



MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 01, 2026 AT 6:30 PM

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

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Tepley at 6:30 PM. Present: Bradley Wegner, Chris Jarvis, Frank Hoffman, Rachel Schultz, Melony Walters, Douglas Martyniuk (virtual), Steve Downs, and Ryan Cairns.

Keller confirmed that the agenda was posted on Friday, August 28, 2026, and an Amended Agenda posted Monday, September 1, 2026 at 11:30 AM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: *Motion by Wegner, second by Schultz to approve the agenda with Closed Session moved immediately following Item 6. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *Motion by Walters, second by Cairns to waive the reading of the minutes of August 18, 2026, in lieu of printed copies and approve said minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).*

MAYOR AND ALDERPERSONS

Tepley: Reported the Richland Center Cemetery and Emergency Services were named beneficiaries of the estate of Vernon J. Jenkins and Sandra J. Jenkins in the amount of \$161,111.11. She also reported presenting proclamations recognizing Betty Hayes Baxter for eight decades of community service, Constitution Day on September 17, and Buddy Poppy Day on September 18.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Oliphant, City Administrator: Reported that 12 municipalities continue to meet regarding the future of emergency medical services following Richland County's planned discontinuation of service in December 2028. The next regional meeting was scheduled for September 28 at 6:00 PM in the Council Room.

Glasbrenner, Director of Public Works/Economic Development: Reported ongoing pothole repair, curb and crosswalk painting, tree removal, mowing, aquatic center shutdown, brush collection, and possible improvements to the Jefferson Street parking lot. Economic development work continues with the UW campus/Hive Drive redevelopment, hotel project, and Stori Field development.

Gald, Utility Manager: Reported replacement of shared utility poles along Highway 14 west, continued lead service-line replacements, and anticipated mobilization for the Valley View project on September 8. Valley View and Mill Street drainage work were expected to continue through mid-November. Gald also reported that the Fire Department has 40 members and continues recruitment.

Jones, Chief of Police: Reported a high volume of calls and arrests during August, including drug, disorderly conduct, resisting, domestic, and victim-intimidation cases. He highlighted the seizure of approximately one pound of methamphetamine during a traffic stop and noted that the investigation remains ongoing.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Oliphant reported that updated financial statements were not yet available due to the timing of the meeting and would be provided at the next meeting. Treasurer Molzof included a delinquent personal property tax listing in the meeting packet for council review and confirmed collection efforts remain underway.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: *Motion by Walters, second by Cairns to approve bills from August 19, 2026, through September 1, 2026, as presented in the amount of \$194,815.59. Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously (8-0).*

PUBLIC COMMENT

Catherine Lewandowski, 795 E. Second Street, speaking on her own behalf, reviewed the respective authority of the Park Board and Common Council under Wis. Stat. § 27.08. She emphasized that parks and recreation are public services and stated that the costs of providing those services should not be characterized as financial losses.

Dave Lins, raised concerns regarding speeding on Bohmann Drive near the Primary School and submitted a petition requesting an interactive speed-feedback sign. He was directed to discuss the request with the Director of Public Works and Police Chief.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Public Hearing on Discontinuation of Shared Ride Taxi Service: Oliphant reported the City's agreement with Running, Inc. has an initial term ending December 31, 2026, followed by optional one-year renewals. The approximately \$400,000 annual program is supported by state and federal grants and fare revenue; however, the City's levy contribution has ranged from approximately \$12,000 to \$78,000 annually. Service changes or discontinuation require public notice and Wisconsin Department of Transportation review.

Mayor Tepley opened the Public Hearing at 6:55 PM.

Public Hearing Participation: Tony Burke of Town Taxi supported discontinuation and described Town Taxi's ridership, service area, provider agreements, and plans to expand capacity by year-end. Oliphant relayed comments from Justin of Running, Inc., who expressed interest in continuing service and concerns regarding affordability and service capacity if the subsidized program ends. Council members also reported constituent concerns regarding affordability, weekend availability, and transportation to employment.

Motion by Walters, second by Wegner, to close the Public Hearing in the matter of Discontinuation of the Shared Ride Taxi Service. Public Hearing was closed at 7:10 PM.

