

DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes for December 5, 2022
7:00pm Regular Called Council Meeting

Council Members Present: Mitchel Greer, Tony Doss, Susan Coleman, Beaty Jackson, Charles Fields, and Tom Hayes

Absent: None

Also Present: Katie Lamb, Mayor
Tuesday Pope, Town Clerk
Don Wagner, Police Dept.
Gavin Blevins, Town Manager
Trent Crewe, Legal Counsel

7:00pm: Mayor Lamb called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance; Ms. Coleman gave the invocation.

Mayor Lamb asked for approval of the November 7, 2022, Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes.

- Mr. Jackson made a motion to approve the Minutes, as presented. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0-1, with Mr. Hayes abstaining).

Mayor Lamb asked for approval of the agenda with the following amendments: add Parks & Rec Personnel Discussion to Legal Matters/Closed Session; and change the Consent Agenda 'consideration of invoices exceeding' amount from \$500 to \$2,500.

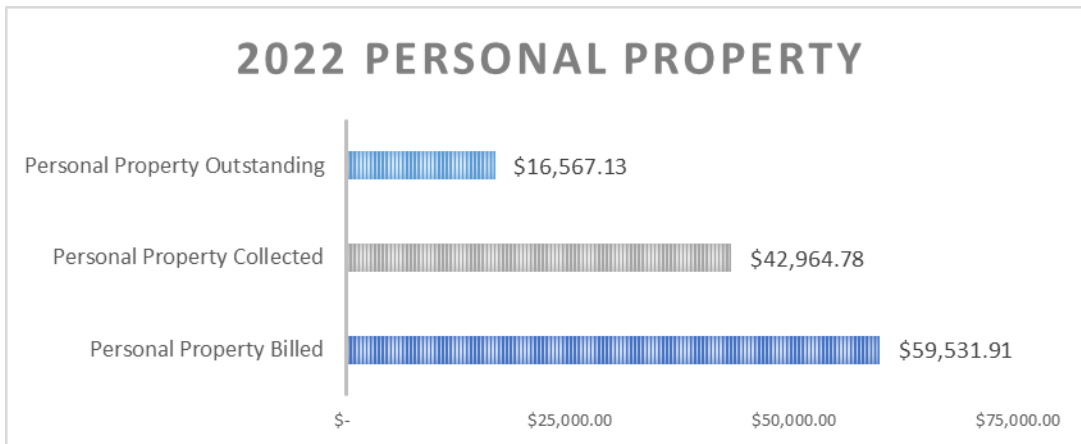
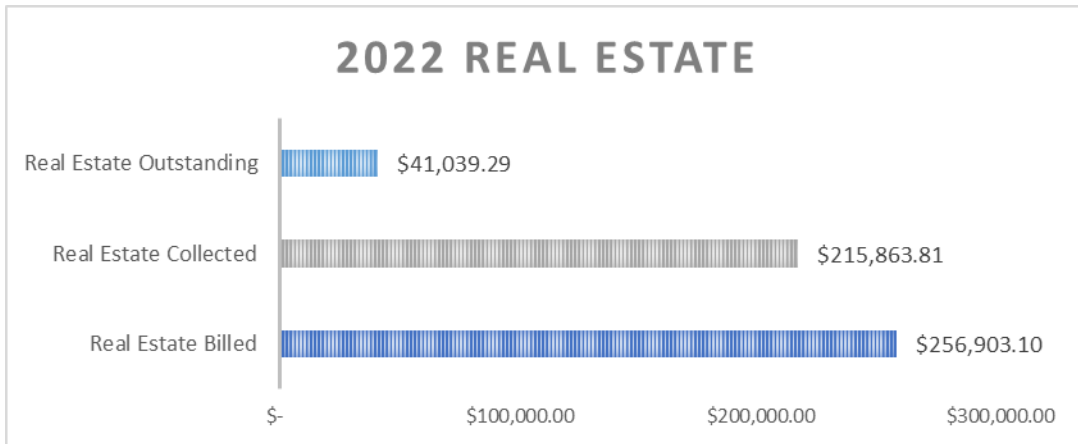
- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the agenda with the recommended amendments. Mr. Doss 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Committee Reports

