

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

Council Members Present:

Susan Seymore, Mitchel Greer, Vicky Van de Vuurst, Shannon Barrett, and Tom Hayes *(via live video feed)*

Absent: None

Also Present: Jack McCrady, Mayor
Tuesday Pope, Town Clerk
Don Wagner, Police Detective
Gavin Blevins, Town Manager
Eva Meyer, Town Treasurer

7:00pm: Mayor McCrady called the meeting to order, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and gave the invocation.

Mayor McCrady welcomed Shannon Barrett to the Town Council, who has been temporarily appointed to fill the seat vacated by Sean Albro.

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the July 13, 2020 Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes, as presented.

- Ms. Seymore made motion to approve the Minutes as presented, 2nd by Mr. Greer. The motion passed (3-0-2, with Mr. Barrett and Ms. Van de Vuurst abstaining).

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the agenda as presented.

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

* Reschedule the Regular Called Council Meeting in September because the 1st Monday (7th) falls on the Labor Day holiday – Offices Closed.

- Ms. Seymore made a motion to schedule the next Regular Called Council Meeting for Tuesday, September 8, 2020. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Committee Reports

Budget, Finance, and Administration:

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

Taxes: The First Half Real Estate collection rate is 93.13%. I have received several payments after sending out delinquent tax letters. The 2019 Personal Property collection rate is 82.82%.

Virginia Investment Pool: The total balance in the VIP Liquidity Pool is \$151,929.03. \$329.00 was transferred to the Trail Days account. This was the first quarterly payment from Washington County.

		<u>YTD Interest</u>
General Reserve	\$53,797.94	\$328.45
Police Vehicle Fund	\$15,222.51	\$92.89
Sewer CD Fund	\$26,151.86	\$159.66
Anthem Recovery	\$43,708.11	\$266.74

Trail Days Reserve	\$11,337.90	\$8.90
Additional Working Capital	\$1,710.71	\$531.05
Total	\$151,929.03	\$1,387.69

Lodging & Meals Tax: The following was collected in the month of July:

Lodging:	\$ 8,089.84
Meals:	\$11,940.86

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

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

We here at the Public Works Department have been busy trying to keep up with our everyday duties and the many challenges that are sent our way. We continue to address many issues with the drainage infrastructure trying to eliminate the flood prone areas and getting rid of excess water. As you all know, we were handed a big job the last couple of weeks. Due to some unforeseen circumstances in the ADA ramps and sidewalks we experienced some ponding in areas on Laurel Avenue resulting in having to cut and jackhammer the concrete and create troughs for the water to escape out. We are exploring a couple different routes for a permanent fix of the troughs. Thank you for being patient.

Mr. Greer thanked the Public Works employees, Mayor McCrady, Mr. Blevins, Kermit Turner, and everyone else that worked above and beyond to remedy the recent water pooling issues during heavy rainfall.

Parks and Recreation:

Nothing to report at this time.

Mayor McCrady commented that it is unfortunate that Mr. Williams has resigned from his Council seat because he is a hard worker, a great person, and has done a great job with Parks & Recreation, Trail Days, and budget preparation over the past several years, and he will be missed.

Planning Commission:

Mr. Blevins reported the Planning Commission is moving forward with Comprehensive Plan updates. Because they have been so busy pushing out COVID related grants for localities in the region, the MRPDC has recently hired someone else to help pick up the slack so they can get back to work on the Comprehensive Plans.

Police and Fire Advisory:

Detective Wagner gave the following P.D. activity report for the previous month, which was submitted by Chief Hounshell:

Operations:

July 2020, Damascus Officers had 106 calls for service. We have taken 19 investigative reports that require follow up and made 7 arrest.

Traffic Enforcement Activities:

In July officers issued 16 citations along with 8 warnings.

Speeding complaint areas include: South Shady.

Special Report:

DCIS website has been fixed and we have submitted numbers for reimbursement on the grants. This will

conclude the grants we have at this time.

Officer Russell is doing well in the academy. His test scores are high, and he is doing well on the physical testing.

Police Vehicles:

The Dodge broke down last week and had to be towed. It has been fixed at a cost of 387.00 dollars not including tow bill. It is back in service.

