## AN ORDINANCE ADDING CHAPTER 287 TO THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF WHARTON, COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:48-1, the governing body of a municipality may make, amend, repeal, and enforce ordinances to manage, regulate and control the finances and property of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Wharton desires to supplement and amend the Revised General Ordinances of the Borough of Wharton, Morris County, New Jersey, with the addition of Chapter 287, Towing Services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wharton, County of Morris, State of New Jersey as follows:

SECTION ONE. The Revised General Ordinances of the Borough of Wharton, Morris County, New Jersey is hereby supplemented with the addition of Chapter 287, Towing Services, to read as follows:

## **CHAPTER 287 – TOWING SERVICES**

Sec.287-1 Definitions.

<u>Abandoned vehicle</u> – any vehicle partially dismantled, not readily capable of operation under its own power, not currently used for transportation, not currently licensed, wrecked, or junked. Also, any vehicle whose owner has terminated the use and care of the vehicle and has either indicated by his words or actions an intent to leave it and no longer claim ownership of it or left it without making arrangements for storage with the owner, occupant or person in control of the premises on which it is located.

Administrative fee – fee to be charged when the services provided are needed as a result of a motor vehicle accident. The administrative fee represents compensation to the tow Operator for paperwork and phone calls with insurance companies and others in connection with the motor vehicle accident. The administrative fee is in addition to the Basic Towing Service and any other associated fees.

<u>Basic Towing Service</u> – the removal and transportation of a vehicle from a highway, street or other public or private road, or a parking area or from a storage facility and other services normally incident thereto, including tarping. Basic Towing Service does not include consent tows, road services, or winching.

<u>Consent Tow</u>- the towing of a vehicle from the scene to anywhere other than the Operator's garage or towing a vehicle from the Operator's garage to a third location. Consent tows are outside the terms of this chapter. The fees for consent tows are to be determined by the Operator and do not have to comply with the fees set forth herein.

<u>Debris Clean-up</u> the clean-up of debris at the point of impact, the final resting point of the vehicle and the associated debris field. Debris clean-up includes the use of absorbents to soak up spills or vehicle fluids as permitted by law.

<u>Heavy Duty Wreckers</u> – provision of basic towing services for a vehicle that weighs 26,000 pounds or more.

<u>Light Duty Wreckers</u> – provision of basic towing services for a vehicle that weighs up to 10,000 pounds.

<u>Medium Duty Wreckers</u> – provision of basic towing services for a vehicle that weighs 10,001 pounds to 25,999 pounds.

<u>Operator</u> – a towing company that has been approved by the Borough Administrator and placed on the Rotational List by the Chief of Police.

<u>Road Service</u> – when an Operator responds to a service call and makes repairs to a passenger vehicle on site without towing said vehicle back to the service garage. Repairs may include, but are not limited to, such activities as repairing flat tires, providing a jump start, and/or opening a locked vehicle.

Rollback Truck - this vehicle shall be classified no lighter than 14,000 GVW.

<u>Secured Storage Facility</u> – a facility that is inside a locked building or outside in a completely enclosed area with at least a 6 foot fence, with at least one entrance and exit gate and is completely illuminated to safe guard the motor vehicles.

<u>Specialized Equipment</u> – equipment needed for recovery of a vehicle that is not identified in this chapter.

Storage fees – the maximum allowable amount to be charged by an Operator for a 24-hour period or fraction thereof for passenger vehicles. A new 24-hour period begins at 12:01 a.m. Storage is charged on a per calendar day or any part thereof.

Tarping – covering a motor vehicle to prevent weather damage.

<u>Towing Operators Rotational List ("List")</u> – schedule prepared by the Chief of Police of towing Operators that were approved by the Borough Administrator, to be called by the Police Department for vehicle assistance.

<u>Vehicle Access Charge</u> – when the owner and/or insurance representative must be accompanied into the secured storage facility to inspect, remove personal belongings, adjust and/or take photographs or removal of vehicle from storage facility for pick-up.