Budget, Finance, and Administration:

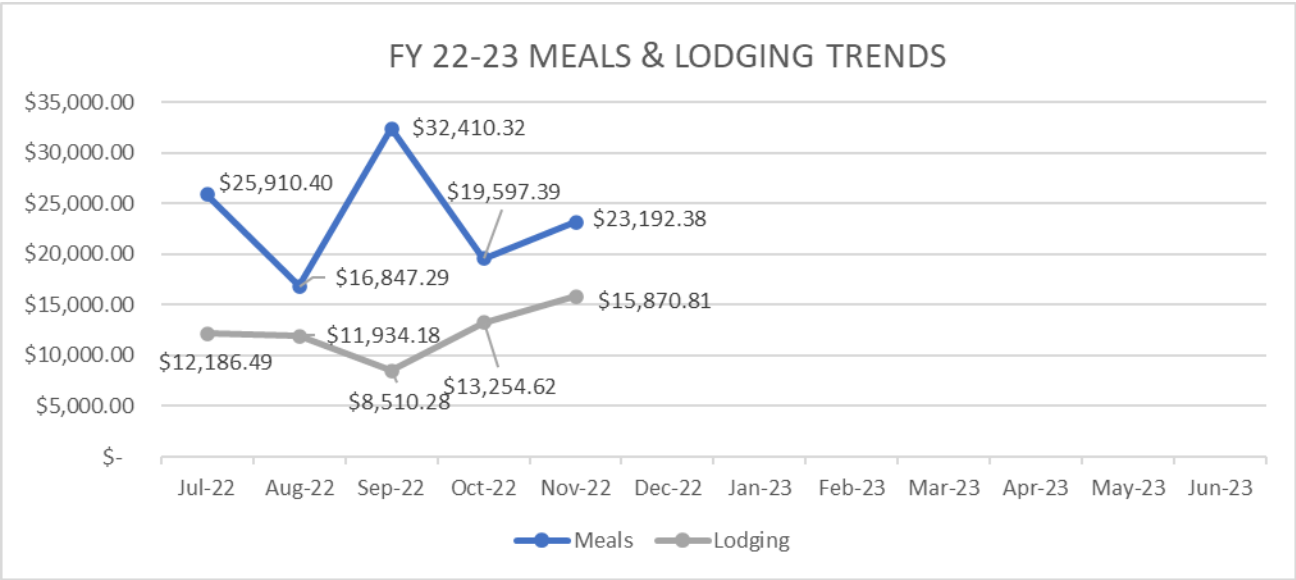
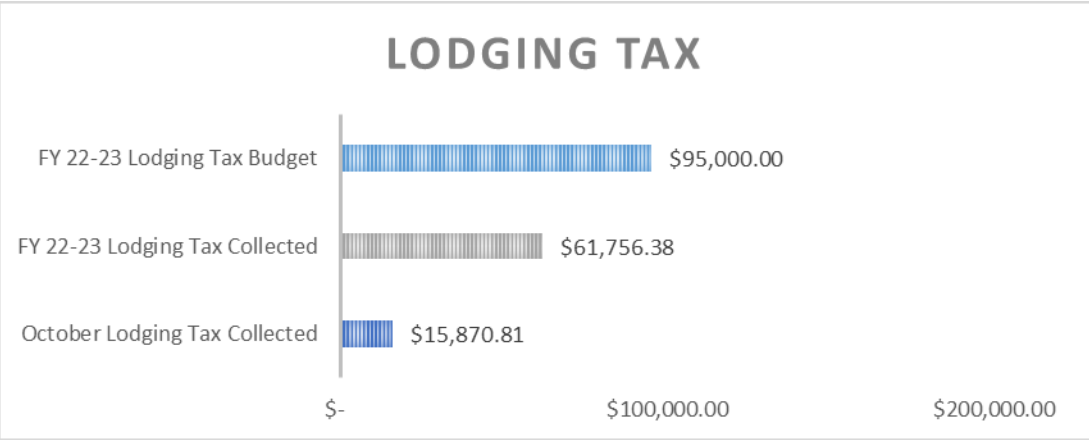
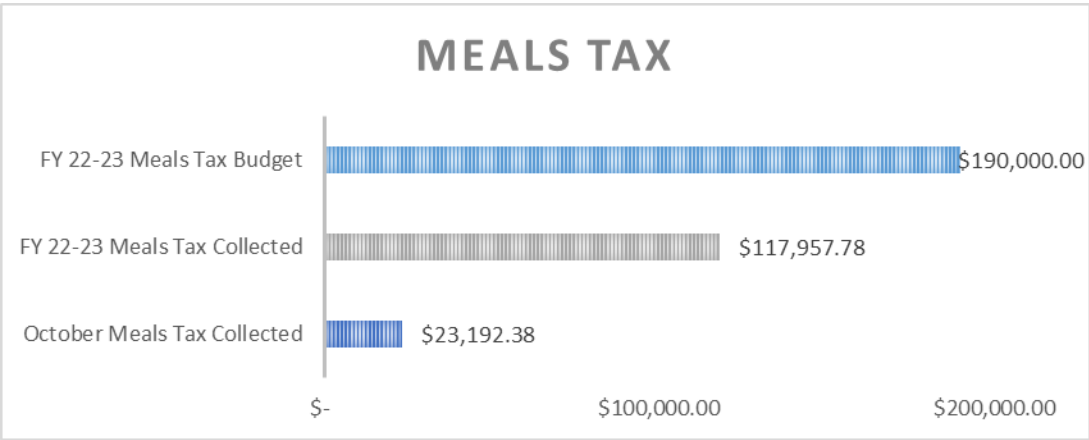
Town Treasurer, Elena Smith, submitted the following report for the previous month, which was presented by Mr. Blevins:

