

DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes for May 2nd, 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

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 April Minutes:

- Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the April 4 2016 Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes as presented, 2nd by Ms. Brand. The motion passed (6-0).
- Ms. Brand made a motion to approve the April 13 2016 Special Called Emergency Council Meeting Minutes as presented, 2nd by Mr. Greer. The motion passed (6-0).
- Mr. Hayes made a motion to approve the April 20 2016 Special Called Emergency Council Meeting Minutes as presented, 2nd by Ms. Brand. The motion passed (5-0-1). Mr. Williams abstained.

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the agenda.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, 2nd by Mr. Williams
The motion passed (6-0).

DAMASCUS, VIRGINIA
PROPOSED BUDGET SYNOPSIS
FOR FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2016-JUNE 30, 2017
- NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING -

The Town Council of Damascus, Virginia will hold a public hearing for the purposes of public information and fiscal planning regarding the proposed Town Budget for Fiscal Year 2016-2017. The hearing will be held on May 2, 2016, at 7:05 p.m. at the Damascus Town Hall, and is open to the public.

The public hearing is held pursuant to Section 15.2-2506 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, and is for the purpose of allowing the public to comment on the proposed budget. All citizens have the right to attend the public hearing and to share their views on the proposed budget within such reasonable time limits as shall be established by the Town Council.

The proposed property tax levies for Damascus, Virginia for the 2016 tax year that would be necessary to fully fund the proposed budgets if approved by the Town Council are as follows:

A Town unit levy for general Town purposes of forty-six cents (\$0.46) per one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of assessed valuation of all taxable real estate and fifty-two cents (\$0.52) per one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of assessed valuation of all mobile home, public utilities, personal property, and machinery and tools at one hundred percent (100%) of fair market value.

The proposed budget is available at Town Hall for review.

TOWN OF DAMASCUS BUDGET SUMMARY

	REVENUE	BUDGET	BUDGET
	Sources	2015-2016	2016-2017
	Penalty/Interest Income	\$8,500	\$9,400
	Lodging Tax	\$40,000	\$45,000
	Meals Tax	\$90,000	\$110,000
	Real Property Tax	\$216,000	\$208,000
	Personal Property Tax/State Car Tax Refund	\$32,500	\$34,500
	Privilege Licenses	\$58,000	\$58,000
	License Fees	\$13,000	\$17,000
	Washington Co. Sales Tax	\$42,000	\$45,500
	Bank Stock Tax	\$5,000	\$16,000
	Cigarette Tax	\$35,000	\$35,000
	Solid Waste Lease	\$1,800	\$1,800
	Fines	\$12,500	\$11,500
	PD-DMV Reimbursement Wages		
	VA Fireman's Grant/DVFD Misc	\$11,000	\$11,000
	Litter Control Grant	\$1,000	\$1,000
	Utility Taxes/Communication Tax	\$54,000	\$54,000
	General Fund Reserve	0	
	Misc. Revenues & Damascus Business Group	\$9,700	\$1,300
	Surplus Property/Loan Proceeds/Line of Credit Advance	0	\$30,000
	VDOT/Beaver Dam Trail	\$328,000	\$328,000
	Sewer Receipts	0	0
	Sewer Connections	0	0
	Sewer Interest Income	0	0
	Washington Co. Recreation	\$9,000	\$8,100
	Pool Revenue	\$8,000	\$4,000
	Beaver Dam Trail Reserve	0	0
	Sewer Reserve	0	0
	Pool Food Sales	\$1,400	\$1,100
	Town Website	\$3,600	\$4,300
	Parks & Recreation Misc.	\$1,500	\$1,500

	Special Events	\$1,000	\$1,000
	Trail Days	\$60,000	\$63,600
	Fine Reserve Revenue	0	0
	Rural Development	0	0
	VML Matching Grant	0	0
	Police Dept Grants	\$33,900	\$33,900
	Housing/Development Grant	\$35,000	\$35,000
	Total	\$1,111,400	\$1,169,500
	EXPENDITURES	2015-2016	2016-2017
	Activity		
	Administration	\$274,893	\$269,526
	Police	\$235,817	\$256,280
	Fire & Rescue	\$18,200	\$19,200
	Public Works	\$156,890	\$201,138
	Parks & Recreation	\$397,550	\$399,266
	Pool	\$28,050	\$24,090
	Sewer Plant	0	0
	TOTAL	\$1,111,400	\$1,169,500

Mayor McCrady opened a Public Hearing about the proposed budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

There were no comments to be heard.

Mayor McCrady closed the Public Hearing.