Consider Discontinuation of the Shared Ride Taxi Service: The Council discussed current fares, alternative transportation and voucher programs, uncertain annual levy costs, possible changes to service hours or fares, federal requirements, private-sector competition, and the City's ability to reapply for the program in the future.

Motion by Walters, second by Wegner to discontinue the Shared Ride Taxi Service effective December 31, 2026. Upon roll-call vote, motion carried unanimously (8-0).

Resolution 2026-11: Stating the City of Richland Center's Concerns Regarding the Proposed BECI 765kV Transmission Line and Requesting Action by the Public Service Commission: Schultz summarized concerns regarding the proposed 765kV transmission line's potential effects on homes, farms, businesses, tourism, the Driftless Area, wildlife, and Richland Airport. The Council discussed Section 5, which authorizes the Mayor and City Administrator, with advice of the City Attorney, to seek formal intervenor status after a CPCN application is filed. The provision remained in the resolution.

Motion by Schultz, second by Downs to waive the reading and adopt Resolution No. 2026-11 stating the City's Concerns Regarding the Proposed BECI 765 kV Transmission Line and Requesting Action by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

Symons Recreational Complex: Operations, Intergovernmental Agreement Status, and City Contributions: Schultz reported that the County included the proposed Symons Recreation HVAC project in its borrowing package and did not anticipate requesting a City contribution toward that project. The current intergovernmental agreement expires at the end of 2026 and must be renegotiated. Council members were encouraged to submit concerns or proposed terms to Administrator Oliphant or City representatives involved in the discussions. No action was taken.

Selection and Contract Award for City Attorney / Legal Services: Oliphant reported that the City received proposals from Murphy Desmond S.C., represented by Attorney Michael Windle, and Axley LLP, represented by Attorney Bill Cole. *Motion by Jarvis, second by Walters, to discuss the proposals received.*

Cole summarized Axley's municipal practice and stated that he would serve as the City's primary attorney, attend meetings as needed, and use other firm attorneys when specialized expertise or coverage was required. He encouraged the Council to consider total legal costs rather than hourly rates alone.

Windle stated that Murphy Desmond's proposal designated him as the City's primary attorney and that continuing to represent Richland Center was part of his employment arrangement with the firm. He also noted that other Murphy Desmond attorneys would be available for specialized matters or meeting coverage when necessary.

The Council discussed hourly-rate structures, municipal experience, proximity and meeting availability, institutional knowledge, potential retainer arrangements, and the need to execute a separate legal services agreement defining the final terms.

Motion by Schultz, second by Downs, to select Murphy Desmond S.C. for City Attorney/legal services and proceed with a legal services agreement. Upon roll-call vote, motion carried 5-3 with Wegner, Jarvis, and Cairns opposed.

Website and Agenda Management Migration & Contract: Oliphant reported that the City's current Municode website and agenda-management platforms are reaching end of life and must be migrated by December 31, 2026. CivicPlus proposed migration to AMM Select and Municipal Websites Central: Starter under a three-year agreement. Staff requested a one-year option to allow comparison with other vendors but had not received a response. The Council discussed the phased price increases and the need to maintain website and public meeting services.

Motion by Walters, second by Hoffman to approve CivicPlus Quote Q-124062-1 for a three-year agreement and authorize migration and implementation with the ability of staff to negotiate a shorter-term agreement if possible. Upon roll-call vote, motion carried unanimously (8-0).

BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION (WALTERS)

WEC Election Security Subgrant Funds: *Motion by Walters, second by Downs to approve the purchase of the HP ProBook 4 G2i from PDS/Pellera for an amount not to exceed \$2,000 using Election Security Subgrant funds and authorize any remaining grant funds to be applied to eligible managed IT services. Upon roll-call vote, motion carried unanimously (8-0).*

Adoption of Purchasing & Procurement Policy: Walters presented the proposed Purchasing and Procurement Policy, which replaces the Procurement section of the Financial Policies adopted November 3, 2020. The Council discussed competitive-procurement exceptions under Section 7.4 and clarified that an exception from competitive bidding does not eliminate the applicable purchasing-approval threshold.

