



Towing Advisory Board

Alexandria Transit Company/DASH

3000 Business Center Drive

Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2025; 6:00 P.M.

OPENING

MEMBERS PRESENT:

George Randolph, Alexandria Police (Law Enforcement member #1);
Dwight Gochenour, Dominion Towing (Licensed Towing & Recovery Operator member #1);
Derek Andrews Grenier (Citizen member);
Christopher Bedwell, City of Alexandria (Secretary Pro Tempore); and,
Darryl Syler, City of Alexandria (Staff Liaison) *via Zoom*.

ALSO PRESENT: Tarrence Moorner, Deputy Director- T&ES; Alexander Frias, Supervisory Impounding Officer, T&ES.

- 1.0 OPENING REMARKS AND CALL TO ORDER: At 6:08, Chairman Randolph called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present in the room, as well as virtually.
- 2.0 ROLL CALL AND QUORUM ASSESSMENT: At Chairman Randolph's direction, Secretary Pro Tempore Christopher Bedwell tabulated attendance orally, and confirmed a quorum was established.

ACTION CONSENT

- 4.0 ADOPTION OF JUNE 8, 2021 MEETING MINUTES: Derek Grenier motioned for adoption of the meeting minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Gochenour. The motion carried unanimously, and meeting minutes were approved.
- 5.0 ADOPTION OF MARCH 26, 2024 MEETING MINUTES: Derek Grenier motioned for adoption of the meeting minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Gochenour. The motion carried unanimously, and meeting minutes were approved.
- 6.0 PRESENT/ADOPT FY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF BOARD ACTIVITIES: Darryl Syler summarized the report that was submitted last year to the City Clerk. The Towing Advisory Board met as required and held elections. Current and past Board officers were identified. Mr. Gochenour asked if the hiatus in Board meetings (FY 2022-FY 2023) extends the term of current Board members. Darryl Syler indicated he would ascertain. Mr. Gochenour motioned to accept the Annual Report; the motion was seconded by Derek Grenier. The motion carried unanimously, and the report was adopted.

ROLL-CALL CONSENT

- 7.0 ADOPT FINALIZED BYLAWS AS APPROVED ON MARCH 26, 2024: Chairman Randolph introduced the finalized Bylaws and referenced the meeting attachment. Derek Grenier motioned to adopt the Bylaws; seconded by Mr. Gochenour. At Chairman

Randolph's direction, Secretary Pro Tempore Christopher Bedwell called for a voice vote: Mr. Randolph ("aye"), Mr. Gochenour ("aye"), Derek Grenier ("aye"), Brad Fleming (absent), James Young (absent). The motion carried and the Bylaws were adopted.

8.0 REVIEW ORDINANCE RECOMMENDATIONS- 2024 VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATION

(Discussion of these items inadvertently occurred in reverse order relative to the Board agenda. The meeting minutes reflect those consecutive discussions.)

8-B House Bill 959- Towing Violations; Enforcement requiring a second authorization: Board Member Gochenour asked why the requirement to obtain signature of property owner(s) prior to towing. T&ES Deputy Director Moorer indicated there have been discussions from the November 2024 Council meeting regarding equity. The council has asked staff to ensure that additional safeguards are included to deter predatory towing. Mr. Gochenour shared that he believes the signature requirement will be problematic (for example, in shopping centers with limited management staff), and there may be too many issues or restrictions, and vehicle removals may take more time. He also advised of possible reprisals against property owners requesting tows; does this violate property owners' rights? Mr. Gochenour thinks staff should reach out to property owners for comments/input. Deputy Director Moorer explained that if there's already a written contract between the towing company and the property owner, no second written authorization is required at the time of tow. Mr. Gochenour asked if there have been problems with predatory towing. Deputy Director Moorer responded that this has occurred in Alexandria and adjacent jurisdictions, so the General Assembly passed this law to allow localities to have the *option* to put this requirement in their municipal ordinances. Mr. Gochenour requested that this item be tabled; Deputy Director Moorer said the Board has the ability to defer the item and not take a position at this time. Chair Randolph asked about towing for expired tags. For apartment complexes, they are required to provide 48 hours' notice; towing for other dwelling types may be immediate. Mr. Grenier asked for a definition of "normal business hours", which is not expressly listed in the ordinance. There was speculation that the term is defined as whatever the operating hours are for the business located on the premises. Mr. Grenier also inquired where he could find any data on complaints. Deputy Director Moorer stated he would discuss this with staff to ascertain and respond. It was noted that this legislation applies to private and public property. Chair Randolph asked about liability for payment; per Mr. Gochenour, it is the responsibility of the vehicle owner. Mr. Gochenour motioned to table discussion, with Chair Randolph seconding. The item was deferred.

