



City of Lowell - Law Department


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MEMORANDUM

TO: Kevin J. Murphy, City Manager 

FROM: James F. Wellock, Assistant City Solicitor

DATE: February 14, 2018

SUBJECT: MOTION RESPONSE: 6.3 1/2/18 **Motion Response** - Req. City Mgr. provide a report regarding the policy of City vehicles being taken home; the number of vehicles issued to employees; and the associated costs.

SUMMARY:

City vehicles are used in four categories: fleet vehicles are assigned on a per shift basis and are not brought home; assigned vehicles are assigned to particular persons for use at work and are not brought home; a small group of vehicles are assigned to particular employees for use at work and to commute; last, a small group of employees who are always “on call” are permitted full use of a vehicle.

City Vehicles Brought Home – Policy

City vehicles are assigned to certain personnel for commuting to and from their domiciles where such assignment is in the best interest of the City and allows a more efficient performance of their job duties. In order to obtain the ability to commute in a City vehicle, the head of a department would request such a vehicle assignment from the City Manager. See Lowell Motor Vehicle Policy, §1.10. The use of City vehicles in these instances is limited to official travel and commuting. While detours *en route* to or from work are permitted, frolics are prohibited. Id.

The use of City vehicles for the purpose of commuting is to provide a more efficient job performance in that, for example, those employees assigned to vehicles may need to travel directly to the scene to perform their duties with equipment stored in the vehicle. Enabling those employees to commute to work in their City vehicle allows the employee’s job to be performed efficiently by removing the unnecessary step of retrieving the city vehicle and/or equipment from a City parking facility before proceeding to the scene.

The fourth category of City vehicle use is “full use” of the vehicle. This small group of employees are deemed “on call” at all times and includes the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Fire Chief, Police Chief, and DPW Director. Full use includes official and personal use.

City Vehicles Brought Home - Numbers

DEPARTMENT	COMMUTING USE	FULL USE	TOTAL COMMUTER VEHICLES
DPW	2	0	2
Parks	0	1	1
MANAGER	0	2	2
POLICE	15	1	16
FIRE	4	1	5
DPD	1	0	1
WasteWater	5	0	5
Water	0	0	0
Engineer	0	0	0
TOTAL	27	5	32

City Vehicles Brought Home – Costs

The City budget includes the costs for the entire vehicle fleet. Cost associated with vehicles can be broken into categories and the costs vary from year to year. These categories include vehicle acquisition, vehicle maintenance supplies and labor, fuel and personnel. Currently, Police, Fire and Public Works including Water and Waste Water independently budget for motor vehicle related costs within department budgets. For example, in FY18, the Police Department budgeted \$600,000 to fund garage repairs and service, gas and motor oil supplies, garage and auto part supplies and police cars. In FY18, the Fire Department budgeted \$10,000 for repairs and maintenance equipment however, did not budget for acquisition of new vehicles. Additionally, Public Works budgeted \$ 212,250 for repair and maintenance equipment, lease and purchase of equipment, auto tire and tubes, and gas and motor oil.