CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER
AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET

Agenda Item: 2027 EMS Contract with Richland County

Meeting Date(s): General Government Committee on 10/27/2026 and Common Council on 11/3/2026

Prepared by: Ashley Oliphant, City Administrator

Background: The City contracts with Richland County for EMS. The current contract ends December 31, 2026. The County's plans for 2027 have changed several times:

May 19, 2026: The County Board adopted Resolution No. 26-22, creating a countywide emergency medical system and directing the County to levy above its state levy limit to fund it starting in 2027, as allowed by Wis. Stat. § 66.0602(3)(e)6.

September 10, 2026: The County Executive and Finance Committee decided that only one-third of 911 dispatch and radio tower costs would be levied above the limit as countywide EMS. The County would not levy any money, above or below the limit, for municipal ambulance costs.

September 16, 2026: The County Administrator sent 2027 terms to the 12 participating municipalities. The 2027 ambulance budget was $357,000, with the County paying $75,000 and the municipalities paying $282,000. Costs were split by 2020 census population instead of call volume as in 2026. The City's full-year share was $126,336 (44.8%). Municipalities were asked to commit by October 15.

September 23, 2026: The City Administrator replied that the City wished to continue receiving service under the countywide system adopted in Resolution 26-22. She asked whether the County had amended, rescinded or replaced that resolution, and said the City was willing to work with the County and the other municipalities to reach terms all could agree to.

September 28, 2026: The County Administrator replied that Resolution 26-22 had not been changed, that the County was still proceeding with a countywide emergency medical system for 2027, and that contracts would be offered to the 12 municipalities *after* October 15. That evening, the WTA Richland Unit EMS Committee consisting of the 12 municipalities using Richland Ambulance found that taking over the County ambulance service would not be workable. It voted 11-0 to issue a request for proposals to select a different third-party ambulance provider.

October 20, 2026: Purportedly because not all municipalities committed, the County Board adopted Resolution No. 26-65. It rescinds Resolutions 26-22 and 26-34, ends County ambulance service at 11:59 p.m. on June 30, 2027, and offers a six-month contract for January through June 2027. Municipalities must sign and return it by December 1, 2026. If they do not, the offer is withdrawn and the County will report the failure to contract to state agencies, including the Department of Health Services and the Department of Revenue.

October 21, 2026: County representatives told the City Administrator the decision is final, but the County may be flexible on the end date, such as through August 2027, if a new provider is not ready by July 1. The County Administrator further advised a contract with a December 1 return deadline would be sent soon.

The County has not yet sent the City a contract. The attached draft is from the County Board packet. The City Attorney has reviewed the resolution and draft contract and found no legally objectionable terms.

Key contract terms:

Term: Effective when signed by both parties and ends at 11:59 p.m. on June 30, 2027. Either party may end it early with 60 days written notice.

Cost: $63,168 for the City, based on population. Billed quarterly, due within 30 days of each invoice. No added fees without written agreement.

County duties: Provide licensed ambulance service, staff, vehicles, equipment, training, records, and insurance. Provide a call summary within 60 days after the contract ends.

City duties: Maintain roads, enforce address numbering, and enforce the driveway ordinance.

Options: The City is not required by law to provide ambulance service, but has arranged it for residents for many years. Regardless of this contract, County ambulance service ends June 30, 2027. The City's options are:

1. Sign the six-month contract and use the time to secure a new provider. The 12 affected municipalities are working together on a request for proposals so a new provider is in place by July 1, 2027.

2. Contract with a different provider starting January 1, 2027. This is not possible in the time available.

3. Start a City or joint municipal service. This is not realistic in the time available.

4. Not arrange ambulance service. The full impact on residents' access to emergency medical care is unclear.

Financial Impact: $63,168 for January through June 2027. This is half of the $126,336 full-year share the County quoted on September 16. For comparison, the City paid $157,275 for all of 2026.

Funding Source: 2027 Operating Budget

Recommended Action:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT: Motion to recommend that the Common Council approve the Richland County EMS Service Contract for January 1 through June 30, 2027, in an amount of $63,168, substantially in the form presented, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign it and return it to the County by December 1, 2026.

COUNCIL: Motion to approve the Richland County EMS Service Contract for January 1 through June 30, 2027, in an amount of $63,168, substantially in the form presented, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign it and return it to the County by December 1, 2026.

Attachment(s): Richland County Resolution No. 26-22 (May 19, 2026); County Administrator letter to municipalities with cost allocation (September 16, 2026); Richland County Resolution No. 26-65 and draft EMS Service Contract from the October 20, 2026 County Board packet