Real Estate & Personal Property Taxes: *The collection rate for 2022 Real Estate taxes is at 84.03% and the collection rate for 2022 Personal Property is at 72.17%. These numbers do not reflect payments not yet processed.*



Town of Damascus Virginia Investment Pool (VIP)	Account Balance	FYTD Income
VIP Stable NAV Liquidity Pool	\$927,935.80	\$6,089.97
Subaccounts		
RESERVE FUND	\$54,456.82	\$443.45
EARMARK POLICE VEHICLE	\$15,409.25	\$125.50
SEWER FUND CD	\$26,472.23	\$215.61
ANTHEM RECOVERY	\$44,243.18	\$360.27
ADDITIONAL WORKING CAPITAL	\$1,731.58	\$14.14
TRAIL DAYS RESERVE	\$7,507.40	\$61.17
TOD ARPA 2021	\$778,115.34	\$4,869.83

Meals & Lodging Tax: We collected \$23,192.38 in Meals Tax and \$15,870.81 in Lodging Tax during November, reflecting sales for October.



Announcements:

Due to a coding error by Washington County which resulted in a number of County residents receiving Damascus tax bills, and the Postal Service misplacing half of the Damascus Real Estate tax bills resulting a second mailing and later due date, penalties and interest shall not be added until all payments received can be processed.

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

Mr. Greer reported the Public Works department has been picking up leaves and brush and putting up holiday lights and light post banners throughout Town. There are a couple of street lights out in the park, and we will need to check with AEP to see if they will service them because our bucket truck will not reach. Also, we have an estimate of \$5,175 from Adams Tree Service to remove 14 dead trees from the Town Park (that price does not include clean-up).

Ms. Coleman suggested asking the churches if they would like to bring in a log splitter and offer free firewood to people who need it, which would help people in the area and help with the clean-up.

Mayor Lamb stated that some members of the Veterans Memorial Committee are present and will also speak about the dead trees in the park.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the tree removal estimate, as presented. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Parks and Recreation:

Ms. Coleman reported that A Trail Town Christmas is off to a good start, with the parade, tree lighting ceremony, Christmas tree sales, and the holiday lights contest.