- * The Council was polled on August 5, 2020 with a request from Chief Hounshell to purchase the required ammunition for Officer Russell while in the academy. The State contract price thru Town Police Supply is \$551.93. The Council unanimously approved the purchase.

Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

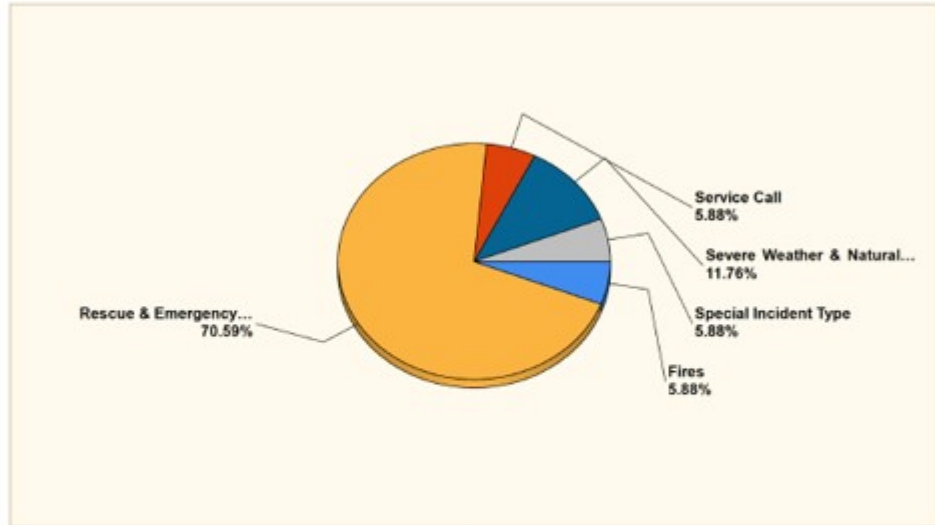
Mayor McCrady presented the following report for the previous month, which was submitted by Chief Turner:

INCIDENT COUNT			
INCIDENT TYPE		# INCIDENTS	
EMS		12	
FIRE		5	
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	
2		11.76	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:20:32	0:07:45	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:17:40	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME (Dispatch to Enroute)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:05:22	0:03:10	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:04:36	
AGENCY		AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE (MM:SS)	
Damascus Fire Department		50:56	

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
143 - Grass fire	1	5.88%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	5	29.41%
322 - Motor vehicle accident with injuries	1	5.88%
324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	2	11.76%
341 - Search for person on land	4	23.53%
553 - Public service	1	5.88%
800 - Severe weather or natural disaster, other	1	5.88%
814 - Lightning strike (no fire)	1	5.88%
900 - Special type of incident, other	1	5.88%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	17	100%

Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

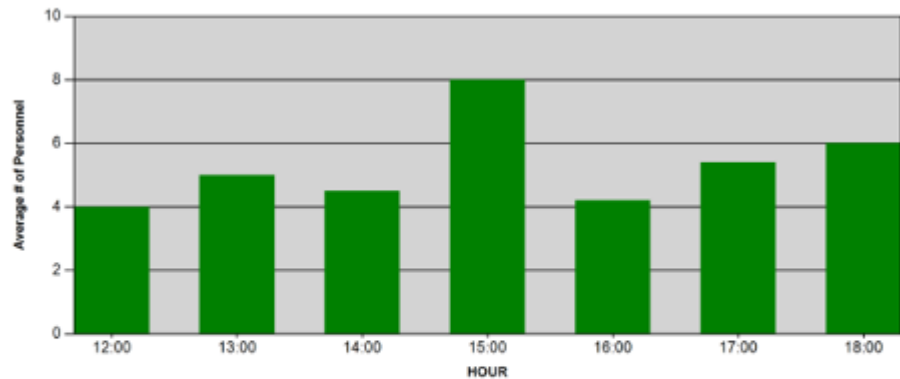
Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 07/01/2020 | End Date: 07/31/2020



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	1	5.88%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	12	70.59%
Service Call	1	5.88%
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	2	11.76%
Special Incident Type	1	5.88%
TOTAL	17	100%

