

DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes for April 1, 2024
7:00pm Regular Called Council Meeting

Council Members Present: Susan Coleman, Charles Fields, Tom Hayes, Beaty Jackson, Robert Kemmerlin, and Jack McCrady

Absent: None

Also Present: Katie Lamb, Mayor
Tuesday Pope, Town Clerk
Shawna Cook, Town Treasurer

Gavin Blevins, Town Manager
Kermit Turner, Police Chief

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 March 4, 2024, Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes as presented.

- Ms. Coleman made a motion to approve the Minutes, as presented. Mr. Fields 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Mayor Lamb asked for approval of the March 8, 2024, Special Called Council Meeting Minutes as presented.

- Mr. McCrady made a motion to approve the Minutes, as presented. Mr. Kemmerlin 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Mayor Lamb asked for approval of the agenda, with the addition of 1. Owens CPA and Associates to give the 2022-23 audit report after the agenda approval, and 2. Administration Personnel Matters to the Closed Session items.

- Mr. McCrady made a motion to approve the agenda, including the requested additions. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
- 2022-23 Fiscal Year Audit Report – Todd Owens, Owens CPA and Associates, reported the Town had a good clean audit, with no change and no findings.
- Virginia Creeper Trail Conservancy – Lisa Quigley, Executive Director, reported out on Creeper Trail projects and updates pertinent to Damascus.

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 2023 second half Real Estate is at 77.11% and 2023 Personal Property is at 70.90%.

Meals & Lodging Tax: \$11,957.56 in Meal Taxes and \$5,608.65 in Lodging Taxes were collected for March 2024.

Town of Damascus Virginia Investment Pool (VIP)	Account Balance	FYTD Income	Inception Date
RESERVE FUND	\$58,502.48	\$2,336.83	08/11/2017
EARMARK POLICE VEHICLE	\$496.45	\$628.20	04/04/2018
SEWER FUND CD	\$28,438.89	\$1,135.94	11/26/2018
ANTHEM RECOVERY	\$47,530.18	\$1,898.64	12/21/2018
ADDITIONAL WORKING CAPITAL	\$1,860.30	\$74.39	08/08/2019
TRAIL DAYS RESERVE	\$8,065.11	\$322.14	05/14/2020
TOD ARPA 2021	\$624,763.15	\$26,325.71	06/29/2021
VIP Stable NAV Liquidity Pool	\$769,656.56	\$32,721.85	

As of 3/28/24:

Bank	Balance
BANK OF DAMASCUS GENERAL FUND	391,841.98
BOM CDBG ARC DOWNTOWN	478.70
BOM CDBG PROGRAM INCOME	13,548.82
TRUIST GENERAL FUND	2,197.30
ARPA FUND CHECKING	100.00
	408,166.80

Announcements:

- *I am requesting review and approval of the new 2024 business license application with the changes as reviewed by Ms. Lucy Phillips, legal counsel.*
- Mr. Kemmerlin made a motion to accept the 2024 revised business license application form, as presented. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
- *As a reminder, the business license deadline was extended to May 31, 2024.*
- *After following up with Accufund and Mountaineer, I would like to let the Council know that there is a possibility that late notices regarding taxes, 2023 supplement bills and 2024 first*

half real estate bills may all end up going out in the mail close to the same time. There has been no hard timeline fully established at this point.

- 2024-25 Group Health Insurance Renewal (10% price increase)
 - Ms. Coleman made a motion to renew the Town's Anthem/The Local Choice/Key Advantage 500 employee health insurance coverage for 2024-25. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
- 3/5/24 Council Poll to purchase 1994 Suzuki truck, not to exceed \$8,000 – Approved (4-0). Purchased 3/8/24 for \$7,723.56.

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

Mr. McCrady reported that the department had been doing brush pick-up, and the dump truck is currently out of commission. Also, he has been in contact with VDOT about filling potholes.