<u>Winching</u> – the process of moving a motor vehicle by the use of chains, nylon slings or additional lengths of winch cable from a position that is not accessible for direct hook up for towing a motor vehicle. Winching also includes recovering a motor vehicle that is not on the road and righting a motor vehicle that is on its side or upside down, but does not include pulling a motor vehicle onto a flatbed tow truck.

Sec. 287-2 Purpose and Administration.

(a) The purpose and intent of this chapter is to provide criteria and standard operating procedures that are reasonable, non-exclusionary and non-discriminatory in the selection and use of towing Operators, on a rotational basis, in providing towing, road services and the storage of vehicles,

including, but not limited to, the towing of vehicles that are abandoned, disabled, illegally parked or stolen, vehicles involved in accidents and/or those vehicles suspected or identified by the Borough as being involved in criminal activity.

(b) The Borough Administrator and the Chief of Police are hereby designated to administer and enforce all provisions of this chapter.

Sec. 287-3 Application Procedure.

- (a) It shall be the responsibility of the Borough Administrator or his designee, with the advice of the Chief of Police, to approve all applications for towing Operators, to be utilized on a rotational basis for the purpose of providing emergency towing, road and storage services to the owners of motor vehicles utilizing Borough roads when he determines that the following requirements have been met by the applicant. On forms prepared by the Borough, and provided by the Borough Administrator or his designee, all towing Operators shall submit written documentation that they are in compliance with the qualification requirements set forth in this Chapter and as specifically listed below:
- (1) Submission to the Borough Administrator of a Certificate of Insurance in accordance with the requirements set forth in Section 287-8 below.
- (2) Submission to the Borough Administrator of a Disclosure of Investment Activities in Iran form to be provided by the Borough.
- (3) Submission to the Borough Administrator of the appropriate Affirmative Action evidence as required by N.J.S.A. 10:5-31 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 17:27.
- (4) Submission to the Borough Administrator of a valid Business Registration Certificate issued to them by the State of New Jersey pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:32-44.
- (5) Submission to the Borough Administrator of the names and contact information for at least four (4) business references.
- (6) Submission to the Borough Administrator of the names, addresses and driver's license numbers of all proposed drivers and employees who will be rendering services known at the time of the application. Submission to the Borough Administrator of certified copies by the Business Owner of current MVC abstracts for the last five (5) years and a criminal name check for all Operators, officers and employees. Neither the MVC abstracts nor the criminal name check can be older than 30 days from the date of the application. In order to keep information current, all Operators will be required to submit updated rosters of drivers within a reasonable period not to exceed thirty (30) calendar days of a new hire to the Chief of Police along with the necessary MVC abstracts for the last five (5) years and a criminal name check for all new drivers.
- (7) Submission to the Borough Administrator of a detailed listing of all equipment to be used while performing services under this chapter. The listing shall include the type of vehicle, the storage location of vehicles and whether the vehicle is owned or leased.
- (8) All Operators shall submit to the Borough Administrator a list of the lifting capacities of the devices for types of vehicles.
- (9) Submission to the Borough Administrator of the size, location and security features of a secured storage area for all vehicles towed by the Operator.

Sec. 287-4 Rotational List and Supervision.

