

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Town Council of the Town of Damascus, Virginia, that Chapter 34 – Motor Vehicles and Traffic – be amended to add Article III. – Golf Carts, Sections 34-64 through 34-100. Added language is include below in italics and underline.

ARTICLE III. – GOLF CARTS

Sec. 34-64. Authority to Regulate

Pursuant to Code of Virginia, § 46.2-916.3, (1950) as amended, the Town of Damascus is authorized, by ordinance, to impose limitations and restrictions on the operation of golf carts upon public highways within the town.

Sec. 34-65. Definitions

The following terms, wherever used herein, shall have the respective meanings assigned to them unless a different meaning clearly appears from the context:

- a) Golf cart means a self-propelled vehicle having at least four wheels, which is designed to transport persons playing golf and their equipment on a golf course.

Sec. 34-66. Insurance Required

Every golf cart and driver thereof shall be covered by an insurance policy. Such policy shall meet the minimum liability amounts contained in Code of Virginia, § 46.2-472, as amended, and provide coverage during the operation of the golf cart upon public highways.

Sec. 34-67. Town Inspection and Safety Equipment

Golf carts shall pass a safety inspection at least once yearly. Such safety inspection shall be conducted by an inspection station approved by the Town of Damascus. Such safety inspection shall only cover the following items:

- a) Headlights, taillights, brake lights and turn signals
- b) Rear reflectors meeting the visibility requirements of §46.2-1016 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended
- c) Tires
- d) Windshield wipers if equipped with a permanent windshield
- e) Horn, adequate steering gear, brakes, emergency or parking brake, one mirror, adequately fixed driver's seat
- f) All other factory installed safety or mechanical systems, including checking for gasoline or propane leaks
- g) Safety lap belts
- h) The golf cart shall be capable of maintaining a minimum speed of twelve (12) miles per hour on a dry, paved, level surface as verified during the town safety inspection
- i) Slow moving vehicle emblem in conformity with §46.2-1081 of the Code of Virginia (1950) as amended

Sec. 34-68. Operation on public highways.

It is unlawful to operate a golf cart on a public highway within the Town of Damascus unless the following requirements are met:

- a) Golf carts may be operated on the highways of the Town of Damascus that allow a maximum speed of twenty-five (25) mph.
- b) Golf carts must display a slow-moving vehicle emblem in conformity with Code of Virginia, § 46.2-916.3, as amended.
- c) No person may operate a golf cart unless that person is licensed to drive upon highways of the Commonwealth of Virginia and then, only in accordance with such driver's license.
- d) Golf carts must be operated in accordance with all applicable state and local laws and ordinances, including all laws, regulations and ordinances pertaining to the possession and use of alcoholic beverages.

- e) Only the number of people the golf cart is designed to seat may ride on a golf cart. Additionally, passengers shall not be carried on the part of a golf cart designed to carry golf bags.
- f) Golf carts must be operated to the extreme right of the roadway and must yield to all vehicular and pedestrian traffic when safely possible.
- g) Golf carts shall not be operated in bicycle lanes or on sidewalks.
- h) Golf carts shall not be operated during inclement weather, nor when visibility is impaired by weather, smoke, fog, or other conditions.
- i) Golf carts may not cross over the highways of the Town of Damascus that allow a speed of more than twenty-five (25) mph.
- j) The Chief of Police, or his designee, may prohibit the operation of golf carts on any highway if the Chief determines that such prohibition is necessary in the interest of public safety.

Sec. 34-69. Local vehicle license.

No golf cart shall be used on the public highways unless it has obtained a Town of Damascus vehicle license. No vehicle license shall be issued until the owner of the golf cart presents evidence that the golf cart is insured in accordance with the requirements of section 34-66. The golf cart license shall be issued by the town treasurer. The fee for such license shall be \$50.00 per year.

Sec. 34-70. Golf cart zones.

