City Manager's Contract Governance Checklist

Public Safety Contracts

Excerpted from *Executive Oversight: The City Manager's Guide to the Business of Public Safety* by Jeff Cirminiello — Chapter 6

ORGANIZATION	REVIEWED BY	DATE

PURPOSE

This checklist ensures public safety operational contracts are driven by validated need, measurable outcomes, and executive governance before legal and procurement review.

This checklist is intended to be answered by the city manager or chief executive, not delegated.

1. Operational Need Validation (Before Procurement)

- ☐ The operational problem has been clearly defined
- ☐ The need has been validated by leaders who understand day-to-day operations
- ☐ The request addresses a real performance gap, not a convenience issue
- ☐ Non-technology or process alternatives have been considered

2. Capability and Redundancy Review

- ☐ Existing systems have been reviewed for overlapping functionality
- ☐ The organization has confirmed the capability does not already exist
- ☐ Integration with current systems has been evaluated, not assumed
- ☐ The request does not duplicate another department's tools or licenses
- ☐ The solution does not introduce AI functionality without explicit executive review

3. Operational Ownership and Executive Input

- ☐ An operational executive has been assigned ownership of the contract scope
- ☐ A leader with operational and financial understanding has reviewed the request
- ☐ End users were consulted, not just command or administrative staff
- ☐ The solution aligns with how work is actually performed in the field

4. Outcome Definition and Measurement

- ☐ The contract defines success in operational terms
- ☐ Performance measures are outcome-based, not feature-based
- ☐ Data or reporting requirements are included to measure effectiveness
- ☐ There is a clear method to determine whether value is being delivered

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5. Financial and Lifecycle Review

- ☐ Full lifecycle costs are identified (purchase, subscription, maintenance, training)
- ☐ Long-term budget impact extends beyond the initial contract term
- ☐ Future expansion or renewal risks are identified
- ☐ The contract does not create unavoidable future financial obligations

6. Executive and Operational Governance Before Legal Review

- ☐ Operational and financial governance review occurred before legal review
- ☐ Contract scope reflects operational need, not vendor defaults
- ☐ Legal counsel is protecting the city, not defining operational value
- ☐ Performance expectations are embedded before final legal language

7. Vendor Accountability and Exit Strategy

- ☐ Contract includes clear performance expectations and remedies
- ☐ The city retains audit or review rights where appropriate
- ☐ Termination clauses are realistic and enforceable
- ☐ The city is not operationally locked into the vendor without alternatives

Executive Test

If you cannot clearly explain why the contract is needed, what success looks like, and how performance will be measured, the contract is not ready for approval.

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