Parks and Recreation:

Mr. Jackson reported that the pool opening process is coming up soon, as well as the Trail Days festival, and we are hoping for another huge event like last year.

Planning Commission:

Mr. Blevins stated that he is continuing to work on the Comprehensive Plan and hopes to have it ready for adoption by July.

Police and Fire Advisory:

Chief Turner presented the following report for the previous month:

***Operations:** March 2024, Damascus Officers had 95 calls for service. We have taken 10 investigative reports and made 6 arrests. We had no reportable accidents. Arrests are as follows: Assault 1, Intoxicated in Public 2, Drive on Revoked License 1 and Others 2.*

***Traffic Enforcement Activities:** We issued 29 citations along with 16 warnings. The Speeding violations were 25 mph zone 11, 35 mph zone 4, Reckless Driving by Speed 1, Elude Police 1, Expired Tags 6, Driving Suspended 3, and 1 revoked.*

***Speeding complaint areas include:** S Shady Ave & Laurel Ave.*

***Special Report:** Crosswalk Signs have been placed back out at or near the crosswalks.*

Special Notes:

Speed Signs, I have attached a quote for new batteries for the speed signs. The price of the batteries have been highlighted.

- Mr. Hayes made a motion to approve the purchase of two new batteries, as quoted at \$662 each, from Trafficalm. Mr. McCrady 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Police Vehicles: All equipment has been ordered and waiting on the delivery to get it outfitted and in service.

Auxiliary: Mr. Campbell has passed the background check and has been added to our system and will be ready to assist with Trail Days and any other event that we need his help with.

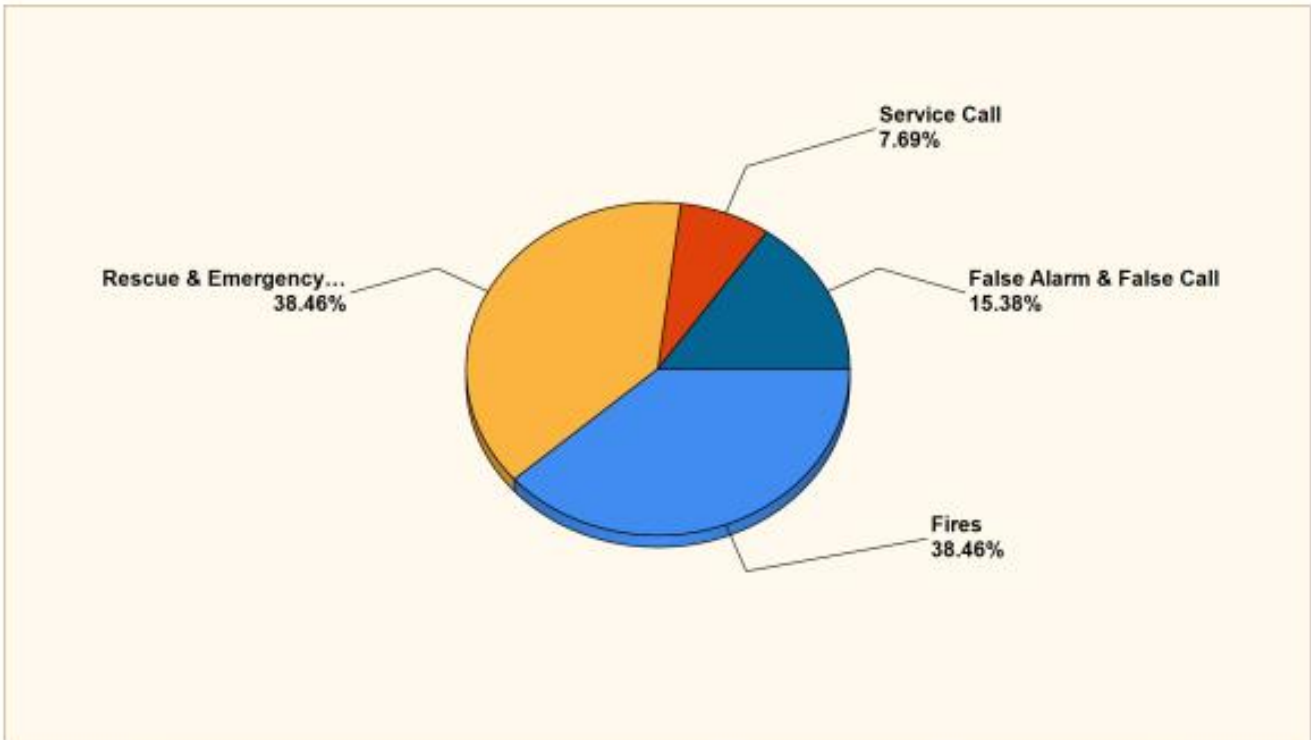
Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