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 payment deadline is May 20th. The Value Payment electronic option is now listed on our website under the [Resources tab/Town Forms/Pay taxes online box](#). It was also printed on our tax tickets. To date, we have not had anyone utilize this service; however I expect this to change as taxpayers realize we have it available.

Business Licenses: Renewal date is May 1st.

Website: Renewal date is also May 1st. Business renewal for in Town is \$75 with set-up fee \$50 for new listings and out of Town is \$150 renewal with \$50 set-up fee for first listening. We hope to see an increase in our website listings due to the improvements and upgrades Gavin and Rocky have made and hope our businesses will utilize this very affordable marketing tool to grow their business.

Line of Credit: The unsecured \$50,000 LOC with The Bank of Marion was renewed on 4-12-16 @ prime + .50 at current rate of 4%. Balance is 0.

Budget: 2016-2017 fiscal year proposed budget ad ran in Washington Co News on April 20th with total revenues and expenditures of \$1,169,500 with public hearing May 2, 2016 and if no changes approval @ June 6, 2016 regular council meeting.

Ms. Seymore reported that Town Hall's administrative offices have been experiencing a lot of trouble with their computer equipment, and the computer technician has submitted a list of three items that need to be purchased asap. The suggested purchases will cost approximately \$300.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to purchase the necessary computer equipment, 2nd by Ms. Brand. The motion passed (6-0).

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

Mr. Greer referred to the following report on the department's operations for the month of April, which was submitted by the Public Works supervisor, Joe Fritts:

We've been trying to blend our festival preparations with our normal work load as Trail Days grows nearer. Also, we've had to prepare the land around our shop and the campground area behind it (bushhogging, trimming and fence work). We have also painted the campground bath house. The parking area between the library and the river has also been improved with brush clearing and leveling.

Flower boxes on Laurel Ave and in the park have been filled and reset with geraniums purchased from the Holston High School's Greenhouse. We hope to finish lining the parking on Laurel Ave. also, but time is at a premium. We've done limited brush picked up but as it is every year at this time, Trail Days has everything limited. Equipment repair has not been as time consuming this month, but we have done some repairs on our Kubota and also the Case tractors. We also replaced the alternators on the Chevrolet truck.

Ms. Seymore mentioned that she loves when the Maintenance Department plants flowers throughout town each year, and would like to see Town residents 'adopt a box' to tend to and keep up.

Parks and Recreation:

Mr. Williams reported that the Town of Damascus is becoming increasingly recognized, and is attracting a lot of interest from outside areas. Trail Days preparations are in full force, and the festival week will kick-off on Saturday May 7th with the Town-wide Yard Sale!

Ms. Barrett reported that the Events & Entertainment Committee is working on the Damascus events pertaining to the Crooked Road's upcoming Mountains of Music Homecoming (MoMH) Tour, which will take place next month.

On June 12th (Sunday), Damascus will host 'The Crooked Road Guitar Masters' at 2pm, in the Rock School Auditorium. Tickets for this event are \$12 in advance or \$15 after May 31st.

Then on Saturday June 18th, the committee presents 'Beaver Dam Jams' in the Town Park from 4-9pm.

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 April:

Operations:

In April 2016, Damascus Officers handled 81 calls for service, issued 6 citations and made 1 criminal arrest. Yearly statistics for 2016 are as follows: 393 calls for service, 14 arrests, 40 offenses, and 115 citations issued.

Traffic Enforcement Activities:

During April 2016, Officers responded to 3 motor vehicle accidents in Town, and issued 6 traffic summons.

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

Special Report:

No Special Reports at this time

Special Notes:

K9: Lt Turner and K9 King were on patrol the month of April.

VDOT Work Crew:

The VDOT work crew is on hold due to funding.

Police Vehicles:

The 2008 Dodge Charger was a total loss.

Auxiliary:

All Auxiliary officers are back in full service and getting ready for Trail Days events.

Manager's Report

Mr. Blevins submitted the following Town Manager's Report:

Beaverdam Creek Trail

The contract amendment has been signed to have the Erosion & Sediment Control Plan as well as bid documents updated so that the project can be put out to bid as quickly as possible (once VDOT approval is obtained).

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

Arnett Muldrow & Associates continues to design the regional logo systems and marketing infrastructure plans. We will have the draft documents by the end of this week, and final documents by the end of June.

ARC Grant Application

On April 22, the Governor was in Galax and announced the recipients of ARC funds for 2016. Congratulations, the Town was awarded \$499,908 for our waterfront initiative.

Now we have to set up the contract negotiation period, followed by the contract work-up, environmental review, etc...