- (a) Following the approval of applications by the Borough Administrator, it shall be the Chief of Police's responsibility to establish a Towing Operators Rotational List. The Police Department shall call the Operator in sequential order as set forth by the Chief so that each Operator will be given the opportunity to respond to individual calls as received by the Borough. The Police Department shall have the right to call the next Operator on the list should an Operator fail to respond to a call within twenty (20) minutes during the day and thirty (30) minutes at night or if the first Operator called cannot be reached by telephone or advises that he is unable to respond. The final decision on the Operator called shall be within the discretion of the Shift Commander based on individual emergent need such as vehicle location, traffic, volume of police calls for assistance and proximity of the Operator to the vehicle location.
- (b) The Chief shall maintain due vigilance over all Operators to make certain that the tow trucks and other related vehicles and equipment are maintained in a safe working condition for transporting and hauling disabled vehicles. The Chief or his duly designated representative shall have the right, at all times, to inspect all towing vehicles and related equipment which perform services pursuant to this chapter.
  - Sec. 287-5 Operator Performance Standards.
- (a) Non-transferable. Operators shall not assign, transfer, convey, sublet or otherwise dispose of the contract or any part thereof to anyone other than another tower on the Borough's rotational list, without the prior written consent of the Borough.
- (b) Compliance with Applicable Laws. Operators shall comply with all New Jersey State and Federal Laws as they pertain to the performance under this Chapter.
- (1) Operators shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities in all services, programs, and activities provided or made available by public entities.
- (c) Performance and Drivers. Each Operator must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Borough that the Operator is thoroughly qualified and experienced in the towing and removal of vehicles of all types, and that he/she has the facilities, equipment, expertise, licensing, personnel and storage areas to perform the services required by this chapter in a manner satisfactory to the Borough.
- (1) The Borough reserves the right to disqualify from consideration any application by an Operator who was declared in default on a previous contract with the Borough.
- (2) All Operators shall employ a sufficient number of employees to comply with the Operator's and Borough's minimum operational requirements.
- (3) No person shall be employed by an Operator for work for the Borough under this chapter unless approved by the Chief of Police subsequent to a driver history and criminal background check.
- (4) All drivers of all Operators shall be over the age of eighteen (18) years and must have a valid, current driver's license and CDL where required.
- (5) All employees of the Operator shall wear uniform clothing with a clear designation (patch or stitching) indicating the employee's first name and a clear designation of the name of the Operator company.
- (6) The service, equipment, and personnel of all Operators will be subject to periodic inspections and approval by the Borough.

- (7) The Operator on call pursuant to the "List" shall be responsible for towing of vehicles on a twenty-four (24) hour basis, seven (7) days a week.
- (8) The Operator shall respond promptly to all requests for towing service by the Borough. The Operator shall respond and be present at the towing location within twenty (20) minutes of receipt of notice of towing, between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M., and within thirty (30) minutes between 4:31 P.M. and 7:59 A.M. unless heavy or unusual traffic conditions within or outside the Borough prevent the Operator from arriving within the above time periods. In that event, the Operator shall arrive in a reasonable time given allowance for said traffic conditions. Failure to arrive promptly as provided herein may subject the Operator to suspension or removal from the "List" pursuant to section 287-10.
- (9) As part of the Basic Towing Service, the Operator shall remove and tow to the storage facility all vehicles described by the Borough of Wharton Police Department which include, but are not limited to abandoned, illegally parked, disabled, involved in accidents, suspected of involvement in criminal activity, or otherwise confiscated. The decision on when a vehicle is abandoned, illegally parked, disabled, involved in an accident or suspected of involvement in criminal activity shall be made by the Borough of Wharton Police Department and the Operator shall have no responsibility for the decision.
- (d) Records of Inspections. All Operators shall record all vehicles towed on billing forms as soon as possible after each vehicle is towed. All personal property shall remain in the vehicle.
- (e) Rights of Owners. The owner of any vehicle towed shall have the right to remove property belonging to him from the stored vehicle unless a "POLICE HOLD" is marked on the towing form and/or vehicle.
- (1) A vehicle owner or his representative shall have the right to take photographs of stored vehicles for insurance purposes.
- (2) Complaints of any kind, relative to service, overcharging, theft of parts, damage to towed or stored vehicles, discourteous treatment, and the like, shall be referred to the Chief of Police for investigation.
- (3) The Borough's on-call Operator must be used for towing services unless, at the discretion of the Police Officer on scene, the vehicle(s) to be towed are not blocking the roadway or otherwise causing a public hazard. In which case, a vehicle owner may summon a towing Operator other than the on-call Operator to tow, store, or otherwise provide services to the vehicle owner. Said service will be provided at no cost whatsoever to the Borough. The servicing tower is not subject to the rates specified by virtue of this chapter. In the interest of public safety, customer requests for a specific towing vendor shall not be honored at crash and recovery scenes.
- (f) Emergency Services. In addition to the service herein outlined, all Operators are required to be oncall and available to provide services to the Borough during storm events, periods of snow emergencies, traffic emergencies, disasters, and any acts of God, and for any other reason when so designated by the Borough Administrator, and/or the Chief of Police or their duly authorized representatives.
- (1) Emergency service will begin when the Chief of Police or his authorized designee notifies the Operators that all Operators must be on call due to an emergency and shall end when he terminates the emergency status by calling the Operators.
- (2) The Operator may, during the emergency, designate temporary areas owned or leased by him or subcontractors with the approval of the Chief of Police or his representative, for the storage of