The winners of the Holiday Lights Decorating Contest are:

Best in Show – 131 E. Creepers Way

Best in Show, Business – Wicked Chicken Winghouse & Tavern

Most Lights – The Dragonfly Inn

Honorable Mention – 456 Ena St.

Mayor Lamb commented that this year's Christmas parade was the best Damascus has had, and that we need to look at the schedule closer next year because having the parade on the Friday before a Council meeting puts a lot on the Clerk.

Ms. Coleman added that next year we need to really emphasize to the participants not to throw candy from vehicles and floats.

Planning Commission:

Mr. Blevins reported the Commission will meet next week and discuss recommendations for the seat vacancy on the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) for the term that expired July 31st, which was previously held by Larry Ginn.

Police and Fire Advisory:

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

Operations:

November 2022, Damascus Officers had 99 calls for service. We have taken 6 investigative reports and made 4 arrests. We work 3 reportable accidents.

Arrest are as follows: 1 Larceny, 1 Intoxicated in Public and 2 Warrant services.

Traffic Enforcement Activities:

We issued 10 citations along with 16 warnings.

Speeding complaint areas include:

Laurel Ave. I am working on getting the hardware to mount two more of the speed signs brackets onto some post on or near Laurel Ave. so we can place them and get traffic count and speed measurements on Laurel Ave.

Special Report:

I would like to request that we look at purchasing Body Cameras for each officer. I have attached a copy of the quote to this report. The quote covers a 5-year plan and has a no question replacement warranty and every 2 years we will get the newest updated system that Axon offers. January 2023 there is going to be a 5-10% increase in the pricing, the hardware will go up 10% and the software will be going up 5%. The quote shows a total of \$21,288.80 that has taxes attached to it, the final price will not have the taxes on it, I will be sending them the tax-exempt form so they will take that off the final price. The total price will be \$20,706.00. If we purchase these once I place the order it will take roughly 60 days to receive the product and there is a 13 week wait time for the scheduling of the setup, due to being backed up with the installation people.

Special Notes:

Officer Price has completed his week of emergency driving in Morristown and will be graduating December 15, 2022, from the academy. On December 16 Officer Price will be taking his State Board test and then on December 18, 2022, he will begin his FTO training that will consist of 120-140 hours. Officer Price will be with Officer Russell for these hours of training.

Det. Wagner ballistic vest expires at the end of December and we will need to order that for him and the cost for the vest will be around \$775.00.

Police Vehicles: I will need to get a set of tires for Officer Price's vehicle soon after he completes the academy and begins his patrol training.

Auxiliary: We have started and have gotten several hours of training in with our new Auxiliary Officers, we should have them complete with their training in the next couple of months.

Mayor Lamb asked where the money would come from in the budget to pay for the body cameras.

Mr. Blevins responded that since this will be mandated in the future, it seems fitting to use the Town's ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) grant funds to pay for them.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to purchase the Police Department body cameras, as requested. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Chief Turner had also submitted the following request:

December 5, 2022

To: Town of Damascus Mayor & Council

Reference: Internal Promotion

I would like to ask for the opportunity to start the promotion process for one of our current officers to be promoted to Lieutenant, this position will be to assist myself with day-to-day operations and to assist with some administrative operations. I would like to have a 3 person panel to consist of one Council Member (Tommy Hayes), either current or retired law enforcement officers and the director of Emergency Management of Washington County, Va.

