidents where the road has been blocked and emergency service vehicles wouldn't be able to get thru if they needed to. The Council agreed to take the matter under advisement and table it for now, since it isn't a critical issue because vehicles can still access those properties from the front (Railroad Ave.).

## Legal Matters

Nothing at this time.

## Council Members Reports

Ms. Seymore suggested eliminating special work/project requests at this time for the Public Works Department since they have been short-handed for months due to the restrictions of COVID-19, and their work load has backed up.

## Citizens Comments *(solicited beforehand via email)*

None at this time.

## Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

*\* For information on upcoming events, visit our website [www.visitdamascus.org](http://www.visitdamascus.org) as well as our social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter!*

## Consent Agenda

- Mr. Williams made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$500, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Greer.

The motion passed (4-0).

- 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. Mr. Greer 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (4-0).
- Mr. Williams made a motion to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Seymore. The motion passed (4-0).

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**Jack McCrady, Mayor**

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**Tuesday Pope, Clerk**