



City of Smithville, Missouri

Board of Aldermen - Work Session Agenda

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

6:30 p.m. – City Hall Council Chambers and Via Videoconference

Anyone who wishes to view the meeting may do so in real time as it will be streamed live on the City's YouTube page.


For Public Comment via Zoom, please email your request to the City Clerk at ldrummond@smithvillemo.org prior to the meeting to be sent the meeting Zoom link.

1. Call to Order
2. Discussion of City Tow Services
3. Adjourn

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83441064878>

Meeting ID: 834 4106 4878
Passcode: 736403



	<div>STAFF</div> <div>REPORT</div>
Date:	12/03/2024
Prepared By:	Jason Lockridge, Chief of Police
Subject:	City Tow Services

Purpose

The Police Department requires a reliable, police-ordered towing service for the public, available 24 hours a day, year-round, including holidays. At a previous Board meeting, a work session was requested to discuss the City's current tow services and future options.

History

Before December 1, 2015, the Police Department maintained a tow rotation list managed on a whiteboard in the officers' squad room. Typically, this list included two or three companies, though response delays were common, requiring multiple calls to secure a tow. These extended wait times were particularly problematic at accident scenes where road closures created traffic concerns.

Further issues arose from tow companies "jumping" accident calls, arriving unrequested at already congested scenes, and soliciting drivers before or during officers' investigations.

To address these challenges, the City issued its first Request for Proposal (RFP) for tow services. Two bids were submitted, and GT Tow Services, offering a fee of \$200 per tow, was selected. On December 1, 2015, the Board of Aldermen approved Resolution 444, entering into a contract with GT Tow Services. This contract was initially set for three years, with two optional one-year extensions, both of which were utilized.

A second RFP was issued on July 20, 2020. GT Tow Services, the current vendor, submitted the only proposal with a rate of \$100 per tow. The Board approved this bid on August 18, 2020, under Resolution 813, awarding a new three-year contract with two additional one-year extension options.

During the 2020 RFP process, the Police Department reviewed the tow rotation system used by the Kansas City Police Department and Platte County Sheriff's Department. While there were some advantages (e.g. a single service for dispatch) the potential of having vehicles stored outside of Smithville, along with the additional fees to the citizen, made this option less favorable.

The current contract with GT Tow Services is set to expire in October 2025, creating the need for a third RFP process.

Considerations

Several factors are essential when evaluating tow service bids:

- 24/7 availability with a reasonable response time (expected within 15 minutes).
- Capacity to handle various types of towing, from motorcycles to loaded tractor-trailers.
- Cooperation with on-scene officers and a clear understanding of procedures.
- Secure storage facilities with inside storage options.
- Local tow lot location with unrestricted police access.
- Public access to vehicle retrieval, with office hours of at least 8 hours daily, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.
- Competitive service fees.

Comparison with Other Communities

Staff reviewed towing practices in nearby communities in the Northland:

- **Gladstone, Riverside, and Parkville** utilize a single vendor system similar to Smithville's, each reporting positive experiences with reduced issues compared to previous rotation systems.
- **Kearney** has a default single-provider setup, as only one tow company operates within city limits.
- **Excelsior Springs, North Kansas City, Liberty, and Pleasant Valley/Claycomo** use some form of tow rotation but rely on their dispatch centers to manage the system, except for Claycomo, which defaults to Pleasant Valley's rotation system. While speaking with these departments staff received several questions about the process of bidding a single vendor system. Most of them cited similar issues as we experienced in the past, and at least two of these departments indicated they are interested in moving to a single vendor system.

The Platte County Sheriff's Department indicated that returning to a pre-2015 rotation system would place additional burdens on dispatchers and staff, making this option less feasible.

Options Available

1. Continue with the Current Practice

The existing contract has been cost-effective for those whose vehicles are towed. A new RFP could be issued before the current contract expires to maintain this system.

2. Implement a Tow Rotation

While a rotation could be explored, other Northland agencies have indicated this is a less favorable option, often increasing costs for consumers. It would likely require a management company or additional demands on the Platte County Dispatch Center, which may be impractical.

3. Modify the Current Practice with a Shorter Contract Period

This option retains the RFP process but with shorter contract terms, such as an initial two-year period with a one-year extension option. This would allow more frequent bids, potentially encouraging more local vendors to participate.

Next Steps

Staff are requesting the Board's guidance on the preferred approach for this year's RFP process. The current contract is set to expire on October 31, 2025. To ensure continuity of service, staff propose issuing an RFP in March 2025, with submissions due by April 30, 2025. The contract would then be presented to the Board for approval in June 2025, allowing the selected vendor a four-month lead time before the new contract takes effect.