- disabled vehicles to said area. During said emergencies, the Operator shall be entitled to charge the rates included in this chapter to the owners of the vehicles so removed.
- (g) Dealing with the Public. In all of his/her dealings with the public in connection with the contract, the Operator is expected to act in a professional manner and at all times to be courteous and respectful toward members of the public as well as representatives of the Borough of Wharton. While members of the public, especially those whose cars may have been towed or impounded, may at times resort to strong language, threats, and unbecoming behavior toward the Operator, the Operator is expected to exercise restraint and not to respond in kind. Repeated reports to the Borough of Wharton Police Department of discourteous behavior by the Operator, which can be substantiated and documented, may be considered by the Borough as sufficient cause for suspension or removal from the "List" pursuant to section 287-10 below.

Sec. 287-6 Equipment Regulations.

- (a) All leased and rented equipment must be permanently located at the Operator's lot at all times.
- (b) Each piece of equipment must meet the minimum standards set forth herein. Equipment that cannot meet these minimum standards shall not be used to perform services under this chapter.
- (c) The Operator is solely responsible for the safety, maintenance and operation of each piece of equipment used to perform services under this chapter.
- (d) All Operators shall provide a minimum of four (4) vehicles to comply with the terms of this chapter, at least one of which must be a hydraulic truck and at least two must be flatbed trucks.
- (e) All tow vehicles shall be equipped with the following, at a minimum:
- (1) Two-way radios or cell phones.
- (2) Chains to secure vehicles to the flatbed.
- (3) Equipment necessary to tow motorcycles.
- (4) Wheel lifts with safety straps to prevent damage to the towed vehicles.
- (5) Steering locks for towing vehicles from the rear.
- (6) Absorbent materials utilized to absorb liquid spills which, if left on the roadways, could create hazardous conditions.
- (7) Broom and shovel.
- (8) Snatch blocks.
- (9) Lock out tools.
- (10) Equipment to jump start a vehicle.

Sec. 287-7 Storage Facilities.

- (a) Each Operator shall maintain a principal place of business operation and a secured storage facility within five (5) miles of the Borough of Wharton.
- (b) Towed vehicles may not be stored upon a public street or alley; they must be stored by the Operator within the secured storage facility.
- (c) The Operator shall be responsible for each vehicle in its storage area until final disposition and removal as ordered by the Borough. All vehicles, regardless of condition, must be stored singly and so arranged to permit inspection and subsequent removal when the vehicle is retrieved, sold or otherwise removed. Adequate walkway inspection space must be provided at all times.
- (d) The Operator must provide a secured storage facility (inside and/or outside).