Mr. Blevins added that the promotion will include a \$0.75 - \$1/hour raise.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to authorize Chief Turner to set up a panel for interviewing and consideration of the Officers eligible for the promotion process, as requested. Mr. Hayes 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

Mayor Lamb presented the following report for the previous month's activities, which was submitted by Chief Turner :

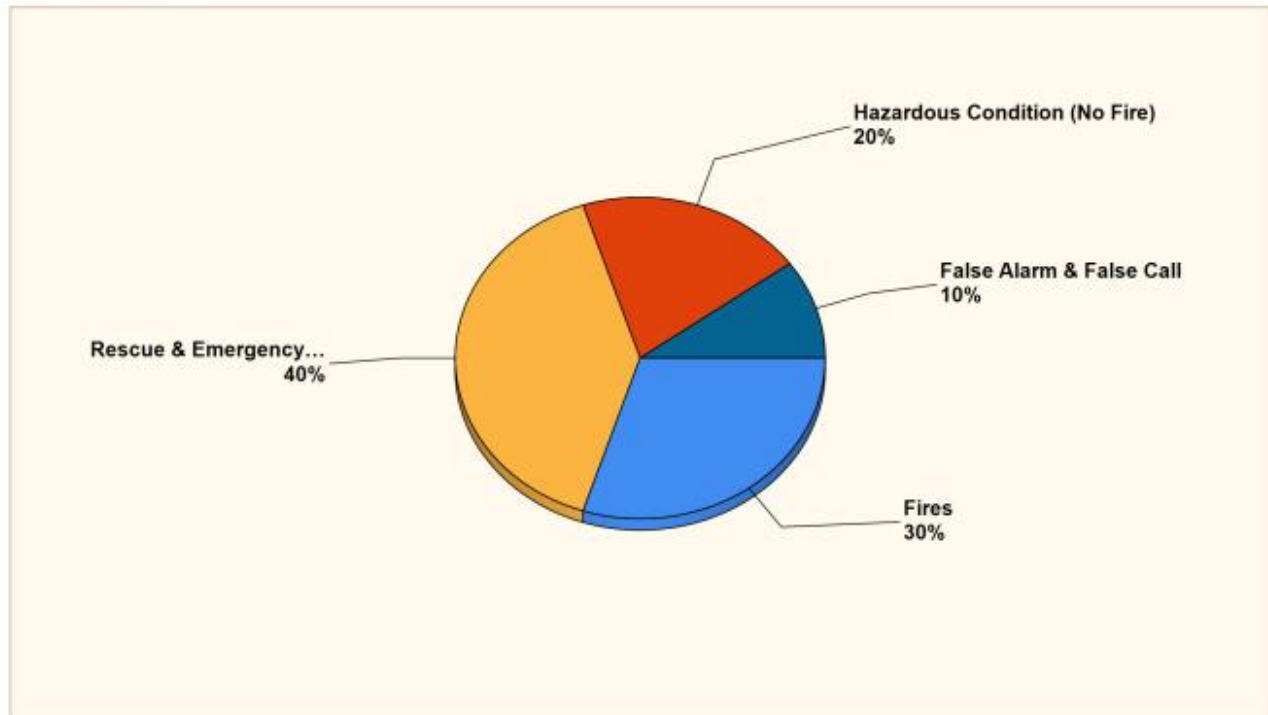
Damascus Fire Department

Damascus, VA

This report was generated on 12/2/2022 9:59:49 AM

Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 11/01/2022 | End Date: 11/30/2022

