

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER - AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET

Agenda Item: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 321 Relating to Control of Weeds, Grasses and Brush

Requested & Presented by: Darcy Perkins, Municipal Services Specialist

Meeting Date: Finance and Common Council on 02-03-2026

Committee Review: Public Works on 01-15-2026 – *Motion by Schultz to forward Ordinance 2026-____, amending Chapter 321 relating to control of weeds, grasses, and brush, to the Finance Committee for review and recommendation to the Common Council. Seconded by Fruit. Motion carried 2-0 by voice vote.*

Background: Chapter 321 governs the control of weeds, grasses, and brush on private property. The current ordinance contains outdated procedures, excessive detail, and reliance on a Weed Commissioner, which has limited the City's ability to enforce nuisance vegetation issues efficiently. Staff revised the ordinance for clarity, consistency, and enforceability, while aligning with Wisconsin statutes and best practices.

The proposed revision:

- Repeals and recreates Chapter 321 in a simplified format.
- Establishes a clear 6-inch height standard.
- Preserves allowances for natural landscaping.
- Removes reliance on Weed Commissioner role.
- Removes mandatory courtesy notices while retaining them as an option.
- Streamlines enforcement and billing procedures, allowing actual abatement and administrative costs to be recovered through special charges on the tax roll.

Cost Basis and Justification: Staff evaluated the City's actual labor and equipment costs incurred when performing weed, grass, and brush abatement to ensure the proposed are reasonable, defensible, and proportionate. A minimum charge of ½ hour per occurrence is proposed to cover mobilization, equipment, and documentation. Typical City costs range from \$45–\$60 based on staff time and equipment.

Legal Authority: Wis. Stat. §§ 66.0407 (noxious weeds); 66.0517 (nuisance abatement); 66.0627 (special charges); and Ch. 74 (tax roll collection).

Department Recommendation: Staff recommend adoption of Ordinance 2026-01, amending Chapter 321 relating to control of weeds, grasses, and brush.

Financial Impact: The ordinance improves the City's ability to recover abatement costs. Previously, procedural delays often resulted in costs being absorbed by the City rather than the owner responsible for the property.

Requested Action:

FINANCE: Motion to recommend to the Common Council adoption of Ordinance 2026-01, amending Chapter 321 relating to control of weeds, grasses, and brush.

COUNCIL: Motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-01, amending Chapter 321 relating to control of weeds, grasses, and brush, as presented.

Attachment(s):

- Ordinance #2026-01_Amending Chapter 321 Relating to Control of Weeds, Grasses and Brush