



## City of Winston-Salem City Council Council Agenda Item Summary

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| <b>Title</b>           | <b>VMS- Vehicle Management Solutions Program</b> |
| City Council Committee | Public Safety Committee                          |
| Staff Lead (Presenter) | Captain Amy Gauldin                              |
| Department Head        | Chief William H. Penn. Jr.                       |
| City Manager/ACM       | Dr. Angel Wright-Lanier, ACM                     |

### Agenda Item Summary

Recommended Council Action      Resolution Approval  
Suggested Motion Options      [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Strategic Focus Area      Good Government  
Strategic Plan Objective      GG1: Delivering Efficient and Effective Core Services  
Anticipated Fiscal Impact      Fiscal Impact Anticipated: See Analysis in Summary

### Summary of Information

The Winston-Salem Police Department (WSPD) oversees approximately 4,500 tow requests annually. Currently, tow requests are managed manually by telecommunicators and patrol officers, requiring phone calls to towers, repeated status checks, and limited real-time visibility. This manual process contributes to officer downtime on roadways, extended timeframe for citizens awaiting service, extended call-handling by telecommunicators, and reduced efficiency overall. Since 2019, WSPD has managed tow ordinance compliance and citizen inquiries/complaints associated with tow services provided under the ordinance. This responsibility has been challenging to maintain due to staffing and the time required to efficiently and effectively ensure compliance with the ordinance, as well as fielding questions or complaints regarding the service.

Vehicle Management Services and Autura ARIES partnership, hereinafter referred to as VMS, offers a towing management and vehicle management solution which is a proven system that automates tow dispatch and citizen access services. It also offers an impound management component which is still being evaluated.

VMS is a comprehensive software solution designed to streamline and modernize tow management operations. The system enables officers to submit digital tow requests

directly from mobile data computers, smartphones, or tablets, while providing real-time visibility into tow truck locations and estimated arrival times. Partner agencies utilizing Autura have reported significant reductions in tow response times—from over 30 minutes to as little as 12 to 14 minutes.

In addition to operational improvements, the system enhances transparency and community service through 24/7 citizen access, allowing vehicle owners to locate their towed vehicles online. This feature not only reduces call volume but also increases public trust and accessibility. Autura also provides robust data and analytics tools, ensuring compliance with tow rotation policies, accountability, and support for data-driven decision-making. The platform further automates impound management processes, including regulated fees, invoicing, liens, and notifications, minimizing administrative workload and the potential for error.

For the Winston-Salem Police Department (WSPD), the implementation of Autura is projected to generate substantial efficiency gains. The system is expected to:

- Save approximately 3,125 telecommunicator hours annually.
- Save patrol officers roughly 1,250 hours per year.
- Ensure compliance with the Winston-Salem Police Department Rules and Regulations governing Wrecker Dispatch.
- Provide a more streamlined approach to handling citizen inquiries involving the wrecker dispatch services.

Beyond measurable cost savings, the implementation of VMS offers significant public safety and service benefits:

- Faster roadway clearance that reduces the risk of secondary crashes (with each 10-minute delay increasing “struck-by” risk by 12%)
- Fewer citizen complaints due to transparent tow management
- Decreased traffic congestion resulting from expedited scene clearance.

Collectively, these outcomes position VMS as a critical tool in enhancing both operational efficiency and community trust in WSPD’s service delivery

The total annual cost for the Vehicle Management Solution (VMS) will be covered by an adjustment to administrative and towing fees. WSPD will increase its current \$10 administrative fee per tow by \$43.75. The total administrative fees charged for general tow requests will be \$53.75. This increase is dedicated to covering system costs, ensuring revenue neutrality. This structure ensures that the cost of the system is borne by users of towing services, not the City’s General Fund or the tow companies.

The proposed fee increase includes a \$50 increase for general services tow requests.

### **Analysis of Fiscal Impact**

Implementation of the Vehicle Management Services (VMS) system will not require the use of General Fund dollars. The total annual cost of the system will be offset through adjustments to existing towing and administrative fees, ensuring revenue neutrality. Specifically, the Winston-Salem Police Department (WSPD) will increase its current \$10 administrative fee per tow by \$43.75, for a total of \$53.75 per tow, dedicated to covering the annual software and maintenance costs associated with VMS.

The proposed fee structure also includes a \$50 increase for general service (non-law enforcement tows) for the tow companies. These adjustments will allow recovery of the system's operating expenses without impacting the City's General Fund or towing service providers. Total administrative and tow fees will increase by a maximum of \$93.75 for general non-law enforcement tows.

Over time, implementation of VMS is anticipated to generate indirect cost savings through improved operational efficiency, including approximately 3,125 telecommunicator hours and 1,250 officer hours saved annually, resulting in enhanced service delivery and reduced roadway clearance times. It will also ensure compliance with the Winston-Salem Police Department Rules and Regulations governing Wrecker Dispatch and provide a more streamlined approach to handling citizen inquiries involving the wrecker dispatch services.

#### Attachments

- Resolution

|                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Committee Action              | PS 12/8/2025 |
| For:                          | Against:     |
| Remarks: Approved Unanimously |              |