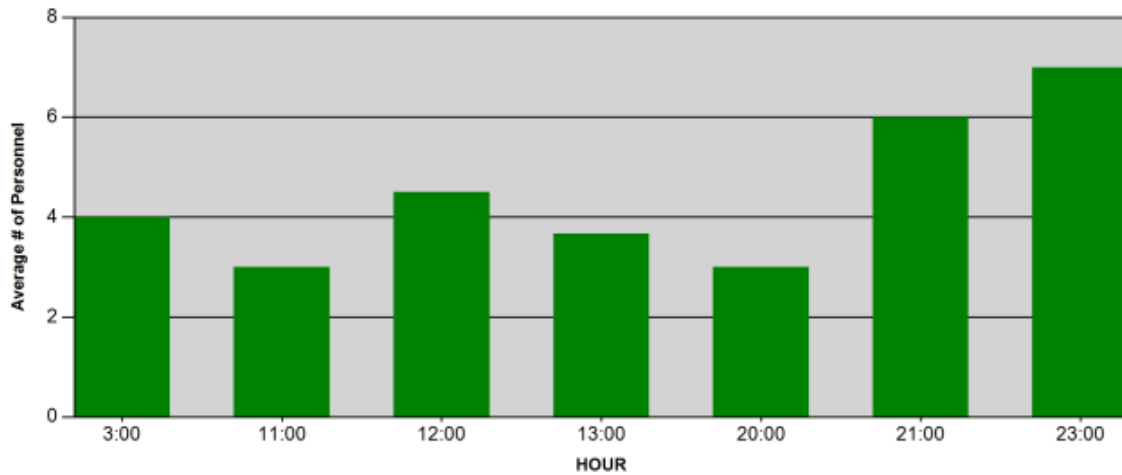


MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	3	30%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	4	40%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	2	20%
False Alarm & False Call	1	10%
TOTAL	10	100%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
100 - Fire, other	1	10%
121 - Fire in mobile home used as fixed residence	1	10%
131 - Passenger vehicle fire	1	10%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	3	30%
324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	1	10%
444 - Power line down	2	20%
743 - Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional	1	10%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	10	100%

Average Number of Responding Personnel per Hour for Date Range

Start Date: 11/01/2022 | End Date: 11/30/2022



Hour	Avg. # Personnel
03:00 - 03:59	4.00
11:00 - 11:59	3.00
12:00 - 12:59	4.50
13:00 - 13:59	3.67
20:00 - 20:59	3.00
21:00 - 21:59	6.00
23:00 - 23:59	7.00

Incident Statistics

Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 11/01/2022 | End Date: 11/30/2022

INCIDENT COUNT			
INCIDENT TYPE		# INCIDENTS	
EMS		4	
FIRE		6	
TOTAL		10	
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		2	
OVERLAPPING CALLS			
# OVERLAPPING		% OVERLAPPING	
0		0	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:16:03	0:14:46	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:14:28	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME (Dispatch to Enroute)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:04:58	0:08:53	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:07:00	
AGENCY		AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE (MM:SS)	
Damascus Fire Department		69:51	

Response Percentage per Station per Personnel for Incident Types for Personnel

Personnel: All Personnel | Incident Type(s): All Incident Types | Start Date: 11/01/2022 | End Date: 11/30/2022

Personnel	Calls Attended	% of Calls for Selected Incident Types
Station: Station 1400		
Campbell, Dalton	2	20.0%
Hurd, Emilee	1	10.0%
Johnson, Michael	8	80.0%
Jones, Andrew	2	20.0%
Jones, Dave	3	30.0%
Justice, Jason	5	50.0%
Minton, Jared	1	10.0%
Mullins, Troy	4	40.0%
Phipps, Michael	4	40.0%
Turner, Kermit	7	70.0%
Turner, Walter B	9	90.0%
Widener, Alex	5	50.0%
Total Incidents for Station Station 1400	10	

Total Incidents for all Stations 10

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

Start Date: 11/01/2022 | End Date: 11/30/2022

PERSONNEL	TIME SPENT ON INCIDENTS (Hours:Minutes Dispatched to Cleared Scene)
Campbell, Dalton	2:50
Johnson, Michael	10:44
Jones, Andrew	0:23
Jones, Dave	3:07
Justice, Jason	9:48
Minton, Jared	0:23
Mullins, Troy	6:33
Phipps, Michael	3:02
Turner, Kermit	9:48
Turner, Walter B	15:38
Widener, Alex	7:32
Total:	69:49

Special Committees

1. The Veterans Memorial Committee of Damascus spoke about the dead Ash trees in Town Park, and said they really appreciate the Town moving forward with having those removed. The property adjacent to the memorial park, over to the river, is maintained by the committee and they would like that area to also be incorporated into the scope of their memorial park. Also, the Town ceased financial contributions to the Veterans Memorial after 2011, and they would like to get on the list for the next fiscal year's budget request considerations.