Golf carts are permitted on the public highways in all areas within the town having a speed limit of twenty-five (25) miles per hour or less.

Golf carts are prohibited from operating on trails, sidewalks, parks, and non-road public areas.

Golf carts are prohibited from operating on the Virginia Creeper Trail, including but not limited to Trestle 16 & Trestle 17 under 36 Code of Federal Regulations § 261.55 (Prohibitions on National Forest System trails).

Sec. 34-71. Liability disclaimer.

This article is adopted to address the interest of public safety. Golf carts are not designed or manufactured to be used on the public streets and the Town of Damascus in no way advocates or endorses their operation on public streets or roads. The Town of Damascus has no liability under any theory of liability and the town assumes no liability for permitting golf carts to be operated on public streets and roads under special legislation granted by the Virginia General Assembly. The Town of Damascus, by regulating such operation is merely trying to address obvious safety issues and adoption of this article is not to be relied upon as a determination that operation on public streets is safe or advisable if done in accordance with this article. All persons who operate or ride upon golf carts upon public streets or roads do so at their own risk and peril, and must be observant of, and attentive to, the safety of themselves and others, including their passengers, other motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. Any person who operates a golf cart is responsible for procuring liability insurance sufficient to cover the risk involved in using a golf cart on the public streets and roads.

Sec. 34-72. Penalties for violation.

A violation of any provision of this article shall be punishable as follows:

- a) The first violation shall be deemed a civil matter and shall be punishable by a fine of not more than \$150.00.
- b) The second violation within a 12-month period shall be punishable as a class 2 misdemeanor.
- c) The third or subsequent violation within a 12-month period shall be punishable as a class 1 misdemeanor.

Sec. 34-73—100. Reserved.

- i. Planning Commission recommendation is to approve.

- ii. Mayor Lamb Opened the Floor for Public Comment. There were no comments to be heard. Mayor Lamb Closed the Public Hearing.
- iii. Town Council Discussion and Possible Action
 - Mr. Buckley made a motion to accept the proposed Ordinance as written. Mr. Faust 2nd the motion, which passed (4-1, with Mr. Fields opposed).

Committee Reports

Budget, Finance, and Administration:

Town Treasurer, Shawna Cook, submitted the following report for the previous month:

Real Estate & Personal Property Taxes: The collection rate for 2025 Real Estate is 91.87%, and 2025 Personal Property is 72.55%.

Meals & Lodging Tax: \$22,044.92 in Meals Taxes and \$4,262.26 in Lodging Taxes were collected for January 2026.

Account balances below are as of January 29, 2026:

<i>Town of Damascus Virginia</i>	<i>Account</i>		<i>Inception</i>
<i>Investment Pool (VIP)</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>FYTD Income</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>RESERVE FUND</i>	<i>\$63,774.46</i>	<i>\$1,535.13</i>	<i>08/11/2017</i>
<i>EARMARK POLICE VEHICLE</i>	<i>\$540.18</i>	<i>\$12.82</i>	<i>04/04/2018</i>
<i>SEWER FUND CD</i>	<i>\$31,001.65</i>	<i>\$746.25</i>	<i>11/26/2018</i>
<i>ANTHEM RECOVERY</i>	<i>\$51,813.45</i>	<i>\$1,247.27</i>	<i>12/21/2018</i>
<i>ADDITIONAL WORKING CAPITAL</i>	<i>\$625,417.15</i>	<i>\$11,427.72</i>	<i>08/08/2019</i>
<i>TRAIL DAYS RESERVE</i>	<i>\$8,791.95</i>	<i>\$211.61</i>	<i>05/14/2020</i>
<i>TOD ARPA 2021</i>	<i>\$192,725.21</i>	<i>\$5,665.20</i>	<i>06/29/2021</i>
<i>Damascus Endowment Fund</i>	<i>\$217,720.52</i>	<i>\$5,287.63</i>	<i>11/7/2024</i>
<i>FLOOD DISASTER RESERVE</i>	<i>\$15,410.80</i>	<i>\$370.97</i>	<i>06/06/25</i>
<i>VIP Stable NAV Liquidity Pool</i>	<i>\$1,207,195.37</i>	<i>\$26,504.60</i>	