Average Number of Responding Personnel per Hour for Date Range

Start Date: 07/01/2020 | End Date: 07/31/2020



HOUR	AVG. # PERSONNEL
12:00 - 12:59	4.00
13:00 - 13:59	5.00
14:00 - 14:59	4.50
15:00 - 15:59	8.00
16:00 - 16:59	4.20
17:00 - 17:59	5.40
18:00 - 18:59	6.00

Personnel Hours for Incidents for Date Range (Not Payroll Related)
 Start Date: 07/01/2020 | End Date: 07/31/2020

PERSONNEL	TIME SPENT ON INCIDENTS (Hours:Minutes Dispatched to Cleared Scene)
Allen, Tristan	12:12
Berry, Austin	10:23
Blackburn, Douglas	1:45
Feliciano, Yamir	2:34
Hand, Devon J	3:04
Harter, Chuck	2:34
Hurd, Emilee	6:39
Jones, Andrew	3:29
McVey, Alex L	2:59
McVey, Mickie	1:12
Mullins, Troy	6:44
Phipps, Jennifer N	0:53
Phipps, Michael	5:41
Prator, Daniel J	8:56
Reid, Michael D	1:39
Turner, Kermit	3:03
Turner, Walter B	7:47
Widener, Alex	8:44
Widener, Anthony	7:37
Widener, Jacob	17:07
Total:	115:02

Response Percentage per Station per Personnel for Incident Types for Personnel
 Personnel: All Personnel | Incident Type(s): All Incident Types | Start Date: 07/01/2020 | End Date: 07/31/2020

Personnel	Calls Attended	% of Calls for Selected Incident Types
Station: Station 1400		
Allen, Tristan	14	82.4%
Berry, Austin	14	82.4%
Blackburn, Douglas	5	29.4%
Feliciano, Yamir	4	23.5%
Finley, Will	3	17.6%
Hand, Devon J	2	11.8%
Harter, Chuck	2	11.8%
Hurd, Emilee	11	64.7%
Jones, Andrew	1	5.9%
Lord, R.C	4	23.5%
McVey, Alex L	4	23.5%
McVey, Mickie	1	5.9%
Mullins, Troy	10	58.8%
Phipps, Jennifer N	4	23.5%
Phipps, Michael	5	29.4%
Prator, Daniel J	10	58.8%
Reid, Michael D	2	11.8%
Remine, Jeremy	1	5.9%
Romans, Dominick	1	5.9%
Thomas, Derek	1	5.9%
Turner, Kermit	3	17.6%
Turner, Walter B	9	52.9%
Widener, Alex	11	64.7%
Widener, Anthony	10	58.8%
Widener, Jacob	17	100.0%
Total Incidents for Station Station 1400	17	

Total Incidents for all Stations 17

Special Committees

- September local foot races – Town resident Buddy Albro reported on upcoming foot races (below) and how they will be implementing modifications due to COVID-19. Race modifications include, but are not limited to, the requirement to wear masks at the aid stations, adjusting the running route, and not using shuttles this year. Mr. Albro stated that he is in contact with the race directors and just wanted to touch base with the Town Council and make sure they are still in approval of these events, which will bring hundreds of people to Town.

- Sept. 12th – Dam Yeti 50 Miler (postponed from June)
- Sept. 19th – Grayson Highlands 50K, 50 Miler, and Half Marathon (postponed from May)

- Sept. 25th - 26th, Yeti 100 Miler

The Council agreed that the races are great for the Town, as well as for the participants, and are glad they are able to get them rescheduled this year.

Manager's Report

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

- *The Pre-construction Conference was held on July 23rd, and the Notice of Award has been issued.*
- *I'm working with the designer and contractor to get changes to the scope of work and price of the contract altered based on current curb crossings, which were not accounted for in the construction plans, as well as other items to cut costs.*
- *I'm anticipating receiving façade materials lists from several building owners within the next couple of weeks and hope to get those procured for construction as quickly as I can.*
- *I've been working with Friends of SWVA to put surveys together for the businesses and community, which should go out soon, to plan for the programming of new public spaces during and post-pandemic.*

ARC POWER & TRRC – Trail Center +

- *The Tobacco Commission has preliminarily approved us to utilize remaining funds from the \$150,000 grant (that weren't able to be utilized for additional square footage of the building) to pay for IT infrastructure on site, and renovations to the garage/training building.*
- *I've been coordinating the cabling installation and testing for the project based on the design needs provided by the ATC to keep the facility fully functional during and post-pandemic.*
- *The new construction timeline is attached to this report.*

- Mr. Blevins stated the most current estimated date of completion for the Trail Center is now at the end of October 2020.