Tom Foltz reported that the Christmas Tree Market has only sold about 1/3 (17) of the trees at this point, so they will extend the sales timeframe an additional week. Also, he thanked

the following for their help with the market: Tommy Foltz, Richard Smith, Robbie Kemmerlin, Brian Schmidt, Shannon Barrett, the Boy Scouts, and the Public Works Dept.

Mayor Lamb thanked Mr. Foltz for all the work he has put into the market and tree lighting event, and added for future consideration that Jesse Kokotek suggested that if the tree market profits are to benefit the Fire Department, it would be a good idea to set up the tree sales area where it is visible from the main street beside the Fire Dept, and maybe have firefighters present when available, for better exposure and to promote people stopping by the Fire Dept.

Citizens Comments

1. Jesse Kokotek, 215 E. Laurel Ave., commented that public service is a thankless job that takes a lot of sacrifice and honor, and as a citizen he would like to thank Mitchel Greer and Tony Doss for their service as Council members. He also thanked the Farmer family (Veterans Memorial Committee) for their commitment and service, and offered to help in any way.

Manager's Report

Mr. Blevins submitted the following report for the previous month:

Downtown + Laurel Creek Park & Trail

- *We continue to work on the bathroom stall installations and are still waiting for the dry riverbed along N Shady Ave to be installed in coordination with Trail Center landscaping, along with relocation of post office drop box.*
- *Final furnishings for the Laurel Creek Park, including benches, trash cans, and bike racks, have been ordered – this includes bike racks for the trail.*

TRRC – Trail Center

- *Final plans for the rain garden are complete and the ATC has a contractor lined up to complete the site work, but they are still coordinating some final pieces before releasing that work construction.*
- *The garage doors are still pending delivery, estimated in the next 30 days based on most recent production schedule received, and the siding we special ordered is still pending delivery.*
- *The electricians have had delays but should finish hooking everything up soon.*
- *Drywall ceiling has been finished; it just needs to be painted.*

Scattered Site Housing Rehab Project

- *Demolition of two blighted structures completed, and contract signed for demolition of a third, just pending completion of survey work.*
- *Contracted signed for substantial reconstruction of two houses, waiting to be executed to start.*

Creeper Trail

- *We are still working on permits and bid documents prior to releases request for bids.
* For trestles 30 and 31.*
- *Caboose repairs are still underway, and the trail managers continue to meet regarding long term trail policies and maintenance needs.*

Miscellaneous

- *I'm still trying to coordinate engineering for Beaverdam Creek bank stabilization but working on the right scope and process to permit, design, and potentially complete in a phased approach that will be manageable for the town.*
- *Julie and I are coordinating with Washington County and the ATC to resurface the section of Beaverdam Creek trail through the Town Park, complete phase 3 of the trail from Backer Park to Beaverdam Creek Ballfield, and landscape the trail appropriately all the way through – this would complete the 20+ year vision for this trail.*
- *Julie and I have been working on the VTC Drive 2.0 grant expenditures, including new gateway signs along major corridors.*
- *Elena and I will be working on a budget revision coming up, and I'll be working on a Resolution for cooperation with VDOT related to overlapping jurisdictions.*
- *Julie has coordinated design and ordering for new banner sets around town and for the banners for Laurel Creek Park.*

Mr. Blevins stated that there has been discussion about adding more paid holiday time off for full-time employees, as an addition to their Christmas bonuses. Paid bonuses are taxed heavily, so instead of increasing the dollar amount more, he suggests additional holiday time in between/connecting their Christmas and New Year holidays (which would be Dec. 27, 28, 29 and 30 this year) as a good alternative. The Police will not be able to take the time off, but they could bank their additional time to be used over the next year.

- Ms. Coleman made a motion to approve four additional days of holiday pay for full-time employees, as suggested. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Also, the following Damascus Scattered Site Housing Rehabilitation invoices are to be paid and reimbursed by the grant:

- Day 3 Construction, Clearance and Demolition, 649 Damascus Dr., \$14,500
- Day 3 Construction, Clearance and Demolition, 306 Damascus Dr., \$11,250
- Anna F. Meade, Inspections and Construction Management, \$12,700

d. MRPDC, Administration: Contract Execution, \$3,827.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve payment of the grant project expenses, as requested. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Legal Matters

At the appropriate time, motion to Recess into Closed Session for Discussion and Consideration of Parks & Rec. Department Personnel Matters, per VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1).