The balances shown below are from online banking:

Bank of Damascus:

General Fund: \$156,376.82

CDBG ARC Downtown: \$478.70

CDBG Program Income: \$13,548.82

ARPA: \$76.00

Damascus Endowment Fund: \$8,348.48

Police Asset Forfeiture: \$3,461.42

Total: \$182,290.24

Announcements:

- *Past due notices for 2025 Real Estate and Personal Property taxes went out in the mail January 27, 2026. Taxpayers with questions are encouraged to contact the Treasurer.*
- *An entity who is considered exempt has paid Town business license fees and should be refunded. I am requesting a Council vote to approve the refund in the amount of \$90.*
- Mr. Buckley made a motion to approve the refund in the amount of \$90, as requested. Mr. Fields 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

I would like to suggest scheduling for Budget Workshops on either Tuesdays or Thursdays at 3:30 P.M. every other week beginning the week of February 23, 2026.

- Mr. Buckley made a motion to hold budget workshops every other Tuesday at 3:30pm, beginning the week of Feb. 23rd and continuing as needed. Mr. Faust 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

Mr. Creech reported that Public Works has been busy with the following projects, along with their brush, leaves, and trash pick-ups: clean overgrowth and brush at Tent City areas and fencing; install yellow bollards and new chain and signage at the IDA property entrance; paint pool storage shed, trash cans and tables; add overhead light at the pool entrance hallway; dispose of trash from property clean-up on 2nd St; install exhaust fans in the Town Hall bathrooms; remove hazardous tree at Town Park; remove old signage from playground and level a round picnic table; add sealant to kiosk; replace American Flags at Town Hall, Town Park, and maintenance shop; install new speed limit signs at the Town limits; remove ash borer invasive species signs; plow snow and salt roads; and check on winterized buildings.

Parks and Recreation:

Mr. Faust said we have a full year of exciting events and opportunities coming up, which he is looking forward to.

Mr. Bell presented an updated park facility reservation form, which is simplified, much easier to understand, and waiving the security deposit that was previously required.

- Mr. Faust made a motion to approve the new park facility reservation form, as presented. Mr. Fields 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Mr. Bell also made the Council aware of a new form he created, which is a street banner permit application. The basic info for this was previously included in the very long and complicated park facility reservation info.

Planning Commission:

Mr. Bell reported the Planning Commission met last month and have had discussions regarding zoning requirements, specifically minimal plot sizes and setbacks, as well as potentially adding a Planned Unit District (PUD) to our zoning requirements, The next meeting will be on Feb. 10th at 6pm, at which time they will hopefully generate some recommendations for the Council.

Police and Fire Advisory:

Chief Turner presented the following reports for the previous month:

Operations:

January 2026, Damascus Officers had 81 calls for service. We have taken 4 investigative reports and made 3 arrests. We had 0 reportable accidents.

Arrests are as follows: Warrant Service 2, Shoplift 1, and Fondling 1 (investigation, not arrest).

Traffic Enforcement Activities: We issued 20 citations along with 18 warnings. The Speeding violations were 25 MPH Zone 15, Passing on Double Yellow Lines 1, Expired Registration 1, No License 1, Expired State Inspection 1, and Petit Larceny 1.

Speeding complaint areas include: Laurel Ave.

Special Report: Working on a Mutual Aid Agreement with the USFS.

Special Notes: K9 Marco was called for 2 times in January; out of those 2 call outs we received 1 positive alert on a vehicle. There was nothing located in the vehicle, and the driver had warrants on him at the time of the stop.

Police Vehicles: Nothing new currently.

Auxiliary: Nothing new currently.

