



City of Racine, Wisconsin Agenda Briefing Memorandum

AGENDA DATE:

Intro to Council Date: December 2nd, 2025

Finance and Personnel Committee Date: December 8, 2025

Final Action Council Date: December 16, 2025

PREPARED BY: Fire Chief Steve Hansen

SUBJECT: Communications sponsored by Alder Horton on behalf of the Fire Chief requesting permission for the Purchasing Agent to sole source the purchase of a 2026 Medical Response Unit (ambulance) from Foster Coach of Sterling Illinois utilizing the Sourcewell Contract number 122123-RVG.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS:

For many years the fire department has standardized fire apparatus and our medical response units (rescue squads) on a basic design that is functional, and easily maintained. In addition we have moved away from extensive customization which is expensive to a more utilitarian design that accomplishes our operational needs. Since 2006 we have waived formal bidding on several medical response units (ambulances) with significant success and always under budget.

There are a number of positive attributes to acquiring this medical response unit (ambulance) from Foster Coach. Those attributes include:

- Knowledgeable Sales and Support Staff. They have always made themselves available on very short notice to answer questions or meet on technical issues that occasionally arise.
- Technical Engineering – Foster Coach working with Ford Motor Company and Horton Ambulance Company has redesigned and improved the construction of this new ambulance which gives the vehicle a life expectancy of 10+ years.
- Standardization of Equipment. This allows us to put the same equipment in the same location on all of the rescue squads which facilitates quicker access by crews on the scene of an emergency. You do not need to hunt down equipment in odd compartments due to different placement of compartments.
- The medical response unit is built for Wisconsin weather. Hot, cold, rain, snow, sleet, ice, and road salt is all part of the Wisconsin experience. Older fire department apparatus built by suppliers well south of Wisconsin have suffered major electrical and corrosion issues due to our environment. A quality control and engineering issue.
- Maintenance – When maintenance issues arise Foster Coach is quickly able to send their representatives or mechanics to us within a few hours of identifying a problem and recommend appropriate repairs. In addition Foster Coach has been very responsive to issues that have arisen when the vehicles have been outside their normal warranty period.
- Parts – With Foster Coach located in Sterling, Illinois they have a well-stocked warehouse of spare parts that can be acquired the same day or overnight depending on the severity of the failure.

- Foster Coach has always been willing to provide a loaner medical response unit when one of our primary units is down for repair.

In developing this request to waive formal bidding we have priced out similar medical response units to compare costs. Our CIP cost for 2026 is \$330,000.

Sole Source document included. The Horton ambulance patient compartment (box) is available through the SourceWell Contract number 122123-RVG.

STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is the recommendation of the Finance and Personnel Committee that the council waive formal bidding and the purchasing agent be directed to purchase a 2026 Ambulance from Foster Coach of Sterling Illinois.

FISCAL NOTE & BUDGETARY IMPACT:

Funding for this purchase is available in the 2026 CIP program.