- Sec. 287-8 Insurance and Indemnification.
- (a) Submission of Certificate of Insurance. All towing Operators shall submit a Certificate of Insurance to the Borough Administrator which certificate shall name the Borough as "an additional insured." The Certificate shall provide evidence that the towing Operator carries the following insurance coverages:
- (1) Automobile Liability. Combined single limit coverage in the minimum amount of seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000.00).
- (2) Garage Liability. A minimum of seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000.00) for each occurrence.
- (3) Garage Keepers Liability. A minimum of forty-five thousand dollars (\$45,000.00) for each occurrence.
- (4) Worker's Compensation Insurance
- (b) The towing Operators agree that to the fullest extent permitted by law, they shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Borough from and against any and all claims, suits, judgments and demands whatsoever, including, without limitation, cost, litigation expenses, counsel fees and liabilities with respect to injury to or death of any person or persons whatsoever, or damage to property of any kind by whomever owned, arising out of or caused or claimed to have been caused in whole or in part by the negligent acts or omissions of the towing Operators or any other person directly or indirectly employed by the towing Operators while in the performance of rendering any services pursuant to the scope of this section.
  - Sec. 287-9 Towing and Storage Fees.
- (a) The following fees to be paid by the motor vehicle owner directly to the Operator represent the maximum fees permitted under this chapter. It shall be unlawful for any Operator to charge a fee in excess of the fees prescribed in this section for the services regulated therein. For all fees that are hourly rates there is a one hour minimum and beyond the first one hour, the fee will be assessed in 30 minute increments.
- (b) Additional Labor (as needed) per person. Ninety-five dollars (\$95.00) per hour
- (c) Administrative Fee. Thirty-five dollars (\$35.00) flat fee
- (d) After Hours Vehicle Release Fee. Forty-five dollars (\$45.00) flat fee
- (e) Basic Towing Service by a Light Duty Wrecker. One hundred thirty-five dollars (\$135.00) flat fee
- (f) Basic Towing Service by a Medium Duty Wrecker. Two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) flat fee
- (g) Basic Towing Service by a Heavy Duty Wrecker. Four hundred fifty dollars (\$450.00) flat fee
- (h) Debris Clean-up. Seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) flat fee
- (i) Light Duty Road Service Charge. Eighty-five dollars (\$85.00) per hour
- (i) Storage Rate. Thirty-five dollars (\$35.00) per day for passenger vehicles

- (k) Vehicle Access Charge. Fifty dollars (\$50.00) flat fee
- (l) Winching Charge by a Light Duty Wrecker. One hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00) per hour
- (m) Winching Charge by a Medium Duty Wrecker. Two hundred seventy-five dollars (\$275.00) per hour
- (n) Winching Charge by a Heavy Duty Wrecker. Five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per hour
- (o) The rates applied to towing services performed under this chapter shall be posted in a conspicuous place, visible to the public at the Operator's storage facility and principal place of business.
- (p) All fees are subject to N.J. State laws, including but not limited to, N.J.S.A. 39:10A-1(c), which provides that when a vehicle is abandoned due to the death or incapacitation of the driver or any passenger, the person storing the vehicle shall charge the owner of record or the security interest holder no more than \$100.00 for the first 72 hours after the vehicle is placed on the premises.
- (q) Consent tows and the use of specialized equipment to perform a recovery service are permissible and are outside the terms of this chapter.
- (r) In no instance shall the Operator request payment from the Borough for any services rendered to the owners of private vehicles except, however, in those cases where the Police Department authorizes the removal of a Borough owned vehicle.
- (s) Towing of any and all disabled Borough vehicles shall be covered under the pricing listed in this chapter.
- (t) The Operator shall prepare a bill for towing charges for each vehicle towed, consistent with the rate schedule of towing services in this chapter. Prior to the release of any vehicle by the Operator from the storage facility, the Operator shall obtain payment for its towing fee and storage as indicated on said bill.
  - Sec. 287-10 Suspension or Removal from List for Non-Compliance.
- (a) The Chief of Police shall have the power to suspend an Operator from the Towing Operators Rotational List for a period of up to thirty (30) calendar days for failure to comply with any provision of this chapter. A subsequent violation may result in the permanent removal of an Operator from the Towing Operators Rotational List for a twelve (12) month period. An Operator may appeal the Chief's ruling of either a suspension or a permanent removal. In such cases, an appeal may be filed with the Borough Administrator within ten (10) business days of the Chief's decision. The Borough Administrator shall render his determination within twenty (20) business days. The Borough Administrator's determination as rendered shall be final and conclusive under this chapter.
- (b) In addition, failure to comply with the Borough's Zoning, Land Use and Property Maintenance codes or failure to pay municipal taxes may subject any Operator to suspension from the Towing Operators Rotational List upon request to the Chief of Police from the Borough's Construction Code Official, Zoning Officer, Health Officer, or Tax Collector. Any Operator suspended from the Towing Operators Rotational List for any violation of the Borough's Zoning, Land Use and Property Maintenance codes shall have the right to due process and appeal as set forth in paragraph (a) above.