Motion by Walters, second by Hoffman to adopt the Purchasing and Procurement Policy as presented, effective September 1, 2026, replacing the Procurement section of the Financial Policies adopted November 3, 2020. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION (JARVIS)

Consider the Conditional Use Permit Application of Schreiber Foods Inc to process dairy products at 920 Sextonville Rd (Tax Parcel 276-2100-7630): *Motion by Jarvis, second by Wegner to approve a Specific Conditional Use Permit for Schreiber Foods, Inc. at 920 Sextonville Road (Tax Parcel No. 276-2100-7630) for dairy-product processing in accordance with § 409.04(3a), subject to the conditions approved by the Plan Commission. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).*

Conditions imposed:

- 1. This permit authorizes the processing of dairy products at 920 Sextonville Road Parcel No. 276-2100-7630, as described in the application.*
- 2. Dairy processing operations shall not encroach upon required parking, fire lanes, or public sidewalks.*
- 3. All fuel, chemicals, and other hazardous or flammable materials associated with the use shall be stored in appropriate leak-proof containers in compliance with applicable Wisconsin DNR, EPA, and fire code requirements.*
- 4. All industrial waste materials, including empty chemical containers, shall be disposed of in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations per Ord. 409.06(e).*
- 5. This permit is granted as a Specific Conditional Use and runs with the land.*

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION (DOWNS)

Temporary Alcohol Beverage License for St. Mary's Parish Festival on Sept.19th 2026 from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM: *Motion by Downs, second by Schultz to approve the Temporary Alcohol Beverage License for St. Mary's Parish Festival on Sept.19th 2026 from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).*

Parade Permit Application for the Canyon of Lights Parade on Oct. 3rd 2026 from 7:30PM to 9:00PM: *Motion by Downs, second by Wegner to approve the Parade Permit Application for the Canyon of Lights Parade on Oct. 3rd 2026 from 7:30PM to 9:00PM. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).*

Approval of Operator Licenses Application for Alyssa Gander: *Motion by Downs, second by Wegner to approve the Operator Licenses Application for Alyssa Gander. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).*

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Recommendation for Award of 2026 Street Maintenance Bid: Schultz presented the Public Works Committee recommendation to award the 2026 Street Maintenance and Improvements project to the low bidder, Fahrner Asphalt Sealers, LLC. Glasbrenner confirmed that no state or federal grant funding was available for the proposed maintenance work.

Motion by Schultz, second by Hoffman to award the 2026 Street Maintenance and Improvements bid to Fahrner Asphalt Sealers, LLC at a cost not to exceed \$250,000. Upon roll-call vote, motion carried unanimously (8-0).

2026 Dike Inspection Contract: *Motion by Schultz, second by Hoffman to approve the Vierbicher Pine River Dike Annual Inspection proposal at a cost not to exceed \$3,500. Upon roll-call vote, motion carried unanimously (8-0).*

APPOINTMENT & CONFIRMATION: None

CLOSED SESSION: Review status, performance terms, and financial incentives regarding the Development Agreement with Cobblestone Hotels.

Enter Closed Session: The Chair may entertain a motion to enter into Closed Session pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 19.85(1)(e) to deliberate or negotiate the investing of public funds or conduct specified public business requiring a closed session for competitive or bargaining reasons. *Motion by Cairns, second by Wegner to enter closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 19.85(1)(e). Motion carried unanimously. Council entered closed session at 7:41 PM.*

Reconvene into Open Session: pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 19.85(2) to consider and take possible action on matters discussed in Closed Session. *Motion by Wegner, second by Downs to reconvene in open session. Motion carried unanimously. Council reconvened in open session at 9:36 PM.*

Action on Matters Discussed During Closed Session: *Motion by Cairns, second by Schultz to extend the Cobblestone Hotel Development Agreement for one year to continue efforts to attract investors. Upon roll-call vote, Jarvis, Downs, Schultz, and Cairns voted aye; Walters, Martyniuk, Hoffman, and Wegner voted no. Mayor Tepley voted aye to break the tie. Motion carried 5-4.*

ADJOURNMENT: *Motion by Wegner, second by Walters to adjourn at approximately 10:44 PM. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).*

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:44 PM.

Meeting Minutes Recorded by Clerk Amanda Keller