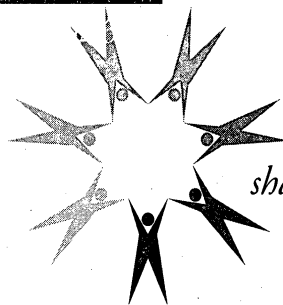


Department of Human Service Programs



sharing resources...building community

Jill Herold
Assistant City Manager

TO:

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Ellen Semonoff
Deputy Director

FROM:

Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services

DATE:

April 17, 2001

RE:

City Council Order 0-6, dated April 2, 2001, regarding Access to and Training on Computers for the City's Senior Population

Childcare & Family
Support Services

Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Community Schools

Community
Learning Center

Coordinating Council for
Children, Youth and Families
(Kids' Council)

Council on Aging;
Elderly Services

Low Income
Fuel Assistance

Multi-Service Center;
Homeless Services

Office of Workforce
Development

Planning & Development

Recreation

Youth

The Cambridge Citywide Senior Center has been offering computer access and training courses to seniors for the past five years. The Center started its offerings with five computers that were provided by the Friends of the Council on Aging. With some additional computers the City added to this inventory, there have generally been eight to nine computers available for seniors. Four of the computers had Internet access.

Over the past year, some of these computers were not functioning for periods of time.

The causes were the age of the computers as well as the high usage by seniors, some of whom were downloading and installing programs from the Internet or bringing in programs from disks that were infecting the machines. Periodic repairs to the computers were made, but several months ago almost all of the computers were not functioning.

In response to this problem, several actions have been taken. First, a priority order was placed with Dell Computers for seven new computers, which have arrived. These are all the newest Dell models, with full Microsoft Office package, full Internet capacities and fully integrated sound capabilities. Second, while we were awaiting the arrival of the new computers, the center's Computer Instructor was able to offer classes one day per week at Cambridge College. The Senior Center also partnered with the Central Square Library to staff blocks of time several days per week for seniors to have lab/open access to the library's computers before the general public's usage hours.

Of the seven new computers, two were installed last week and the remaining five will be installed and operational by the end of this week. One of the older computers has also been repaired, with Internet access restored, so that there are a total of eight computers available to seniors.



The standard offering of weekly classes for seniors includes several sections of computer basics, Internet basics, and intermediate computers. The classes are generally offered in four-week sessions that run continuously throughout the year. The computer lab is otherwise open to seniors for any usage, including Internet access, email, word processing and computer games.

These new computers are password protected to minimize future problems with damage caused by people downloading unauthorized programs. The Computer Instructor or a Senior Center staff person must be on site for general monitoring whenever the computers are available to seniors.



5,

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

April 23, 2001

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 01-169, regarding a report on access to and training on computers for the City's seniors, received from Assistant City Manager for Human Services Jill Herold.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "H" and "Y" at the end.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment



1545

Consent Agenda #5

Awaiting Report Item Number
01-169, regarding a report on
access to and training on
computers for the City's seniors.

In City Council April 23, 2001

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