Arrest Race/Sex Totals by Offense

Damascus Police Department

(01/01/2026 - 01/31/2026)

Primary Offense:	White Male:	Black Male:	Indian Male:	Asian/ Pac. Isl. Male:	White Female:	Black Female:	Indian Female:	Asian/ Pac. Isl. Female:	Juven.:	Adult:	Resd.:	NonRes.:	Arrests:
23C - Shoplifting	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Totals:	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1

Citation Totals by Charge

Damascus Police Department

(01/01/2026 - 01/31/2026)

Charge:	Number of Charges:
18.2-103 - Petit Larceny	1
46.2-1158 - EXPIRED STATE STATE INSPECTION	1
46.2-300 - NO DRIVERS LICENSE	1
46.2-646 - EXPIRED REGISTRATION	1
46.2-804 - PASS ON DOUBLE LINES	1
46.2-874 - SPEEDING 25 MPH ZONE	15
Total:	20

Incident Case Status Totals by Offense

Damascus Police Department

(01/01/2026 - 01/31/2026)

Offense:	Active:	Active TOT O/A:	Inactive:	Inactive WOF:	Closed Service:	Closed Except.:	Closed Arrest:	Adult Arrest:	Juvenile Arrest:	Adu./Juv. Arrest:	Unfld.:	Rptd.:	Actual:
11D - Fondling	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
23C - Shoplifting	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
90Z - All Other Offenses	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	2
Totals:	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	4	4

Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

January 2026 calls are as follows:

Lift Assist/Assist EMS: 4

MVA With Injuries: 1

MVA No Injuries: 3

House Fire: 1

Brush Fire: 1

Fire Alarm: 1

Carbon Monoxide Alarm: 1

Total calls: 12

We conducted training with Kiewit Construction Company in the area of Creek Junction. We had Damascus VFD, Abingdon FD and Bristol Task Force 4 come to assist with the training. It was successful training, and after the training we spoke with Kiewit and with the equipment that we need to conduct a rescue, they agreed to pay for the equipment. That equipment has been ordered and paid for, and we should be getting it in soon.

Code Enforcement:

Mayor Lamb presented the following activity report for the previous month from the Town's Code Enforcement Officer, Marty Berry:

Visits and Contacts: 4

Zoning: 4

Business License: 2

Lodging: 0

Meals: 1

Complaints and Investigations: 1

Assist P.D.: 0

Special Committees

- Community Events & Economic Engagement Coordinator – K.T. Martin presented the following:

I'm excited to give you a brief look at how our events and economic efforts are bringing energy and opportunity to Damascus.

We are full steam ahead in preparation season, the essential behind-the-scenes work that makes our work successful. This includes securing sponsorships, building partnerships, coordinating logistics and operations, marketing & promotion, and managing registration & communication. This behind-the-scenes work is where momentum is built.

- Local Business Updates:

***Damascus Business Community Thrive Grant**

We are one month in with Damascus Business Community Thrive grant recipients, and early results are strong:

- *There's been a noticeable growth in social media presence and engagement along with 2 new businesses starting their social media accounts & hundreds of followers & interactions within days.*
- *Increasing regional attention on Damascus as a destination, as local businesses highlight the unique assets of our town.*
- *A clear shift toward collaboration with other businesses and town-led events*
This grant is already helping amplify Damascus' visibility well beyond our borders.

***New & Expanding Businesses**

Next, I'd like to highlight several new and expanding businesses that are bringing fresh energy and investment into Damascus.

- *Along for the Ride Cabooses – Preparing for a grand opening in early April*
- *Damascus Fitness – New gym and yoga studio targeting a spring opening*
- *Cardinal Music Hall – First performance scheduled for Thursday, March 12, featuring Tyler Nail*

- **Trail Town Adventure Golf** – Currently installing a professional golf simulator
- **Laurel Family Drug** – Planning a full store facelift

These developments point to continued investment, confidence, & diversification within our downtown.