Chief Turner presented the following report for the previous month's activities:

Damascus Fire Department

Damascus, VA
This report was generated on 4/1/2024 11:20:35 AM

Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range
Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 03/01/2024 | End Date: 03/31/2024

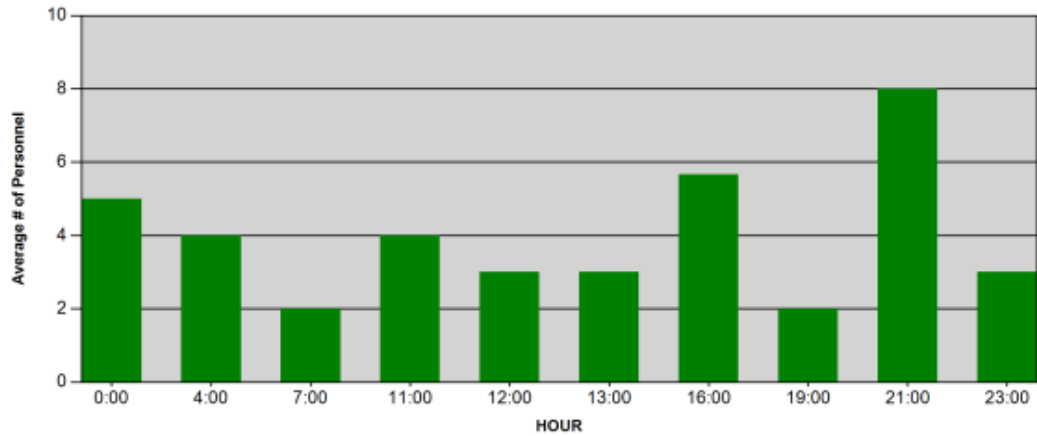


MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	5	38.46%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	5	38.46%
Service Call	1	7.69%
False Alarm & False Call	2	15.38%
TOTAL	13	100%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
118 - Trash or rubbish fire, contained	1	7.69%
121 - Fire in mobile home used as fixed residence	1	7.69%
141 - Forest, woods or wildland fire	1	7.69%
142 - Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire	1	7.69%
143 - Grass fire	1	7.69%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	2	15.38%
324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	3	23.08%
550 - Public service assistance, other	1	7.69%
730 - System malfunction, other	1	7.69%
735 - Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	1	7.69%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	13	100%

Average Number of Responding Personnel per Hour for Date Range

Start Date: 03/01/2024 | End Date: 03/31/2024



HOUR	AVG. # PERSONNEL
00:00 - 00:59	5.00
04:00 - 04:59	4.00
07:00 - 07:59	2.00
11:00 - 11:59	4.00
12:00 - 12:59	3.00
13:00 - 13:59	3.00
16:00 - 16:59	5.67
19:00 - 19:59	2.00
21:00 - 21:59	8.00
23:00 - 23:59	3.00

