

# DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes for April 4, 2016 7:00pm

## Regular Council Meeting

**Council Members Present:** Tim Williams, Mitchel Greer, Shirley Brand, Susan Seymore, Melissa Barrett, and Tom Hayes

**Absent:** None

**Also Present:** Jack McCrady, Mayor  
Gavin Blevins, Town Manager  
Thomas Dene, Town Attorney

Tuesday Pope, Town Clerk  
Linda Rouse, Town Treasurer  
Roger Dowell, Police Chief  
Rebeca Donahue, Administrative Asst.

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

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the Minutes.

- Ms. Brand made a motion to approve the March 7<sup>th</sup> 2016 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Greer. The motion passed (6-0).
- Ms. Brand made a motion to approve the March 9<sup>th</sup> 2016 Joint Planning Commission/Council Public Hearing Minutes as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Williams. The motion passed (6-0).

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the agenda.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Seymore. The motion passed (6-0).

### Committee Reports

#### **Budget, Finance and Administration:**

Ms. Seymore deferred to the Town Treasurer, Linda Rouse, for the monthly Treasurer's report.

Ms. Rouse submitted the following report:

*TAXES: Real Estate tax collection rate improved to 94.73% with \$69,159 outstanding & Personal Property rate improved to 85.51 with \$37,637 outstanding. The first half 2016 real estate property tax will be due May 20th and bills should go out the latter part of April depending on the date we receive our data from Washington Co.*

*Electronic Tax Payments: The agreement has been finalized with Value Payment Systems and they are in the process of adding the link to our Town website to offer taxpayers this option in May and this info will also be printed on the back of our tax tickets.*

*Line of Credit: The unsecured \$50,000 LOC with The Bank of Marion will mature 4-9-16. The current balance is -0-. Interest rate is prime + .50 current rate of 4%. Request approval to renew for 1 year term.*

- Ms. Brand made a motion to approve the line of credit renewal with the Bank of Marion, as requested; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Greer. The motion passed (6-0).

Ms. Rouse also reported that the next budget meeting will be held on April 11<sup>th</sup> at 4pm.

### **Streets, Lights and Maintenance:**

Mr. Greer referred to the following report on the department's operations for the month of March which was submitted by the public works supervisor Joe Fritts:

*Throughout the month, we've worked on the Wilson Street Lot (beside the Library), clearing brush and debris, sowing grass, and resurfacing the parking area. We added six dump truck loads of dirt to smooth and level the lot. We were able to do this because we had eleven dump loads of dirt donated to the Town from a lot on Railroad Avenue. Brush pickup continues and we've also began mowing. Trail Days preparation is ongoing, and we will soon be readying the pool for the 2016 swim season. All water systems have been de-winterized and made ready for use. Earlier in the month, we repaired potholes throughout Town, and also striped and realigned Reynolds Street parking (as requested by the Mayor and Town Council.*

Mr. Blevins asked who is clearing off the land around the Veterans Memorial site in the park. Mayor McCrady advised him to contact members of the Veterans Memorial Committee to find out.

### **Parks and Recreation:**

Mr. Williams reported on the state of the final preparations of Trail Days planning and asked for volunteers to help with final details. He also thanked Ms. Pope for her time and efforts put into taking care of the event preparations. He also stated that outside interest in Trail Days is outstanding and growing every year.

### **Planning Commission:**

Nothing to report at this time.

### **Police and Fire Advisory:**

Mr. Hayes deferred to Chief Dowell, who delivered the following P.D. activity report for the month of February:

#### Operations:

*In March 2016, Damascus Officers handled 139 calls for service, issued 41 citations, and made 6 criminal arrests. Yearly Statistics for 2016 are as follows: 393 calls for service, 13 Arrests, 39 Offenses, and 109 Citations issued.*

#### Traffic Enforcement Activities:

*During March 2016, Officers responded to 3 motor vehicle accident in Town, issued 41 traffic summons, made 1 DUI arrest, and notified 4 subjects that they were suspended.*

*Speeding complaint areas include: South Shady Avenue, Douglas Drive, Damascus Drive, and Beaverdam Ave., with special attention being placed on Crosswalk Areas.*

#### Special Report:

*Officer DeBusk was involved in a car chase which led into Johnson County, TN and resulted in several charges, as well as damage to his police vehicle. Insurance has advised that the patrol car may possibly be a total loss.*

*Officers dealt with a drunk driver that was being stopped for speeding and failure to yield at the intersection, and then pulled into the Subway / Mojo's parking lot and proceeded to ram a parked car several times. The subject was restrained at gun point and arrested for DUI, as well as other charges.*

*Officers dealt with a car occupied by two subjects who tried to elude officers in Town, and was stopped beside Laurel Family Drug. Multiple charges were issued and the car was towed.*

*Damascus Police Department had several stops this month that resulted in the recovery of Narcotics.*

*Special Notes:*

*K9: Lt Turner and K9 King were used on several traffic stops this month that resulted in the recovery of narcotics.*