- (a) No impounded vehicle shall be released without proper authorization from the Wharton Borough Police Department. Vehicles may be released by tow Operators between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays. After hours vehicle releases are at the discretion of the tow Operator and are subject to the After Hours Vehicle Release Fee.
  - Sec. 287-12 Sale of Abandoned or Unclaimed Vehicles.
- (a) Vehicles designated and determined to be abandoned by the Borough of Wharton Police Department shall be removed to the Operator's storage area. The last known registered owner shall be notified in writing by the Borough of Wharton Police Department within fifteen (15) days of vehicle being towed that the vehicle is in violation of the law and must satisfy all State and local laws pertaining to the registration and insurance requirements. If the owner does not comply or respond to this notification, the police department will initiate the proper title to take control of the vehicle within ninety (90) days of having the vehicle towed to the storage area. The Borough of Wharton Police Department will make application for a certificate of ownership or junk title through the NJ Motor Vehicle Commission.
- (b) Whenever any motor vehicle that was towed by an Operator pursuant to this Chapter 287 shall remain unclaimed for the minimum holding period set forth in N.J.S.A. 39:10A-1b, such vehicle may be subject to sale at public auction as provided in N.J.S.A. 39:10A-1 et seq.
- (c) The Borough Council shall, by resolution, provide for the sale of abandoned or unclaimed vehicles at public auction, after notice as required by N.J.S.A. 39:10A-1 et seq.
- (d) The following procedure shall be followed in regards to the auction of abandoned or unclaimed vehicles:
- (1) The estimated value ("EV") of the vehicle shall be determined as well as the outstanding towing and storage charges to the date of the anticipated auction.
- (2) If the "EV" of the vehicle exceeds \$400.00 and is equal to or more than the aggregated towing and storage charges to the date of the auction, the vehicle should be sold at public auction with a minimum bid equal to the amount of the outstanding towing and storage charges. If at auction, the amount bid is equal to the minimum bid, all of the funds are paid to the person towing and storing the vehicle from the monies given to the Borough from the sale. If the bid exceeds the minimum, any excess is retained by the Borough.
- (3) If the "EV" of the vehicle exceeds \$400.00 but is less than the outstanding towing and storage charges due, the Borough should auction the vehicle with a minimum bid equal to the "EV" of the vehicle and pay the entire amount over to the person who towed and stored the vehicle up to the amount of accrued towing and storage charges, retaining any amount over the outstanding charges.
- (4) If the "EV" of the vehicle is less than \$400.00, then the municipality should auction the vehicle without a minimum price and pay over to the person towing and storing the vehicle whatever it receives, provided that it is equal to or less than the aggregate amount outstanding.
- (5) If no bid is received in any of the above scenarios, then the Borough can pay the person towing and storing the vehicle the \$400.00 (from its own coffers) and take title to the vehicle or pay nothing to the person towing and storing the vehicle and instead convey the junk title to that person.
- (6) Any conveyance of title (or application for title) to the person towing and storing the vehicle should be accompanied by a release signed by them, releasing the Borough from any liability for the payment of any further fees to the person towing and storing the vehicle.

- (7) If title becomes "vested" in the Borough, it retains the vehicle or disposes of it in the normal course, following the sale provisions of the Local Public Contracts Law.
- (8) A public sale needs to take place in all cases in order to establish title in a third party (successful bidder) or to establish title in the Borough (when no one bids, or the minimum bid is not achieved).

Sec. 287-13 Violations and Penalties.

First Reading: December 12, 2016 Second Reading: December 27, 2016

**Borough Clerk** 

In addition to the removal from "the list", any person or business found guilty of a violation of this chapter shall be punishable as provided in Chapter 1, General Provisions, Article I, General Penalty.

SECTION TWO. All Ordinances of the Borough of Wharton which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed as to the extent of such inconsistency.

SECTION THREE. If any section, subsection, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

SECTION FOUR. This Ordinance shall take effect as provided by law.

ATTEST:	BOROUGH OF WHARTON
Gabrielle Evangelista,	WILLIAM CHEGWIDDEN,

MAYOR