



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Council

From: Jeff Smith, Assistant City Manager

Date: April 9, 2026

Re: Options for Procurement of a Bucket Truck

Background

In the FY2026 Budget, staff identified the purchase of a bucket truck on the list of proposed capital items for FY26 in the Capital Improvement Plan. The bucket truck was specifically listed in the capital projects and was detailed in the FY26 budget proposal with an allocated amount of \$150,000 (p. 305). The capital project was identified as a Public Works project; however, staff determined that the vehicle could be used by multiple departments rather than have a single department use such a versatile piece of equipment.

In February of 2026, Fleet Director Ross Burrell approached me with a quote for the vehicle from Custom Truck One Source in the amount of \$150,000, delivered. I assisted Director Burrell in creating a bid specification form to seek other bids. Bids were sought from Loganville Ford and Akins Ford. Loganville Ford provided a responsive bid of \$153,084.36. Akins Ford did not respond to the bid request. Custom Truck had the vehicle in stock; Loganville Ford would have to order one.

The proposal was brought before City Council for ratification at their Work Session on March 9, 2026. The item was placed on the consent agenda for the City Council Meeting of March 12. At the March 12 meeting, the purchase was removed from the consent agenda and brought to the council for action. The council voted to table the purchase for 30 days and asked staff to provide analysis of different options to include:

- Outright purchase of the vehicle
- Leasing a vehicle
- Purchasing a pre-owned vehicle
- Rental of a vehicle on an as-needed basis

Purchase of a Vehicle

This specialty vehicle would primarily be used by multiple departments within the city to include Public Works, Facilities, and Technology. It also has potential utility for Police and other departments. It is not so specialized as to be of use to a single department or for a single use.

- The purchase option provides a single capital expenditure in a single budget year.
- As a new vehicle, the vehicle and components would come with warranties and without wear and tear or unknown issues.
- The bid for purchase of the vehicle is within the budget amount allotted for FY2026.

Vehicle Lease

At this time, staff is unsure if heavy-duty specialty equipment of this nature would be available as a lease. I have not been involved with government leasing vehicles in the past, and find it to be out of the norm for governmental operation; however, we can explore the possibility with a new round of bid requests for a Lease.

An issue with a lease would be ongoing budgetary costs to cover payments on a lease. This would require us to incur the short-term “loan” payment in a budget category, thus reducing the available amount in a department budget for the life of the lease. In addition, this would be booked as a long-term liability for the city.

Leases are generally used when the acquisition is expected to last only a few years or will need replacing within a short time horizon. The best analogy would be the difference between leasing a personal vehicle or purchasing one. Generally, the lease option works better for people who will need to change vehicles on a shorter time horizon. For people who will keep a vehicle for its useful life, the purchase makes more sense. The amount expended on a lease provides no ownership or equity.

Purchase of a Used Vehicle

Finding a vehicle meeting the specifications we posted is difficult. Even national dealers such as Custom Truck One Source does not have a used vehicle in inventory matching our specifications. The closest trucks to our specifications are 9-11 years old. Typically, these vehicles are long term capital expenses that are held for a useful life. As an example, Director Burrell discussed the current bucket truck owned by the city is 40 years old – a 1986 model.

The purchase of a used specialty vehicle such as this would also come with inherent risks concerning the reliability of the vehicle and the lift. We would be purchasing a vehicle with whatever conditions it may have (known or unknown) based on normal wear and tear.

As-Needed Rental

There is no accurate manner to forecast the annual need for the vehicle across the various departments. So much of the analysis would depend on unknown variables such a weather events and what may come up necessitating the use of a bucket truck. This also creates budgeting issues in attempting to forecast the amount of times the truck would be needed, for how long it would be needed each rental period, and the cost for such rental(s).

In speaking with large rental companies, the availability of such vehicle rentals is somewhat sparse. The likelihood of having one ready-when-needed is low, but not zero. This would be important especially for unplanned use rather than long-term planned needs such as seasonal decorations.

In addition to availability issues (i.e. having one when the employees would need it), the location of an available unit would require staff to travel to the location to pick it up. This would cost the city in downtime for staff to pick up the equipment and then return it. This creates a system that is both less efficient and less effective.

Conclusion

Based on the above information, staff recommends the purchase of the vehicle. We believe it creates less issues for staff across the city from finance to administration to end-user. The purchase of the vehicle is balanced by the needs of the city across several departments. We do not see it as a spurious or frivolous expenditure, as it is needed by multiple departments in carrying out designated tasks.

We recommend the purchase of the vehicle from One Truck Custom Source for an amount of \$150,000, as a budgeted capital expenditure in the FY2026 budget.