

**Towing Advisory Board
Annual Report
July 2018– June 2019**

Summary of Accomplishments

The mission of the Tow Advisory Board includes providing a public forum for issues related to the towing and impounding of vehicles within the City of Alexandria and making recommendations to City Council regarding policy and ordinance changes for towing requirements. Within these guidelines, the Towing Advisory Board membership completed the following activities during its 2018/19 year.

Towing Advisory Board Policy and Membership Accomplishments

- The towing advisory board currently has one vacancy for a tow operator representative. Efforts will continue to be made in FY2020 to fill this tow operator vacancy.
- The Tow Advisory Board met on Wednesday, June 12, 2019 for the required annual meeting. A full list of topics discussed in FY2019 are contained in the meeting minutes for the May 14, 2018 meeting, which are contained in Appendix 1.

Leadership

- Currently Lt. Mike May with Alexandria Police Department (APD) is serving as the chair of the board. A new chairperson will be elected in FY2020, as state law (as well as City Ordinance) requires the board chairperson to rotate annually.
- During the course of the year, membership included the following individuals:
 - Lt. Mike May
 - Sgt. Thomas Ground
 - Charity Ave-Lallemant
 - Dwight Gochenour
 - (2nd Tow Operator Representative Currently Vacant)
- Matt Melkerson and Alexander Frias in the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services acted as the staff liaisons to the Towing Advisory Board during the course of the 2018/2019 year.

Appendix 1

Towing Advisory Board Meeting Notes June 12, 2018

Meeting was called to order at 11:01 AM by Matt Melkerson.

Introductions were made; since the previous meeting Sgt. Thomas Ground of Alexandria Police Department (APD) replaced Deputy Chief Chris Wemple.

New Business:

Election of New Chairperson

State Code and City Ordinance requires the election of a new chairperson annually. The FY2019 Chairperson, Dwight Gochenour, was therefore required to relinquish the chairmanship. Lt. Mike May of APD was nominated to succeed Mr. Gochenour. Lt. May was unanimously voted in by the board members as board chair for FY2019.

Discussion of Virginia Code changes in 2019 General Assembly Legislative Session

[SB1567](#) – Ties the maximum charges for Planning District 8 and Planning District 16 to Virginia Code Section 46.2-1233.1 (currently \$150).

Final Outcome: Bill Signed into Law

[SB1432](#) – Modified code to allow vehicle immobilizing devices other than a vehicle boot (placed on a vehicle wheel to keep the wheel from turning) to be utilized to immobilize a trespassing vehicle.

Final Outcome: Bill Signed into Law

Other Bills related to Towing in 2019 Virginia General Assembly – Failed Bills

[HB1697](#) - Would have relaxed the prohibition on the issuance of a tow truck driver registration to a person who was convicted of a violent crime or a crime involving the driving of a tow truck, including drug or alcohol offenses, which the conviction occurred more than 10 years prior to the date of application.

Final Outcome: Bill Died in Committee

Discussion of Tow Fees in Alexandria

There was discussion regarding the passage of SB1567 and the impacts it would have to private tows in Alexandria. Mr. Gochenour, representing the tow industry, indicated that costs have steadily increased since the last adjustment to the private tow fee was made 5 years ago. He also indicated there is a tight labor market in the region, which makes hiring drivers more of a

challenge. After some additional discussion among the group, a motion was made to make a recommendation to City Council to raise the maximum tow fee for private tows to \$150 in Alexandria. This motion was seconded and passed unanimously, 4-0.

There was also discussion regarding modifying the heavy vehicle police impound tow fee (vehicle greater than 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight). Currently this rate is \$125. City code allows for a heavy vehicle tow fee of \$500 for private tows. Mr. Gochenour, representing the tow industry, indicated that in some cases his company will decline a heavy vehicle private tow because the \$500 does not cover the costs associated with the heavy tow. After some additional discussion among the group, a motion was made to make a recommendation to City Council to raise the maximum tow fee for heavy vehicle police impound tows to \$500, which would be consistent with the rates permitted for private heavy vehicle tows in Alexandria. This motion was seconded and passed unanimously, 4-0.

There being no other new business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:32 AM.