Incident Type and Street Name for Date Range

Incident Status: Reviewed | Start Date: 03/01/2024 | End Date: 03/31/2024

Incident Date	Address	Incident Type
03/01/2024	Konnarock RD, Damascus, VA 24236	Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.
03/02/2024	Jeb Stuart HWY, Abingdon, VA 24210	Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.
03/11/2024	Rush Creek RD, Glade Spring, VA 24340	Fire in mobile home used as fixed residence
03/12/2024	Jeb Stuart HWY, Damascus, VA 24236	Alarm system sounded due to malfunction
03/12/2024	Jeb Stuart HWY, Damascus, VA 24236	System malfunction, other
03/13/2024	Monroe RD, Damascus, VA 24236	Grass fire
03/17/2024	Creek Junction Rd, Damascus, VA 24236	Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.
03/21/2024	21308 Monroe Road RD, Damascus, VA 24236	Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire
03/22/2024	Highlands PKY, Whitetop, VA 24292	Forest, woods or wildland fire
03/29/2024	Alverado Road RD, Damascus, VA 24236	Medical assist, assist EMS crew
03/30/2024	Creeper TRL, Damascus, VA 24236	Medical assist, assist EMS crew
03/31/2024	Bethel RD, Abingdon, VA 24210	Trash or rubbish fire, contained
03/31/2024	Jeb Stuart HWY, Damascus, VA 24236	Public service assistance, other

Total Incidents: 13

Incident Statistics

Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 03/01/2024 | End Date: 03/31/2024

INCIDENT COUNT			
INCIDENT TYPE		# INCIDENTS	
EMS		5	
FIRE		8	
TOTAL		13	
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		1	
OVERLAPPING CALLS			
# OVERLAPPING		% OVERLAPPING	
2		15.38	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:14:08	0:19:18	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:15:01	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME (Dispatch to Enroute)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:04:33	0:07:11	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:05:57	
AGENCY	AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE (MM:SS)		
Damascus Fire Department	63:57		

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

Start Date: 03/01/2024 | End Date: 03/31/2024

PERSONNEL	TIME SPENT ON INCIDENTS (Hours:Minutes Dispatched to Cleared Scene)
Barr, Derek	2:57
Campbell, Candace	8:45
Doss, Brady	3:03
Hicks, Emilee	7:51
Hicks, Mindi	0:37
Hicks, Noah	7:51
Johnson, Michael	15:21
Jones, Dave	1:53
Justice, Jason	3:03
Norris, Ralph	2:55
Phipps, Jennifer	3:03
Richey, Jordan	8:10
Turner, Kermit	13:49
Turner, Walter B	6:56
Widener, Alex	8:45
Total:	95:00

Response Percentage per Station per Personnel for Incident Types for Personnel

Personnel: All Personnel | Incident Type(s): All Incident Types | Start Date: 03/01/2024 | End Date: 03/31/2024

Personnel	Calls Attended	% of Calls for Selected Incident Types
Station: Station 1400		
Barr, Derek	1	7.7%
Belcher, Emalee	2	15.4%
Campbell, Candace	8	61.5%
Doss, Brady	4	30.8%
Greer, Jesse	3	23.1%
Hicks, Emilee	4	30.8%
Hicks, Mindi	1	7.7%
Hicks, Noah	7	53.8%
Johnson, Michael	12	92.3%
Jones, Andrew	2	15.4%
Jones, Dave	4	30.8%
Justice, Jason	2	15.4%
Norris, Ralph	1	7.7%
Phipps, Jennifer	3	23.1%
Reedy, Tony Mitchell	1	7.7%
Richey, Jordan	7	53.8%
Turner, Kermit	8	61.5%
Turner, Walter B	6	46.2%
Widener, Alex	8	61.5%
Widener, Anthony	2	15.4%
Widener, Bailey	1	7.7%
Total Incidents for Station Station 1400	13	

Total Incidents for all Stations**13**

Special Committees

Nothing at this time.