Old Business

Mayor Lamb thanked and congratulated Hayden Miller, who did the storm drain inlet markers in Town as an Eagle Scout project, stating there are sixteen throughout Town and they are wonderful.

Mr. Miller was present and provided a location summary of the markers.

New Business

- DMV Dog & Cat Sterilization Fund, Acceptance/Assignment of Funds – Mayor Lamb presented the following letter:

Mayor
Town of Damascus
208 W Laurel Ave
P.O. Box 576
Damascus, VA 24236

Dear Mayor:

The Department of Motor Vehicles sells the Animal Friendly license plate, which is authorized by Virginia Code, §46.2-749.2:7, as part of its special license plate program. This plate is issued to supporters of dog and cat sterilization programs at a cost of \$25.00 per year in addition to the prescribed fee for vehicle registration. After the first 1,000 sets of plates are sold, \$15.00 of each fee is made available to the locality in which the vehicle is registered, to be used to support sterilization programs for dogs and cats. This money is set aside in a special fund titled the Dog and Cat Sterilization Fund for distribution to localities, regardless of the amount of funds involved. For Fiscal Year 2022, DMV's records indicate that your locality is due \$30.00 from this Fund.

Virginia Code §46.2-749.2:7 requires each locality to certify that this money will be used to support sterilization of dogs and cats. If your locality does not have a program for this purpose, the statute provides the locality options. You may make the funds available to any private, nonprofit sterilization program for dogs and cats in your locality or decline receipt of funds. Any funds that are declined shall be distributed to other affected localities on a pro rata basis.

Attached to this letter is a form to make your choice pertaining to the amount stated above. Complete the form and return it no later than December 09, 2022, to:

- (after discussion) Mr. Jackson made a motion to allocate the funds to VCA Highlands Animal Hospital. Mr. Greer 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Consent Agenda

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

Mayor & Council Members Reports

Mayor Lamb thanked Mr. Greer for his sixteen years of service on the Town Council and said that he will be missed. She also thanked Mr. Doss for his service and stated that he will be missed as well. Lastly Mayor Lamb thanked the Veterans Memorial Committee members, stating that they do a lot that is close to her heart.

Mr. Greer stated that since this is his last Council meeting, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve on the Town Council. He advised the Council to take care of the staff because they do all the work to run the Town. He also wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and congratulated the local election winners.

Mr. Jackson wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Ms. Coleman reported that a group of Holston High School students will be having a workday in Town on the 16th, and that there are a few projects lined up over at the Trail Center as well as the Dog Park.

Mr. Doss reiterated what Mr. Greer said.

Mr. Fields thanked Mr. Greer and Mr. Doss for their service.

Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

December 16th – Caroling with the Holston High School Choir (downtown)

December 16th – Trail Town Twirl, Contra Dance at the Rock School Auditorium

December 23rd and 26th – Town Hall CLOSED in Observance of Christmas (with additional days 27, 28, 29, and 30th off, as approved earlier)

January 2nd - Town Hall CLOSED in Observance of New Year's Day

- * *For upcoming events, go to our website visitdamascus.org and check out the **Events Calendar**. For citizen info go to damascus.org, and don't forget our social media presence on **Facebook** and **Instagram**!*

- Mr. Greer made a motion to Recess into Closed Session for items previously identified under Legal Matters. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

- Mr. Fields made a motion to return to Open Session, 2nd by Mr. Jackson. The motion passed (6-0).

- We Certify that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such matters identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting.
 - Mitchel Greer - Yea
 - Tom Hayes – Yea
 - Beaty Jackson - Yea
 - Charles Fields - Yea
 - Tony Doss - Yea
 - Susan Coleman - Yea

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

Katie Lamb, Mayor

Tuesday Pope, Clerk