*VDOT Work Crew:*

*The VDOT work crew is on hold due to funding.*

*Police Vehicles:*

*We have had several vehicle issues this month, and are less one car due to the accident.*

*Auxiliary:*

*All Auxiliary officers are on suspension until we get them covered under the Town's VML workers compensation policy.*

*Mayor McCrady advised that this topic will be covered under New Business.*

*Chief Dowell advised that the Town move ahead with advertising for the employee position which was vacated in February by Mr. Hogston.*

*Mayor McCrady advised that this topic should be addressed in Closed Session.*

**Special Committees:**

VISTA report by Jay Prevatt:

*Mr. Prevatt reported that his last day as the Town's VISTA volunteer will be during the third week of April; is in the process of arranging a conference call between the ATC and Town officials about the possibility of transferring the community pathway over to the Town. Mayor McCrady thanked Jay for a job well done while serving the Town and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.*

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| <b>Manager's Report</b> |
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Mr. Blevins submitted the following Town Manager's Report:

***Beaverdam Creek Trail***

*The public works dept has cleared the site of trees where the bridge abutments will be constructed.*

*I am still negotiating the price to redo the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan so that we can complete the Environmental Review. This plan must be signed off on and then sent to VDOT.*

**Rally Damascus**

*The map information has been sent to the printer.*

*The bicycle racks are waiting and ready to be bolted down.*

**Regional Planning Grant/ Mount Rogers Regional Initiative**

*I met with Arnett Muldrow & Associates this month concerning the regional branding/marketing strategy to clarify the direction of the infrastructure aspect of the system.*

**ARC Grant Application**

*It is my understanding that the results are in and we are merely waiting on the governor to announce the grant awards – I do not know who will be awarded.*

**CDBG Grant**

*As of February 24, Environmental Services & Consultants (out of Blacksburg, VA) have been procured for the Phase 1 Environmental Review required by DHCD and has already completed the site visit for the Phase 1. I've been trying to move the process along and get the Phase 1 Report so that we can finish the Environmental Review.*

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| <b>Attorney Report</b> |
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Mr. Dene advised the Council to move forward with advertising the proposed 2016-17 budget so that a public hearing on the subject can be held during the May Council meeting, and then adopted during the June Council meeting.

There was discussion of options for collecting delinquent taxes, as well as increasing the price of cigarette tax stamps. These items were deferred to the Budget, Finance, and Administration Committee for review and recommendation.

Mr. Dene reported the following item for closed session discussion:

- I. Discussion and consideration of the performance of the employees of the Police Department, per VA Code Sec. 2.2-3711 (A)(1).
  - Ms. Brand made a motion to approve the item(s) for closed session, at the appropriate time, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Hayes. The motion passed (6-0).

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| <b>Old Business</b> |
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A VDOT representative was present to speak to the Council about the agencies' intention to look closely into several concerns that have been brought before them by Town residents and Officials. These issues are all relevant safety concerns, and VDOT will be conducting safety studies, etc... in order to formulate possible solutions regarding these concerns.

Mayor McCrady recognized the Town's newest employee, Ms. Rebeca Donahue, who is now acting as the official Administrative Assistant to the Clerk and Treasurer's offices.

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| <b>New Business</b> |
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Mayor McCrady presented a sample Resolution authorizing VML to add the Police Department's Auxiliary members under the Town's workers compensation insurance coverage policy.

- Ms. Seymore made a motion to adopt the resolution, as presented; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Brand. The motion passed (6-0).

### Council Members Reports

1. Ms. Brand stated that she will be ordering four quilt squares from the Holston Mtn. Artisans to be displayed around Town as part of the Regional Quilt Trail. Partial funding will be provided by an anonymous donor, as well as the Rally Damascus Grant.
2. Mayor McCrady said that he has had the opportunity to look at the Damascus Elite Hiking sock, produced by Farm To Feet/Nester Hosiery, and was very impressed with the quality.

### Citizens Comments

None at this time.

### Announcements

April 30<sup>th</sup> – Trail Town Challenge (foot race)

### Consent Agenda

- Ms. Brand made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$500, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Hayes; the motion passed (6-0).
- Mr. Hayes made a motion to pay the bills, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Brand; the motion passed (6-0).
- Ms. Brand made a motion for closed session, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Hayes; the motion passed (6-0).
- Mr. Greer made a motion to return to open session, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Williams; the motion passed (6-0).
- Mr. Williams made a motion to certify, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Hayes; the motion passed (6-0).
- Ms. Seymore made a motion to advertise for the employment a certified Police Officer, with a starting hourly wage of \$12. Mr. Williams 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (6-0).
- Ms. Seymore made a motion to advertise increase the hourly wage of Officer Reid to \$12. Mr. Hayes 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, which passed (6-0).
- Mr. Greer made a motion to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Barrett; the motion passed (6-0).

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**Jack McCrady, Mayor**

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**Tuesday Pope, Clerk**