

# SPECIAL CALLED COUNCIL MEETING

## MINUTES

Thursday, November 14, 2024  
6pm at the Rock School Auditorium

**Council Members Present:** Charles Fields, Tom Hayes, Beaty Jackson, Robbie Kemmerlin, and Jack McCrady

**Absent:** Susan Coleman

**Also Present:** Katie Lamb, Mayor                      Chris Bell, Town Manager  
Tuesday Pope, Town Clerk                      Kermit Turner, Police Chief

Mayor Lamb called the meeting to order and stated that a Special Called Council Meeting is being called for discussion, consideration, and possible action on the following items:

1. Damascus Strong Direct Endowment Fund – 5-person committee, plus Town Manager and Treasurer as advisory members: Mr. Bell explained the role of the committee, including determining the eligibility guidelines, application process, and allocation of the undesignated funds donated to the Damascus Strong endowment fund. The proposed committee members are as follows:

### **Gene Copenhaver**

- retired ag banker of 38 years: previous 28 years with first bank and trust co; currently owns and operates Copenhaver Brothers Farms; currently the Vice President of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association; very active in volunteer organizations his whole life; former President of WashCo Chambers; former WashCo IDA Board Member; local resident of Meadowview/Lodi

### **Mark Graham**

- currently the Chief of Staff in the Office of the President at Emory & Henry University; his past experience includes a nearly two-decade legal career, including as a partner at Boucher, Hutton & Graham, P.C. Mark has served on several boards and committees, including as governors' appointment for the State Board for Community Colleges and its Budget & Finance committee, finance chair at Shady Grove United Methodist Church, board secretary of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation, board member and past president of the Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator, and more.

### **Kerry Guest**

- Representative of Washington County on two post-Helene committees: Trails to Recovery and WashCo Long Term Recovery; over 40 years of work experience in business and sales; current Town of Damascus resident

### **Tonya Triplett**

- former Town Clerk in Damascus for 7 years, coordinated budgeting with the Damascus Town Council, former Tourism Department Sales Manager in Abingdon for 7 years, former Deputy Clerk in Abingdon for 2 years, former Tourism and Community Development sector of Abingdon for 7 years, over 25 years of experience managing large budgets, served on the Washington County CARES committee during COVID

### **John Whitesides**

- local resident of Meadowview, approx 13 years as a local produce farmer, approx 7 years of accounting background: worked for Spiegler Blevins & Company and maintained a Personal Clientele, familiar with managing fund in a reasonable and conservative manner

Mr. McCrady stated the Council hasn't been kept abreast of things going on, meetings, etc, and wasn't consulted on putting together the list of proposed members.

Mr. Bell replied that on October 30<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Pope sent an email to the Council asking for member recommendations, and no one has submitted any.

Mr. McCrady said that he would like to see at least one Council member appointed to this committee also, after the first of the year, as this is a Town project.

- Mr. Jackson made a motion to accept the list of five candidates and form the committee to start developing criteria, bi-laws, application process, etc, to then bring those suggestions and parameters to Council for consideration/approval. Mr. Kemmerlin 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Mr. McCrady moved to amend the motion to include one Council member as well. Mr. Fields 2<sup>nd</sup> the amendment to the motion. The motion passed (5-0).
2. Park Bathroom Doors: Mr. Bell recommends replacing the doors at both the Town Park and the Tent City bathrooms. The replacement doors should be metal with the ability to accept electronic locks and outswing for proper emergency egress. Three quotes were presented.
- Mr. McCrady made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to move forward with replacing the restroom doors at the Town Park and Tent City bathrooms, as recommended. Mr. Jackson 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (5-0).

3. ARPA Fund – Status, extension elicited, appropriation of funds, reallocate funds earmarked for Trestle 30 repairs/previous MOU, suggested allocation for reimbursement of non-Helene related wages: Mr. Bell reported he has not received a decision on the extension request for allocating the remaining funds at this time. The 2023 MOU with the Creeper Trail Conservancy that committed \$262,000 from the Town to go towards the reconstruction of trestles 30 and 31 is no longer valid, as those trestles were destroyed in the flood, and repairs are now in the hands of congress and the Forest Service. (Approximately \$116,000 has been paid to the conservancy since the MOU/obligation.) Mr. Bell suggested un-obligating the remaining funds so they can be used for other needs.
- Mr. Kemmerlin made a motion to un-allocate the remaining ARPA funds that had been previously obligated for trestle repairs on 30 and 31. Mr. McCrady moved to amend the motion to include using the remaining ARPA funds for reimbursement to the Town's General Fund for non-Helene related wages paid. Mr. Jackson 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (5-0).
  - Mr. McCrady made a motion to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Jackson. The motion passed (5-0).

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Katie Lamb, Mayor

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Tuesday Pope, Clerk