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MEMORANDUM

Police Department

To: City Council & Mayor Jackola

Date: May 23, 2025

From: Chief Frank Stevenson 

Subject: Tow Rotation Discussion

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an overview of the Lebanon Police Department's current tow rotation policy and to address the ongoing issue of abandoned RVs, trailers, and boats within city limits.

Tow Rotation Policy Overview

The Lebanon Police Department maintains a non-preference tow rotation list to ensure that qualified towing companies within a 15-mile radius of the City of Lebanon are utilized equitably. This rotation enhances both operational efficiency and fairness, providing timely assistance to officers, especially during incidents involving multiple vehicles.

The tow list currently includes the following:

- Lebanon Towing
- AA Towing
- Aerostar Towing
- Rogers Towing

The list is used for non-preference tows, which include:

- Disabled vehicles
- Abandoned vehicles
- Vehicles involved in traffic crashes (no owner preference)
- Traffic crime impoundments

Traffic crime impoundments are authorized when a vehicle:

- Poses a public safety risk
- Obstructs traffic flow
- Is involved in criminal activity
- Is a hazard to others

INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM & TEAMWORK

- Is vulnerable to vandalism or theft
- Cannot be legally moved by the driver

The Department's internal policy emphasizes the **prompt and safe removal** of such vehicles from public roadways to ensure community safety and mobility. To note, Lebanon Police have utilized non-preference tow rotation approximately 196 times over the past year.

This rotation system has consistently proven effective during the twenty plus years that I have been with the Department. It is important to note that we have not had a complaint regarding the tow rotation or the towing of these vehicles.

Abandoned RVs, Trailers, and Boats

Over the last three to four years, the City has observed a **significant increase in abandoned RVs, trailers, and boats** that have become public nuisances. These vehicles are often deteriorated, unsightly, and difficult to remove. Identifying and contacting responsible parties is challenging due to frequent changes in ownership, and citations or warnings often do not result in voluntary removal.

The rules and regulations imposed by the state of Oregon regarding disposal protocols, such as storage, waste removal (black and grey tanks), freon and asbestos, have made remediation very difficult and costly, generally amounting to \$2,500 to \$5,500 per recreation vehicle (RVs, trailers and boats) for abatement. In addition to labor, moving, and storage, typical comprehensive costs include fees for asbestos sampling and related abatement, freon recovery, pumping of black water tanks, hauling, and excavator and related dumping fees.

At the height of the problem, in 2020 **no tow companies within the city limits were willing or able to remove these vehicles** due to their size, the cost of dismantling, and storage limitations. The situation escalated to the point where **officers used personal vehicles** to tow them off roadways to mitigate safety risks.

During that time, Rogers Towing agreed to assist in removing these abandoned vehicles. Their operational lot met the criteria outlined in our policy, and they were added to the rotation. Although Rogers Towing explored establishing a permanent storage yard within city limits, that plan has not materialized.

In the past year, AA Towing and Aerostar Towing have joined Rogers in providing removal services for abandoned RVs, trailers, and boats. Despite the substantial logistical and financial burdens involved, we appreciate their willingness to address this ongoing need.

Conclusion

The Lebanon Police Department continues to manage the tow rotation system with fairness, efficiency, and a focus on community safety. The issue of abandoned vehicles remains a priority, and we recognize the vital role local tow companies play in maintaining clean and safe streets.

We appreciate the Council's continued support and are happy to provide additional information or answer any questions as needed.