

DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes for August 1, 2016 7:00pm
Regular Council Meeting

Council Members Present: Mitchel Greer, Susan Seymore, Melissa Barrett, and Tom Hayes

Absent: Tim Williams

<u>Also Present:</u> Jack McCrady, Mayor	Tuesday Pope, Town Clerk
Gavin Blevins, Town Manager	Linda Rouse, Town Treasurer
Mike Hounshell, Police Chief	Thomas Dene, Legal Counsel

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 July Minutes:

- Mr. Hayes made a motion to approve the July 6, 2016 Special Called Council Meeting Minutes as presented, 2nd by Mr. Greer. The motion passed (4-0).
- Ms. Seymore made a motion to approve the July 7, 2016 Regular Council Meeting Minutes as presented, 2nd by Mr. Hayes. The motion passed (4-0).
- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the July 13, 2016 Special Called Council Meeting Minutes as presented, 2nd by Mr. Hayes. The motion passed (4-0).
- Ms. Seymore made a motion to approve the July 26, 2016 Special Called Council Meeting Minutes as presented, 2nd by Mr. Greer. The motion passed (4-0).

Mayor McCrady asked for approval of the agenda.

- Mr. Greer made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, 2nd by Ms. Seymore. The motion passed (4-0).

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: Our collection rate for real estate taxes has improved 1.66% to 89.07% for 2016 and 94.81% for all years. I will be sending out 'pink' past due notices for all real estate in August. Personal property has improved slightly to 85.72%

Audit/Fiscal Year: Al McIntosh with Albano has scheduled our audit and closing for fiscal year August 15th and 16th. Todd Owens has submitted a request to do our annual Town audit for \$5,000. Gavin to check on pricing from firm used by MRPD located in Christiansburg, VA. Budgeted amount is 5,000.

* Mr. Blevins sent a previous audit for them to review and is awaiting a quote.

Business Licenses/ Lodging: To date we have issued 76 business licenses. One is a new restaurant; Alfredo's opening at 338 Douglas Dr. (Cavalier). I have 10 that have not renewed and reminder letters were sent. .

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

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

The placement of the pole banners and the street banner for C-TREC took four days, but everything went smoothly and even though there was some storm activity, there was no trouble with the banners. There were flood issues though, especially on Bone Hollow Rd. and Second St., as well as Whistlestop Rd. and near the Old Mill.

Work continues on finishing the salt shed and solving some flood issues around town. The project to fill in the ditch on North Railroad Ave. has been canceled because a culvert pipe was proven to be in place and functioning. Brush was cleared on the corner of Legion St. and Laurel Ave. Brush clearing continues along the Creeper Trail, and some other streets.

There were some necessary equipment service and repairs involving alternators, starters and brake repair. Also repaired and replaced lights in the fire dept bay.

The pool has closed for the season, and pool repairs will happen prior to replacing the cover.

Ms. Seymore added that she'd like to discuss the option of keeping the pool open longer during the summer, as August and September are both hot months. She suggested remaining open at least on weekends if possible.

Mayor McCrady advised that as the Town is now being charged for hauling brush to the dump, it is the responsibility of property owners to make sure any contractors hired to perform tree trimming/clearing also remove all the trimmings.

Parks and Recreation:

Mr. Williams reported that the swim season at the Town pool ended on July 31st.

Ms. Barrett reported the Events & Entertainment Committee is planning a chili cook-off soon with all participants welcome. More details to follow.

Planning Commission:

Caitlyn Kelley submitted her resignation form the commission last month.

- Ms. Seymore motioned to appoint Larry Ginn to fill the seat for the remainder of Ms. Kelley's unexpired term. Mr. Greer seconded the motion, which passed (4-0).

Police and Fire Advisory:

Mayor McCrady introduced newly appointed Chief of Police, Mike Hounshell.

Chief Hounshell thanked the Council for the opportunity to serve the Town and its residents, which he is very much looking forward to. He also introduced several family members and friends who were also present at the meeting.

The Mayor and Council welcomed Chief Hounshell, along with his family and friends, to Damascus.

Mr. Hayes deferred to the following P.D. activity report for the month of July, as presented by Lt. Turner:

Operations:

In July 2016, Damascus Officers handled 78 calls for service, issued 3 citations, and made 2 criminal arrests.

Traffic Enforcement Activities:

During June 2016, Officers responded to 2 motor vehicle accidents in Town.

Speeding complaint areas include:

South Shady Avenue, Douglas Drive, Damascus Drive, and Beaver Dam Ave., with special attention being placed on crosswalk areas.

VDOT Work Crew:

We are still waiting on a call from them.

Police Vehicles:

We have changed the oil in two of the patrol vehicles, and changed out one head light.

Auxiliary:

We are in the process of scheduling a class for all Auxiliary Officers to get their training completed, as well as refresher training for existing Officers.

WCC Grant:

We had officers work one day of the grant cycle and I will be sending them an invoice to recover the funds back for the Town.

Manager's Report

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

Beaverdam Creek Trail

Awaiting Extension Letter from Virginia Marine Resources Commission that I requested back in April. Apparently it's already been approved, they just haven't sent out documentation.