8-A House Bill 925- Towing; vehicles with expired registration, 48-hour notice, civil penalty: Deputy Director Moorer spoke to the language added, requiring written notice and posting requirements (48 hours), and the provision of civil penalties for non-compliance. Mr. Gochenour asked if there were any changes relative to property owner associations. Deputy Director Moorer responded there were no changes "Multifamily dwelling unit" does not include any lot within a

development created pursuant to the Property Owners' Association Act (§ 55.1-1800 et seq). Division Chief Syler indicated this has already been implemented procedurally, but this legislation would just add the wording to the City's ordinance(s). Mr. Gochenour asked about the difference between State and City Codes; Division Chief Syler responded and read the pertinent section of the legislation. Vehicles must be kept within the jurisdiction of removal/tow. The City Code changes will simply align it with the State Code. Mr. Grenier motioned to support the legislation, with Mr. Gochenour seconding. The motion passed.

- 9.0 ANNUAL FAIR MARKET ANALYSIS: Deputy Director Moorer shared the ordinance update from City Council meeting in November 2024, summarized the trespass towing fee, and showed a table reflecting the differences and changes. The summary included past Board actions in 2015, 2020, and 2024. The analysis was performed by the Office of Performance & Accountability. Deputy Director Moorer went through the presentation, referenced and explained the appendices in the presentation/attachment and their potential impact. He also spoke to how the City compares to other area jurisdictions. Mr. Gochenour added that towing providers attempt to be flexible and some of their fees are negotiable. Other Board members asked about City towing and impoundment fees and Impounding Officer, Alex Frias responded. Mr. Gochenour asked if the Board can recommend revising fees for the City's impounding operation. Deputy Director Moorer responded yes. Mr. Grenier motioned to accept the analysis/report, and Mr. Gochenour seconded. The motion passed.

PUBLIC HEARING

- 10.0 OPENING THE PUBLIC HEARING: Chairman Randolph opened the public hearing and invited comments, etc. from those attending.
- 11.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON LEGISLATIVE CHANGES & FAIR MARKET ANALYSIS: Mike Reynolds, of A-1 Towing asked the Board about provisions if a vehicle owner cannot afford to pay. Mr. Frias responded on behalf of the City; they attempt to work with the owner, depending on circumstances. Sometimes there are referrals to charitable organizations. Mr. Reynolds inquired as to the City's objectives and provided some examples. Deputy Director said the Board could take this information back for analysis and consideration. Chair Randolph mentioned certain situations, such as a person without a fixed address and living out of their car, providing examples of how he has handled these. Chairman Randolph suggested the City maintain a list of charities / assistance organizations that could be distributed in such situations. Deputy Director Moorer said the City staff will look into this.
- Jason Harris, of Henry's Towing, spoke to similar situations and suggested the City establish some policies to make ordinances more uniform. Mr. Harris also spoke to the second signature requirement in legislation, indicating the objective is to reduce incidents that are potentially unsafe. He also spoke to processes that caused problems, citing a situation on Housing Authority property as an example.
- 12.0 CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING: Hearing no more requests for comments, Chairman Randolph closed the public hearing.

- 13.0 NEW BUSINESS/ROUNDTABLE: Deputy Director Moorer briefed the board on Senate Bill 1332 and provided a status update. The Bill increases the maximum fee from \$150 to \$210. If the Board wants the City to consider an increase, a fair market analysis will be required for 2026. Mr. Syler read and provided a summary of the Senate Bill. Mr. Gochenour motioned for a study (Fair Market Analysis) regarding the sunset provision of the \$20 fuel surcharge. It was asked if the Board would like to see any other information or analysis in a presentation? Mr. Gochenour indicated if Council wants to look at other towing issues, the Board is ready to assist. Mr. Grenier seconded the motion, which carried.
- 14.0 TOWING SERVICES CONTRACT RESOLICITATION PLANNING AND DEADLINE: Mr. Christopher Bedwell mentioned the upcoming contract expiration date of June 25, with no options for renewal, and provided a timeline for uninterrupted service. He then requested Board input regarding the new contract specifications. Board comment included possible adjustments for public tows, large vehicles, and how to handle electric vehicles (storage, fire blankets, other safety barriers). Christopher Bedwell gave attendees his business card for future suggestions, which will be shared with the Board. Mr. Syler inquired how personal property stored in vehicles is handled by towing/recovery providers. Mr. Gochenour responded that photographs are taken upon intake, but the vehicle's contents are not inventoried. Perhaps a contract addition will be drafted as to a policy or process to inventory property inside vehicles. Chair Randolph recommended involving Public Safety in this process and asked if there are provisions for flatbed towing versus other methods. Mr. Gochenour spoke to his company's procedures, including using a wheel lift dolly for All-Wheel Drive vehicles. Is the use of wheel dollies in the existing contract? Staff will ascertain. Are there instances in which towing cannot occur due to the contractor having improper equipment? If so, insert pertinent language in solicitation.
- 15.0 ADOPT NEW CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND SECRETARY FOR 2025: Chair Randolph motioned to table officer elections. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gochenour and passed.
- 16.0 NEXT MEETING: Darryl Syler and Deputy Director Moorer asked members to check their calendars for a possible June meeting. Please let Darryl Syler know of availability, or any potential schedule conflicts.
- 17.0 ADJOURNMENT: Hearing no other requests for business, Chairman Randolph adjourned the meeting at 7:57p.m.

The next meeting of the Towing Advisory Board will be determined (time and place)