



DEPARTMENT OF
**INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY**

CITY OF APPLETON
Department of Information Technology

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Action Item Memorandum

To: Human Resources & Information Technology Committee and Common Council

From: Corey Popp, Director of Information Technology

Date: February 29, 2026

Regarding: Request to Approve Participation in State of Wisconsin Wireless Contract

Recommendation

I am seeking approval for the City of Appleton to execute a service agreement with Verizon Wireless under the State of Wisconsin wireless contract. Participation under this State agreement allows the City to leverage competitively awarded, State-negotiated pricing and terms without issuing a separate RFP.

Background

The City has experienced persistent performance and reception issues with its current cellular provider, Cellcom, whose five-year contract expires in August 2026. While these concerns have been most acutely reported by the Appleton Police Department, connectivity limitations are affecting all City operations that rely on mobile voice and data services. Officers and field personnel have reported difficulty maintaining reliable cellular signal strength in core areas of the City, including College Avenue, as well as on the City's north side. Connectivity concerns have also been identified within the Police Department facility itself. These deficiencies affect both voice and data transmission and impact staff who depend on consistent mobile access for public safety and critical operational communications.

Cost Analysis

The I.T. Department worked with Verizon Wireless, the City Attorney's Office, and the City Purchasing Manager to obtain and review pricing available through the State wireless contract. Under the State agreement, the City's monthly service cost will increase from approximately \$11,167 to an estimated \$13,242, representing an annual increase of approximately \$24,900.

Verizon is offering a \$400 per-line lump-sum credit totaling approximately \$128,000, contingent upon activation of new devices and a minimum two-year service commitment. Verizon has identified three acceptable iPhone models available at zero cost under this structure. If the City selects from the zero-cost device options, the \$128,000 promotional credit will be applied to service invoices until exhausted.

The credit is projected to cover nine to ten months of service, reducing the budget impact during the transition. As a result, 2028 will be the first budget year reflecting the full annual service increase, with 2026 and 2027 reflecting lower net wireless expenditures than 2025 due to the application of the promotional credit.

Table of Financial Summary

| Description | Amount |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Current Incumbent Cost | \$11,167 per month |
| Proposed Verizon Cost | \$13,242 per month |
| Monthly Increase | \$2,075 |
| Annual Increase | \$24,900 |
| Verizon Credit | (\$128,000) |

Justification

From an infrastructure standpoint, the incumbent provider operates a regional wireless network, while Verizon operates a nationwide network with greater scale and investment. Transitioning to a national carrier reflects the City's need for network density, redundancy, and long-term stability to support mission-critical operations. While the proposed agreement results in an annual increase, it allows the City to leverage the pricing and protective contractual provisions of a competitively awarded State contract with an established national carrier.

Valley Transit Exception

Valley Transit will not be included in this conversion. As a recipient of federal transit funding, Valley Transit is subject to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) procurement and contracting requirements, including specific provisions related to competition, contract terms, and termination rights. As a result, Valley Transit may independently negotiate a new agreement with Cellcom or any other provider at their discretion, using federal procurement guidelines.

Contact Information

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