Also, I encourage everyone to take time to visit and thank our local businesses and restaurants for sustaining our town through the winter months. Many have done so quietly and faithfully. Even small acts like stopping in to check on a business or sharing their posts on social media have a meaningful impact.

- Town Events Update:

***Trout Days | April 10–12**

Preparation for Trout Days, April 10-12, is moving forward with strong momentum. A new and exciting addition this year is a Saturday festival component, designed to deepen community involvement & visitor engagement.

Saturday Festival Highlights (Noon–4 PM | Speckled Trout Annex Lot):

- Sponsor and vendor showcases
 - Educational components
 - Self-led, family-friendly games
 - A scavenger hunt connecting participating businesses throughout town
- The day will flow into an evening celebration and raffle at Appalachian Heritage Distillery & Brewery, creating a full-day experience that connects businesses, visitors, & residents in new ways. This format allows Trout Days to feel less like a single activity and more like a town-wide experience.*

***Virginia Highlands Festival – Day in Damascus**

Last month, we announced a major opportunity: the Virginia Highlands Festival, now in its 77th year, is dedicating an entire day to Damascus.

Over the past four weeks, we have worked closely with:

- Local businesses
- Holston High School
- Artisans and makers
- Farms
- Community organizations

Together, we have developed 40+ unique experiences, all taking place on one day: Thursday, July 30th.

This day will introduce visitors to every corner of Damascus through experiences such as:

- A self-guided scavenger hunt and barn quilt trail with Fig Tree Flower Farm
- A geology bus tour led by Holston High School's science department
- Hands-on weaving with a local artisan
- An Industrial Revolution history walking tour

- *An optimal performance workshop for outdoor recreation with Trail Town Chiropractic*
 - *Farm and flower-field tours at Big Jake's Garden*
 - *A trail run and hike with an after-party hosted by Run Damascus and Damascus Fitness*
 - *Trail care and wellness insights from our local pharmacist*
 - *A Bites & Brews Tour featuring our restaurants and breweries*
- There's definitely going to be something for everyone.*

In closing, collaboration has been the defining theme of the past month. Businesses, schools, nonprofits, & event partners are working together in meaningful ways, creating shared impact across town. Thank you for your continued excitement & support of Damascus.

- **Damascus Health Center Commission:** The Commission had one member vacate their seat early (S. Albro, term ending 12/31/2029) and has recommended that Dave Buckley fill the seat for the remainder of the term.
- Mr. Campbell made a motion to appoint Dave Buckley to the Damascus Health Center Commission, as recommended. Mr. Fields 2nd the motion, which passed (4-0-1, with Mr. Buckley abstaining).

Citizens Comments

Nothing at this time.

Manager's Report

Chris Bell presented the following Manager's Report for the previous month:

Creepers Trail

- *Demolition of Trestles 16 & 17 scheduled to begin mid-February*
- *Coordination of temporary bike detour with VDOT in progress*
- *Zoning permit & floodplain submittals for Trestle 16 & 17 design this month*
- *Finalizing Mutual Aid agreement with USFS & Washington County*

Town Hall

- *Addition of "Town of Damascus" lettering on council chamber wall*
- *Seeking state disaster relief funding for backup generator thru MRPDC*

Emergency Preparedness

- *Meeting with Washington County this month to discuss emergency and warming shelters*
- *Mock emergency rescue simulation in coordination with Kiewit completed at Creek Junction*
- *20 tons of road de-icing salt from Morton was delivered prior to ice storm*

FEMA/VDEM

- Awaiting approval from FEMA on Greenspace Land Acquisition Program for 205 N. Railroad
- Town awaiting further reimbursement for Helene repair projects