Town-wide Housing Assessment

- *As COVID cases rise in the area, the housing rehab specialist is unable to complete many facets of her scope of work, but the Planning District Commission still plans to submit a scattered-site application for a housing renovation/reconstruction project in November.*

Miscellaneous

- *Comprehensive Plan Update – The PDC has hired on additional staff to help realign workloads and get the Comp Plan updates moving again.*
- *VA Creeper Trail Conservancy – Proposals for the Conservancy's Master Plan and Economic Impact Study have been received, the team is scoring them this week and scheduling interviews for late August for four (4) different consulting teams/firms.*
- *CARES Act – Applications for the first round of the Small Business Relief Fund were due on July 31. I'm still working on a list of items to be procured to upgrade health/safety equipment in public facilities, but it sounds like Washington County, and perhaps Damascus, will be getting another round of funding later this summer.*

- Mr. Blevins elaborated that the CARES Act grant funding for businesses, which will be allocated by Washington County, can be used for lost revenues or new projects. They are not restricted, and there is no pay-back.
 - *Iron Mtn Trail Parking Lot – I've started working with VDOT and the USFS to attempt to submit a grant in October to expand the parking lot for the Iron Mtn Trail located at the end of Rebel Circle.*

Old Business

Mr. Greer reported that the Public Works department is ready to auction off the 2005 Ford Explorer, a transmission, and the 2001 Dodge truck with a scraper blade and salt spreader.

- Ms. Seymore made a motion to have the Public Works' surplus equipment placed up for bid on an online auction site, as they have done before. Ms. Van de Vuurst 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

New Business

1. Council Seat Resignation by Tim Williams (Term ending 12/31/2020) – Mr. Williams submitted a letter of resignation from his position on the Damascus Town Council, effective July 31, 2020. Mr. Williams was elected for a four-year term, ending December 31, 2020, and the seat will be on the ballot for the upcoming General Election on November 3rd.

Mr. Williams had been appointed Vice-Mayor, and with his resignation, Mayor McCrady announced that he has now appointed Ms. Seymore to temporarily serve as the Vice-Mayor.

Mayor McCrady stated that the Council should appoint someone to fill the vacant seat who is not running in the November election, and suggested Mr. Brian Schmidt to fill the vacancy through December 31st. Mr. Schmidt hasn't yet confirmed that he is willing to serve, so the Council will be polled for a vote at a later date, or will revisit the topic at the September meeting.

* *The Council was polled on August 5, 2020 after Mayor McCrady received confirmation from Mr. Schmidt that he is willing to serve the remainder of Mr. Williams' term, ending December 31, 2020, and the Council unanimously approved the appointment.*

2. Mayor McCrady asked Mr. Blevins to summarize the curbs/bulb-outs/VDOT situation that has caused some recent upset.

Mr. Blevins stated that originally, last year VDOT got Federal funding to upgrade a lot of the outdated crosswalks through the district to be ADA compliant, and the Damascus crosswalks came on to their schedule, but because VDOT had overspent their funds last fiscal year, they pulled those off the schedule and put them on to the next year. Mr. Blevins got a call from VDOT the Thursday before saying that the contractor was going to show up the following Monday (July 13th), which they did and immediately got to work. These curb crossings are only meant to be ADA compliant, and didn't take anything else into consideration. Mr. Blevins told VDOT that the new curb crossings were going to cause problems because they didn't incorporate anything for drainage, and the Town would have to modify them as soon as they were finished and took their pictures to confirm that the work was done. Unfortunately, once they were completed, but before we could start modifications, the weather turned and not in our favor.

