

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-01

**TOWN OF KEWASKUM
WASHINGTON COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING PARTICIPATION IN A FEASIBILITY AND
FACT-FINDING PROCESS REGARDING LONG-TERM EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICES (EMS) SUSTAINABILITY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY**

WHEREAS, the Town of Kewaskum recognizes that emergency medical services (EMS) across Washington County are facing increasing challenges related to staffing shortages, declining volunteerism, rising call volumes, inflationary cost pressures, and long-term fiscal sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the Town further recognizes that state-imposed municipal levy limits significantly constrain the ability of local governments to sustainably fund EMS services over time; and

WHEREAS, after alternative and collaborative service delivery models have been proactively pursued, the Town of Kewaskum has become part of an intergovernmental partnership with the Village of Kewaskum and the City of West Bend for ambulance transportation and advanced life support services, while an independent and locally controlled fire department serving Kewaskum and surrounding communities has been maintained; and

WHEREAS, this partnership has allowed the Town to avoid the immediate need for a referendum, mitigate staffing risk, and contain escalating EMS costs, thereby demonstrating fiscal responsibility and forward-looking planning on behalf of Town taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, Washington County has initiated discussions regarding the potential creation of a countywide EMS funding mechanism, including the possible use of a county levy authorized under state statute, and has requested that municipalities adopt resolutions indicating interest in continued discussion; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kewaskum supports regional collaboration and good-faith exploration of long-term solutions, but has significant concerns regarding:

- The potential redistribution of local taxpayer dollars without clear benefit to contributing communities
- The deferral of staffing or operational costs by other municipalities in anticipation of county action

- The lack of defined allocation formulas, governance authority, and levy-offset expectations
- The risk that fiscally responsible and early-acting municipalities may be disadvantaged or subsidize delayed action elsewhere

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Board of the Town of Kewaskum, Washington County, Wisconsin, that:

1. **The Town of Kewaskum supports participation in a structured feasibility, data-gathering, and fact-finding process** to evaluate potential long-term EMS funding and coordination models at the county level.
2. **This resolution does not constitute approval of, nor commitment to, the creation of a countywide EMS system, levy, or governance structure**, and shall not be interpreted as consent to any future fiscal or operational arrangement.
3. The Town's participation is expressly conditioned upon the following principles being incorporated into any further analysis or proposal:
 - a. **Protection of First Movers:** Any funding or allocation model must explicitly recognize and credit municipalities that have already taken proactive steps to control EMS costs, address staffing challenges, or implement alternative service delivery arrangements.
 - b. **No Cost Deferral or Backfilling:** The Countywide process must not result in the transfer or socialization of deferred staffing, hiring delays, or unfunded operational needs from other municipalities onto Town of Kewaskum taxpayers.
 - c. **Transparency and Data-Driven Modeling:** Prior to any consideration of implementation, municipalities must be provided with clear, comparable, and auditable financial models showing:
 - i. Current EMS costs by municipality
 - ii. Projected costs under proposed alternatives
 - iii. Taxpayer impact scenarios
 - iv. Allocation methodologies and assumptions
 - d. **Preservation of Local Control:** Any future model must preserve local control over fire departments, EMS operations, contractual relationships, and service-level decisions, including recognition of existing intergovernmental agreements.
 - e. **Clear Scope Definition:** All future discussions, materials, and proposals must clearly distinguish EMS from fire suppression services and avoid ambiguous or interchangeable use of "Fire/EMS" unless fire services are explicitly included and authorized.
4. The Town of Kewaskum supports the creation of a **multi-jurisdictional work group** that includes representation from chief elected officials, town officials, municipal

administrators, fire/EMS leadership, and the County, with the express purpose of developing and evaluating options, not predetermining outcomes.

5. The requests that Washington County treat this process as **exploratory and collaborative**, recognizing that municipalities retain full discretion to participate, modify, or decline any future proposal based on local fiscal impact and community interest.
6. The Town Clerk is directed to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Washington County Executive, the Washington County Board of Supervisors, the Chief Public Safety Officer, and all Washington County municipalities.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 27th day of January, 2026, by the Kewaskum Town Board.



Scott J. Wollner

Kewaskum Town Chairperson

ATTEST:



Anne L. Trautner

Kewaskum Town Clerk