

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER - AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET

Agenda Item:	2026 Richland County EMS Contract	Meeting Date:	Finance and Council on October 7, 2025
Requested by:	Ashley Oliphant, City Administrator	Attachment(s):	2026 EMS Contract

BACKGROUND: The City has historically received EMS through an agreement with the County, with the current contract set to expire on December 31, 2025. On September 26, 2025, the County provided a proposed one-year contract to continue EMS for the City and other participating municipalities, with a signing deadline of November 1, 2025.

Contract Analysis: The proposed 2026 EMS contract from the County includes material changes compared to the current and previous agreements. Given the nature of these modifications and the constrained review period, I cannot recommend approving the contract in its current form. The November 1, 2025, deadline provides insufficient time to fully assess the terms or resolve identified concerns effectively.

Proposed Remedy: To ensure uninterrupted EMS while addressing these issues, the City and County Administrators are collaborating to identify a mutually beneficial solution. Subject to the approval of the County Board/designated committee, the City has suggested a three-month extension of the current agreement through March 31, 2026. This extension would facilitate:

1. A comprehensive review of current EMS operations by a workgroup comprising representatives from participating municipalities and the County.
2. An evaluation of concerns with the proposed contract and potential amendments to determine if continued County EMS participation is in the City and other participant's best interest.
3. Exploration of alternatives, including forming a joint EMS district independent of the County or securing a new provider, to prevent any service disruption.

Legal and Community Considerations: While the City is not legally obligated to provide EMS unlike towns, it has a longstanding commitment to ensuring this critical service for residents. Abruptly ceasing participation without an alternative provider would create significant public health and safety risks, as no immediate replacement services are available. Collaboration with Richland Hospital may also be explored as part of transition planning to ensure a sustainable solution.

Recommendation

1. Decline to sign the proposed County EMS contract due to unresolved concerns and insufficient review time.
2. Formally request an extension of the current agreement through March 31, 2026, to allow for thorough evaluation and planning.
3. Accept a rate adjustment in the extended agreement, provided it excludes capital expenditures.

This approach ensures continued EMS coverage, addresses contract concerns, and supports a collaborative process to secure a long-term solution that prioritizes resident safety.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

- a) If one-year contract is approved as presented there will be an increase of \$52,422.50 from 2025 to 2026 amounting to a total cost of \$167,512.50 (the 2025 total cost is \$115,090); or
- b) If an extension is approved, an adjusted rate may also be approved but is yet to be determined by the County Board/designated committee. If no rate reduction occurs, it would be reasonable to assume the County would assess a cost of a quarter of the annual cost for the three-month extension period. The cost of the remaining nine months would be determined by the provider selected by each governing body.

FUNDING SOURCE: 2026 Budget – Ambulance/Contracted Service 10-52600-560

REQUESTED ACTION:

FINANCE: Motion to recommend to the Council to decline executing the proposed 2026 EMS contract with Richland County as presented and instead authorize the City Administrator to formally request an extension of the current EMS agreement through March 31, 2026, with a rate adjustment excluding capital expenditures, to ensure uninterrupted service and allow time for a thorough evaluation of service options.

COUNCIL: Motion to decline executing the proposed 2026 EMS contract with Richland County as presented and instead authorize the City Administrator to formally request an extension of the current EMS agreement through March 31, 2026, with a rate adjustment excluding capital expenditures, to ensure uninterrupted service and allow time for a thorough evaluation of service options.