CDBG Grant (Downtown Revitalization Grant)

As of February 24, Environmental Services & Consultants has been procured for the Phase 1 Environmental Review required by DHCD and has already completed the site visit for the Phase 1.

The consultant has proven difficult, but I am working out the issues to prevent further delays.

Community Pathways Project

With our ATC VISTA, Jay, gone, I'm now the site supervisor for the project and will be managing the installation of the last batch of bricks to go down with this project, which are to be installed after the end of June.

Website/ Wireless Mesh

I've spent some time repairing, reworking, and planning future repairs and possible expansions of the wireless mesh system. A couple of new gateways would greatly increase ability to transmit data.

Multiple days have been spent increasing notices and public awareness of programs going on in Damascus. We are still working to redesign the listings to makes them more appealing and effective.

Attorney Report

1. Mr. Dene stated that tougher language needs to be implemented in all the Town's contracts in order to avoid some of the problems and breeches that have been encountered over the past few years.
2. Legislative update: A second legislative bill which directly concerns the Town of Damascus has now been passed. The Council agreed that it will be a good idea for Mr. Dene to prepare a resolution of appreciation for Senator Carrico and Delegate O'Quinn, on behalf of the Town.
3. Mr. Dene advised the Council to move forward with advertising for a public hearing during the June Council meeting on the topic of increasing the purchase price of cigarette tax stamps. The Town currently sells these for .10, and the City of Bristol sells them for .20, so the Council wants to consider raising the price to .15.

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

- I. Discussion and consideration of the disciplining of a specific Police Officer, per VA Code Sec. 2.2-3711 (A)(1).

Old Business

Nothing at this time.

New Business

- Mr. Williams made a motion to place an ad in the newspaper seeking bids for Town legal services for the 2016-17 year; 2nd by Ms. Seymore. The motion passed (6-0).

Council Members Reports

1. In reference to the Regional Quilt Trail, Ms. Brand reported that the Town's quilt square designs are underway.
2. Ms. Barrett questioned if there are laws in place regarding public smoking areas, and restricting smoking at entrances and doorways that lead into businesses in Town.
3. Ms. Seymore encouraged everyone to attend the observance of a National Day of Prayer in the Town Park on Thursday (May 5th) at 6pm.
4. Mr. Hayes reported that the tenants of the mobile home behind the Damascus Service Center have moved out and the barbed wire fence has been removed from the yard. The Council had previously received several complaints concerning this property.
5. Mr. Greer reported that vehicles are still being parked in the road in front of a residence on Imboden St., which has been reported as a nuisance several times in the past.
Mr. Blevins responded that he has already sent a letter to the property owner about the need to correct this problem.
Mayor McCrady suggested the Police issue the tenants a 48 hour notice to have the vehicle(s) moved due to the fact that it causes a road hazard.
6. Mayor McCrady reported nuisance properties on which a house is collapsing: on Damascus Dr., and on Cemetery Ridge Rd.
Chief Dowell stated that one of those used to be a meth house. Also, there is a mobile home on Fifth St. that is dilapidated, with no electricity or running water, which has many vagrants occupying it.
7. Mayor McCrady stated that when residents hire a tree trimming service, they should ensure that the service provider will be responsible for the removal of any trimmings.

Citizens Comments

Robert Van de Vuurst, 210 N. Legion St., commented that the home and property on Imboden St. (previously mentioned) badly needs to be cleaned up also.

Mayor McCrady stated that the vehicles and property will be addressed.

Announcements

- * May 5th – National Day of Prayer observance in the Park, 6pm
- * May 7th – Town Wide Yard Sale, 7am-3pm
- * May 13-15th – 30th Appalachian Trail Days Festival
- * May 30th – Offices Closed – Memorial Day

Consent Agenda

- Ms. Seymore made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$500, 2nd by Ms. Brand; the motion passed (6-0).
- Ms. Brand made a motion to pay the bills, 2nd by Mr. Greer; the motion passed (6-0).
- Ms. Brand made a motion to recess into Closed Session for consideration of the matters previously identified by Legal Counsel, 2nd by Ms. Seymore; the motion passed (6-0).
- Ms. Seymore made a motion to return to open session, 2nd by Mr. Greer; the motion passed (6-0).
- Mr. Hayes made a motion to certify, 2nd by Mr. Williams; the motion passed (6-0).
- Mr. Hayes made a motion to terminate the employment of Adam DeBusk, effective immediately. Mr. Williams 2nd the motion, which passed (6-0).
- Mr. Williams made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Mr. Hayes; the motion passed (6-0).

Jack McCrady, Mayor

Tuesday Pope, Clerk