Mayor McCrady said he called the VDOT Resident Engineer and left messages multiple times asking about the plans for drainage, and when he spoke to him asked how the project could be paid for, completed, inspected, and approved by VDOT with no drains in them. He informed the Engineer of the flooding problems caused to the businesses along Laurel Ave., and that the Town was going to have to modify them, at its expense, in order to correct the design flaws, and asked that an Engineer come and give his approval on the Town's modifications.

Mayor McCrady then read the following FOIA request for the Virginia Department of Transportation, and said that he looks forward to their responses:

Virginia Department of Transportation
Allan D. Sumpter
Holly Jones

FOIA Request

August 3, 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

Please be advised that I, Jack McCrady Mayor of the Town of Damascus, in Washington County VA, am requesting the following info under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act of Virginia.

1. Any design plans and information pertaining to the recently installed bulb outs/ADA curb improvements within the Town of Damascus, including plans to install proper drainage of the same.
2. Estimated date of construction on the Water Street bridge within the Town of Damascus, VA. This bridge was removed from service in April of 2019 due to safety issues, and the original replacement was scheduled for 2020.
3. Our main street (Laurel Avenue) has been paved several times without removing/milling the under pavement, causing an excessive crest in the center of the road. This crest, or center height, has caused flooding to adjacent businesses and land owners for many years. Please provide plans for correcting this situation, with an approximate date of construction. I would also like to know how many times this project has been placed on the 6-year plan only to be delayed and/or removed.

Please provide your response in writing and remit to:

Damascus Town Hall
Attn. Jack McCrady, Mayor
P.O. Box 576
Damascus VA, 24236

3. Mr. Greer stated the Public Works Dept. needs to purchase a water pump to be used for flooding issues as well as at the Town Pool, and one has been found online that would fit their needs for \$499.
- Ms. Seymore made a motion to approve the purchase of a water pump for the Public Works Dept., as requested, up to \$499. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Legal Matters

- Mr. Greer made a motion to, at the appropriate time, motion to Recess into Closed Session for Discussion and Consideration of actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body, per VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7). Ms. Van de Vuurst 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Council Members Reports

Ms. Van de Vuurst welcomed Mr. Barrett to the Damascus Town Council, and commended Ms. Meyer for doing a great job on the latest Trail Town Tribune newsletter.

Ms. Seymore thanked Ms. Meyer for the tribute to John in the Trail Town Tribune newsletter.

Mayor McCrady reported that the Town will be continuing to cut more on the sidewalk troughs, and then working on grates/covers for them.

- * *The Council was polled on August 17, 2020 with a request to purchase 2 storm water collection boxes with steel grates for \$516 each, to alleviate flooding at E. Liberty & N. Shady, and W. Laurel & N. Shady Avenues. The Council unanimously approved the purchase.*
- * *The Council was polled on August 20, 2020 with a quote of \$2,053.20 for the piping needed on the current drainage project. The Council unanimously approved the purchase.*

Mr. Hayes reported that one of his neighbors has expressed concern about some trees along the Brook St. alley that seem to be about to fall.

Mr. Blevins replied that he would go look at them the following day.

Ms. Seymore suggested residents and business owners in the community pitch in to help out the Public Works Department (since they have been short-handed basically all year due to the restrictions of COVID-19) by mowing, pulling weeds, weed-eating, etc., the areas around their properties/businesses.

Citizens Comments

Anthony Westmoreland, 835 S. Beaverdam Ave., and representing the AT Community, wanted to voice his thanks to Tim Williams for everything he has done while serving on Town Council, and stated that the AT Community owes him a great debt for all he has done with Trail Days for many years.

Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- * *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. Seymore made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$500, 2nd by Ms. Van de Vuurst. The motion passed (5-0).
- 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 (5-0).
- Mr. Greer made a motion to Recess into Closed Session for consideration of items previously identified (see Legal Matters). Ms. Van de Vuurst 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Ms. Seymore made a motion to return to Open Session, 2nd by Ms. Van de Vuurst. The motion passed (5-0).
- Ms. Van de Vuurst made a motion to certify. Ms. Seymore 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Mr. Greer made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Ms. Van de Vuurst. The motion passed (5-0).

Jack McCrady, Mayor

Tuesday Pope, Clerk