

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
DES MOINES, IOWA**

**CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 96-216  
MAY 28, 1996 AGENDA**

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
AMBULANCE BILLING SYSTEM	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	CHARLES MORGAN FIRE CHIEF

**SYNOPSIS —**

A proposal to implement an automated ambulance billing system and private ambulance billing services has been prepared.

**FISCAL IMPACT —**

Ambulance revenues are currently \$600,000 on billings of \$1.5 million. It is estimated that implementation of an automated system will increase ambulance billings by \$200,000 annually. Initial software costs of \$12,735 will be funded from Fire Department salary savings identified during the current fiscal year. Hardware costs, estimated at \$30,000 and to be purchased in FY96-97, will be offset by anticipated revenue increases. In addition, one full-time account clerk position (MEA Range 14 — \$19,451-\$23,145) assigned exclusively to ambulance billings has been diminished from the FY96-97 operating budget. The private contractor will receive revenues equal to five percent of collected billings.

**RECOMMENDATION —**

**Approval of purchase of software and contract for ambulance billings with Sweet Computer Systems.**

**BACKGROUND —**

For many years, the Des Moines Fire Department's Emergency Medical Service has been filing multiple reports with the City and with area hospitals after rendering care. These reports are used for various state and federal mandatory reports, as well as by the City in order to generate a bill for the services which have been provided. In addition, Medicare will be requiring an electronic billing system by July 1. As 65 percent of all ambulance billings are Medicare reimbursable, it is critical that the City implement a system to provide for electronic billing at this time.

In an effort to streamline the system and increase revenues for ambulance services, EMS sought a computer system that would eliminate report duplication. It is proposed that a pen-based computer entry system be used. This system will allow a medic to enter information one time which can be downloaded into several compatible systems.

A Request for Proposals was prepared and a compliant response was received from Sweet Computer Services Inc. (2037 Grand Avenue, West Des Moines, Brad Brady, President). No other bids were received, although at least one other local vendor could have submitted a project.

In addition to software for patient documentation and ambulance billings, SCSI will also provide training on the use of the system, and on an interim basis provide staff support and hardware at the Fire Department to begin implementation of the automated system immediately.

A recommendation for the purchase of computer hardware will be made at a later date.