Citizens Comments

Elizabeth McCartin, E. Laurel Ave., stated that AEP has been replacing burnt out street lights with excessively bright lights; the trestle lights are still out and need to be replaced; she would like the contents of the Council packets be made available for her to review before the meetings; the Town's beautification committee has ceased to exist again; and she would like an update on the tree replacement request she asked for a long time ago.

Manager's Report

Scattered Site Housing Rehab Project

- *Currently working on project closeout and application for Phase II. (Two Public Hearings are required, and the first one will be at the next Council Meeting.)*

Creeper Trail

- *Trestles 30 & 31: The bents are currently being inspected prior to final approval by USFS on the bid documents.*

DOF Urban & Community Forestry

- *We have submitted and have approval for reimbursement of initial tree removal work. We plan on bidding the majority of the tree removal to be completed at the beginning of FY25, including replanting in the Fall 2024.*

Miscellaneous

- *Camera Upgrade: I'm still working with a vendor to finalize the proposal for camera system upgrades Town-wide, integrating into our current network, and including electronic locks for public restrooms.*
- *VTC Drive 2.0 grant: The Town completed final submission to VTC by 03/15 for the \$20,000 to complete a market study. I'll be following up with Washington County and the IDA and to secure the additional matching funds.*
- *Laurel Creek Trail: I'm working on the drawings for VDOT to reconfigure the trail along Reynolds Street.*
- *LOVEwork: We are working on scoping a mural-type LOVEwork in accordance with VTC guidelines and utilizing \$1,500 in funding allocated from VTC for the purpose.*
- *Replacement of redbuds along North and South Shady Ave needs to be completed this Spring – we've received two quotes and request approval for replacement of 6 redbuds (~\$1,640). Due to digging out the existing trees, the cost is higher than for new plantings.*
- Ms. Coleman made a motion to approve the estimate from Planters & Designers, Bristol, at \$1,684. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Legal Matters

At the appropriate time, The Mayor and Council will Recess into Closed Session for Discussion and Consideration of Administration Personnel Matters, per VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1).

Old Business

Nothing at this time.

New Business

Nothing at this time.

Consent Agenda

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

Mayor & Council Members Reports

Mayor Lamb reminded folks to pick up after their dogs at the dog park. Also, many thanks to our wonderful Treasurer for getting us to where we are.

Mr. Jackson stated that people don't always clean up after their dogs along the Creeper Trail either, and maybe reminders need to be posted. Also, we've got Trail Days coming up, pool preparation, and general town upkeep, so volunteers are welcome!

Mr. Kemmerlin stated that he thinks the Council should reply to the Citizens Comments part of the meeting at the following meeting, or a specific time, instead of just not responding at all.

Mr. McCrady stated that there have been numerous complaints made about AEP's new lights being too bright and invasive, and he thinks the Town should write them a letter or Resolution about it; the Roy Wright monument needs to be put up, so he needs to know exactly where to put it; instead of using a spray paint marking machine to mark off the park, we should use a stadium chalk marking machine; and many households are using Town trash cans instead of hauling their trash to the dump.

- Mr. McCrady made a motion to send a Resolution to American Electric Power asking them to dramatically reduce the lumens of their LED lights. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).

Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- *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!***

- Ms. Coleman made a motion to Recess into Closed Session for Discussion and Consideration of Personnel Matters regarding the Administration Departments, per VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1). Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
- Mr. McCrady made a motion to return to Open Session, 2nd by Mr. Jackson. The motion passed (6-0).
- *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.*

Susan Coleman – Yea

Charles Fields – Yea

Tom Hayes - Yea

Beaty Jackson– Yea

Robert Kemmerlin - Yea

Jack McCrady - Yea

- Mr. McCrady made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to begin the process of hiring a full-time Town Manager for the Town of Damascus. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
- Ms. Hayes made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Mr. Kemmerlin. The motion passed (6-0).

Katie Lamb, Mayor

Tuesday Pope, Clerk