Grants

- Washington County Board of Supervisors awarded the Laurel Gateway Feasibility study contract on 1/28/26 to RKG Associates for \$51,900 (for the former IDA property).
- SEAP submitting EDA grant application this month for Recovery Coordinator funding
- Letter of Support provided to SORBA Tr-Cities for Impact grant application for Beartree Gateway Trail System (mountain bike trail expansion)
- Awaiting decision on Bass Pro & Cabela's Outdoor Fund Local Impact Grant for Trout Days support
- Applying for Virginia Tourism Grant this month

Miscellaneous

- Scattered Site Rehab Phase II – 4 property applications approved at board meeting. 2 blight removals and 2 substantial rehabilitations.
- Bayer Property – Attorneys progressing on sales agreement and application submission for the DEQ VRP program.
- Stormwater Study – Met with DEQ to review preliminary plans and discuss specific requirements for final design and permitting.
- Farmer's Market – Town was denied SNAP approval and appealing decision.
- Trademark– 6 to 9 month timeline for decision on request to trademark "Trail Town, USA" and "Appalachian Trail Days"
- Special Events & Music Festivals – Developing proposed language and additions to Code of Ordinances to provide better clarity and definition around special event and music festival regulations.

Legal Matters

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

Unfinished Business

Julie Kroll, Recreation Program Director, presented the following:

1. Creekside Park ITB award (FEMA funds)
 - Mr. Buckley made a motion to approve the ITB #2025-05 as presented. Mr. Creech 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
2. Creekside Park hydroseeding expense (FEMA funds)

- Mr. Faust made a motion to approve the hydroseeding expense as presented. Mr. Fields 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
3. Urban and Community Forestry - tree planting project update
- Mr. Buckley made a motion to authorize the plantings at the proposed sites. Mr. Faust 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
4. VDOF grant expense plan – Council action needed
- Mr. Buckley made a motion to approve the expense plan as presented. Mr. Faust 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

New Business

Nothing at this time.

Consent Agenda

- Mr. Fields made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$2,500, 2nd by Mr. Faust. The motion passed (5-0).
- Mr. Faust 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. Campbell 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Mayor & Council Members Reports

Mayor Lamb expressed her appreciation for the Town staff, Planning Commission members, and Kiewit Corp.

Mr. Buckley mentioned the Town should look into a teleworking policy for employees during inclement weather, etc.

Mr. Creech spoke to a Washington County Service Authority employee, who reported a lot of frozen pipes and leaks for homeowners recently.

Mr. Faust expressed his appreciation for the Town employees, and said Thank God for warmer weather!

Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Town Hall will be CLOSED on the following days in February:

February 16th – George Washington Day

- For information on upcoming events, go to our website visitdamascus.org. For citizen info go to damascus.org, and don't forget our social media presence on **Facebook** and **Instagram**!
- Mr. Faust made a motion to Recess into Closed Session for Discussion and Consideration of Parks & Recreation and Public Works Personnel Matters, per VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1). Mr. Fields 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Mr. Faust made a motion to return to Open Session, 2nd by Mr. Buckley. The motion passed (5-0).
- *CERTIFY (individually): 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.*
 - Buddy Albro – Absent
 - Jeff Buckley– Yea
 - Sammy Campbell – Yea
 - Derwin Creech - Yea
 - Hunter Faust – Yea
 - Charlie Fields - Yea
- Mr. Campbell made a motion to hire Amanda Puckett as the pool manager at \$16.50/hour, and Kristen Green as the assistant manager at \$14/hour, for the 2026 season. Mr. Fields 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Mr. Faust made a motion to hire Donna Foltz as the Farmers Market Manager for the 2026 season, at a rate of \$3,000, with a \$400 stipend for signage. Mr. Buckley 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Mr. Creech made a motion to terminate Nick Span from the Public Works Dept. regarding an incident that occurred on 2/6/26. Mr. Fields 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- Mr. Campbell made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Mr. Faust. The motion passed (5-0). 7:47pm

Katie Lamb, Mayor

Tuesday Pope, Clerk