Joint Permit from Army Corps has expired, but should be reapproved for renewal within 30 days.

Washington County is going to require a building permit for the bridge, even though it's a design-build prefabricated structure, so we are getting the plans from the manufacturer.

Regional Planning Grant/ Mount Rogers Regional Initiative

Still awaiting final documentation for project closeout (contract termination 6-30-2016) from DHCD.

ARC Grant Application

DHCD requested additional information on July 18 (some of which was in the application already) so that the application could be packaged and sent to ARC for final approval – the requested documents were sent via email and submitted on CAMS on July 20, 2016.

CDBG Grant

The DHCD contract for our \$659,400 of CDBG funds was executed on July 5, 2016, and will be effective for 24 months.

Proposals for A/E Services for the project were received by June 30th, reviewed by the selection committee, and consultant interviews were completed. Notice of award and negotiation of fees will commence in August.

Once the consultants have been hired for the project, the Management Team will begin meeting again to begin implementation.

Community Pathways Project

One batch of 293 bricks for the final installation on this project was shipped on July 19th, and the other batch should be shipped from Brick Markers USA on July 29th.

ARC POWER Initiative

MySWVA should be submitting the pre-application for POWER Initiative funds to construct the Outdoor Recreation and Nature Center from the Master Plan by August 5th. Tobacco Commission funds will also be applied for in September in order to leverage additional funding.

VTC Market Leverage Program

The 2016 VTC Market Leverage Program grant deadline is coming up this November; this grant will be discussed at the next DBG meeting.

Attorney Report

Mr. Dene advised the Council to make an interim appointment of a Council member to fill the vacated seat after the passing of Shirley Brand.

- Ms. Barrett made a motion to appoint Vickie Van de Vuurst to fill the vacancy, 2nd by Ms. Seymore. The motion passed (3-0-1, with Mr. Hayes abstaining).

Mr. Dene commented that since the local cable provider has abruptly ceased to operate in Damascus, that perhaps the Town could advertise a RFP for another cable service provider. Also, he knows of a company that may be interested in taking a look, and will contact them about it.

Mayor McCrady stated that he would like Mr. Dene to file a grievance against Multi Line for cutting off the cable service without advising residents before hand. People should have been given enough consideration to make other arrangements for service before what they had was terminated (and for most, this occurred on the same day they received a letter from Multi Line stating they were ceasing services on that day).

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

- I. Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding institution of legal proceedings to enforce the business license requirements in the Town of Damascus, per VA Code Sec. 2.2-3711 (A)(7).

Old Business

Nothing to report at this time.

New Business

Ms. Seymore reminded the Council of her previous request to explore options for beautification of the property on S. Shady Ave. where the Maintenance building is located. Some residents have asked that the Town install a privacy fence, shrubs, etc...to block the view of the equipment and supplies located there. Checking on options and prices for this is in the process.

Mr. Greer reminded the Council that they need to made a final decision on where to construct a basketball court so the process can get underway soon.

Ms. Barrett suggested adding a location for volleyball court as well.

Council Members Reports

Ms. Seymore welcomed the new Police Chief, and stated that she really appreciates his presence becoming prominent in community events, even before being offered the job.

Mr. Hayes stated that VDOT or People Inc. needs to look into a current water issue in front of the Rock School.

Mr. Hayes also stated that the Chief either needs a new vehicle, or the current vehicle we are providing to undergo the necessary repairs to be safe and functional.

Mayor McCrady stated that the Town needs to set clear rules forbidding the open air burning of trash or anything toxic, and those who burn those things should be issued a nuisance fine.

Mayor McCrady also reported a water drainage issue on 3rd St. behind Damascus Auto Repair. The owners of that business report that the existing ditch needs to be cleared out because it has been filled in, and is even with the road.

Citizens Comments

Richard T. Kiser, 815 Orchard Hill Rd., addressed the Council with concerns about people burning plastic, tires, mattresses, and other things that release toxins into the air, which has been adversely and directly affecting his health.

The Council and Mayor agreed that they would like for the Town Attorney to draw up a general prohibition, including exceptions, for consideration.

Announcements

- * Town Hall will be CLOSED on September 5th, in observance of Labor Day.
- * The Regular Called Council meeting for Sept. will need to be rescheduled because it falls on Labor Day. It was the consensus of the Council to reschedule the meeting for Tuesday the 6th.

Consent Agenda

- Mr. Greer made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$500, 2nd by Ms. Seymore; the motion passed (4-0).
- Mr. Hayes made a motion to pay the bills, 2nd by Ms. Seymore; the motion passed (4-0).
- Mr. Hayes 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 (4-0).
- Mr. Hayes made a motion to return to Open Session, 2nd by Ms. Seymore; the motion passed (4-0).
- Mr. Greer made a motion to certify, 2nd by Ms. Barrett; the motion passed (4-0).
- Mr. Hayes made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Ms. Seymore; the motion passed (4-0).

Jack McCrady, Mayor

Tuesday Pope, Clerk