



MINUTES OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2026 AT 5:30 PM

COUNCIL ROOM, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN ST., RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Cairns called the meeting to order at 5:32PM. A quorum was present. Keller affirmed proper notice. Members present: Ryan Cairns, Melony Walters, and Karin Tepley. Members absent: Rachel Schultz. Others present: Jasen Glasbrenner, Ashley Oliphant, Amanda Keller, and members of the public.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *Motion by Walters, seconded by Cairns to approve the July 28, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (2-0).*

PAYMENT OF BILLS: *Motion by Cairns, seconded by Walters, to approve the bills as presented. Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously (2-0).*

DEPARTMENT REPORTS: Oliphant reported that early in-person voting will be held October 20-30 for the November 3 election. Staff are evaluating a tower land-lease proposal. Two bequests designated for public safety and the cemetery were accepted and, upon receipt, will be held in restricted accounts for at least six years in accordance with legal guidance. Economic development updates included a WEDC program review, continued work with the A.D. German Warehouse, monitoring of the Stori Field development, and UW campus redevelopment planning with Richland County.

BUDGET vs ACTUAL REVIEW: Oliphant reviewed the financial summaries through August 31, 2026. She reported that activity was generally consistent with expectations and that identified variances were attributable to known items, including economic-development pass-through transactions. No action was taken.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Review of Title Search Results for 929 W Seminary Street (Tax Parcel 276-2012-0900) and Next Steps

Oliphant reported that the title search for Tax Parcel 276-2012-0900 identified the City's \$75,000 loan/grant mortgage and an unknown additional \$14,000 mortgage involving Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) and Southwest CAP. The property cannot be conveyed to Lydia's House until the encumbrances are resolved.

Michael Breninnger, representing Lydia's House, urged prompt action due to safety, liability, and grant-funding concerns and requested that SWCAP be held accountable.

Motion by Walters, second by Cairns to direct the City Attorney to resolve the City's portion of the outstanding mortgage on the property at 929 W Seminary Street (Tax Parcel 276-2012-0900), while retaining the City's ability to pursue any legally available action against SWCAP to recover the funds, coordinate with NHS to resolve its outstanding mortgage, and proceed with issuing a warranty deed as soon as the title issues are resolved. Motion carried unanimously (2-0).

2027 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Provider and Annual Cost

Oliphant reviewed Richland County Resolution 26-22, which established a countywide EMS model funded through a countywide levy based on equalized value. Under the communicated process, municipalities receiving County EMS would no longer separately contract or budget for service. Oliphant noted that the resolution has not been repealed, amended, or replaced.

A September 16 letter issued at the direction of the County Executive and Finance Committee instead asked 12 municipalities currently participating in the Richland EMS to confirm participation by October 15 and contribute toward EMS costs based on population. The City's proposed 2027 contribution was approximately \$126,000, compared with more than \$157,000 in 2026. The Committee discussed that the letter did not align with the existing

resolution or previously communicated process and that no County Board action reconciling the two had been identified.

Additional concerns included the absence of a proposed service agreement, uncertainty regarding whether EMS would be provided through a countywide system or individual municipal contracts, future service after 2028, and the potential effect on emergency coverage and participating municipalities. The Committee agreed that declining service was not advisable but that the City should not commit funds without clarification and written terms.

Motion by Cairns, second by Walters to notify the County that the City wishes to receive EMS coverage in accordance with Richland County Resolution 26-22, without committing to the proposed payment pending clarification of the County's service model and receipt of a written agreement outlining the service and financial terms. Motion carried unanimously (2-0).

Connect Communities Grant Application and Request for Municipal Accounting and Bookkeeping Services

Mayor Tepley presented a WEDC small-business development grant opportunity for downtown businesses, with awards ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000 and an October 2 application deadline. Connect Communities had substantially completed the application and requested that the City provide limited accounting services, including receiving and disbursing grant funds. Oliphant explained that because Connect Communities operates under City sponsorship, the City would retain responsibility for appropriate financial oversight.

Christy Adsit, representing downtown stakeholders, expressed concern that Connect Communities had not met an agreed upon August deadline, after which Southwest Partners and the Greater Richland Area Chamber of Commerce intended to pursue the grant. She also stated that the other organizations had the staffing, accounting resources, and community relationships necessary to administer and promote the program. Walters encouraged any eligible organization to submit a grant application, regardless of whether Connect Communities applies.

Motion by Cairns, second by Walters to refer the grant application and request for municipal accounting services to the Common Council for consideration at an upcoming special meeting. Motion carried unanimously (2-0).

Legal Services Agreement with Murphy Desmond S.C.

Oliphant presented the proposed legal services agreement following the firm's selection through the RFP process. General legal services would be billed at \$225 per hour, with separate rates for special services, and Attorney Michael Windle would have primary responsibility. Oliphant will obtain an independent review by Boardman & Clark of the agreement prior to Council action and confirm the travel-billing language. The Committee also discussed the distinction between selecting a law firm, approving a legal services agreement, and appointing an individual City Attorney, as well as the need to clarify the status of the prior appointment.

Motion by Walters, second by Cairns to recommend approval of the Murphy Desmond S.C. legal services agreement to the Common Council. Motion carried unanimously (2-0).

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: October 27, 2026 at 5:30 PM

ADJOURNMENT: *Motion by Cairns, seconded by Walters to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 PM. Motion carried unanimously.*

Meeting minutes recorded by Amanda Keller