

Councillor Sullivan said that there needs to be an assessment of what the City Council has for staff resources. He is concerned that staff will create even more work for councillors. He still must maintain contact with his constituents; anything that buffers those contacts would not be useful. Councillor Sullivan said that to date, the City Manager's staff has responded adequately to his requests for assistance.

Councillor Braude raised the issue of lawyering. The City's legal staff is very talented and hardworking, but there is a healthy tension between the legislative and the executive branches of Cambridge government. He asked Mr. Healy and Mr. Rossi for their comments. Mr. Rossi said that currently the City Manager is legally responsible for the City's actions in the end. Mr. Healy said that he believes that there is a legal issue under the charter.

Councillor Braude said that the Law Department and other City staff have provided anything that he has asked for in the last few months. But he knows from his twenty-five years of experience that he would be more effective if he had staff. Mr. Healy said that this is really the way this form of government is intended to operate. Individual City Councillors do not have strong power; the City Council as a body does.

Councillor Born stated that additional and individual contact with a City Council lawyer could be helpful, for example, in the area of zoning.

Councillor Davis noted the usefulness of informal roundtables with staff, like those Councillor Sullivan had a couple of years ago prior to budget hearings.

Councillor Born said that when she first requested information that led to this meeting, information about staff for the City Council, she was neither for nor against, but she knew many members of the City Council were interested in getting staff.

In response to a question from Councillor Braude, Mr. Healy said that his concern is both the nature of the interaction with his staff and the time constraints on the administrative staff.

Councillor Born said that her assumption is that staff would abide by the same pathways that are required for the City Council.

Councillor Braude then invited public comment.

John Gintell, 9 West Street, stated that he is opposed to staff. The question of what the staff is going to really do has not been answered. Councillors have to do their own research; there is enough administrative help. He suggested that City Council members take notes for a month on what they would want assigned if they had staff. There is also a question of who would supervise them. Cost is also a problem. Already there are two City Council staff, four to five Mayoral staff, some of the

Clerk's Office staff – that adds up to over \$1 million. He said that he believes it would also be a problem at election time.

Robert Winters, Broadway, stated that he agrees with Mr. Gintell's comments. He also sees the Mayoral staff and the Clerk's Office as providing support for the City Council. He doesn't agree with the idea of staff for the Mayor. He completely disagrees with individual staff. He is very concerned about problems of separating the political and governmental work, especially at election time.

Councillor Braude invited suggestions on how the City Council can go about assessing the need for staff.

Councillor Sullivan said that there should be conversations with the Clerk's Office and the City Council employees.

Councillor Davis said that she would like to have more administrative assistance with paper work. She added that she does not think the Council Office needs another person with the qualifications of Sandra or Mary, but it would be useful to have someone to answer the telephone to free up Sandra and Mary. The telephone in the Council Office rings constantly.

Councillor Decker said that she worked as a legislative aide for a representative in state government. It is clear to her that the City Council needs staff. This is a "no brainer." Staff will help the City Council be more effective.

Mayor Anthony Galluccio stated that he has done the job while holding other full time and part time jobs and while going to school, and in all situations he has felt that he could have done a better job with staff. Constituents will not deal with a staff person unless they get to know that person as staff to "their" councillor. Staff is also needed to keep the City Councillors from becoming just independently wealthy persons who do not need to hold another job to earn their living. At an appropriate salary, the job will attract appropriate candidates. He added that space is an issue. He has concerns about either part time or full time staff without appropriate space. The Council should deal with the space issue first, but he is committed to full time staff for each person.

Councillor Timothy Toomey stated that he would support individual part time staff for each person and that full time staff would be better. He said that issues about supervision and election time problems are red herrings. The City Councillors have been elected by the people to make responsible decisions and take responsible action, and they can clearly make responsible decisions about what activities they assign to staff.

Councillor Kenneth Reeves said that he can see two sides. On the one hand, City Councillors are paid to do a job and they can just do it. However, there is no way

he can be as effective as someone with staff. It means he has to pare down the job from what he would want to do.

Councillor Braude said that the City Council does not communicate well with the public about the sheer volume of the communication required.

Vice Mayor David Maher said that his is still slightly undecided. Sandra and Mary are a huge help; but he has to refrain from making additional requests to not overburden them. He said that if he were Richard Rossi or Robert Healy, he would be concerned about going from nine to eighteen demanding people.

Councillor Sullivan asked for an update on the space issue. Mr. Rossi said that the space plan has always been eight individual offices for members of the City Council and a place for Sandra and Mary. To add additional staff offices to this plan would mean that some department would have to leave the building. They looked at using the Assessor's Office or the Credit Union/Retirement Office, or using the fourth floor attic space to create the City Council space.

Councillor Born stated that this is another reason for a facilities plan, but she doesn't want to use the space issue as a red herring to put off discussion of the staff issue. She said that because they are employees rather than self-employed persons, members of the City Council could not deduct costs of paying staff if they chose to hire and pay staff themselves. They would have to pay with after-tax dollars. She suggested increasing the salary of the City Council members and letting them choose whether to use the increase to pay staff.

Councillor Davis said that she sees an advantage of having staff supervised in the Clerk's Office and the Council Office. She gave an example of the kind of issue she cannot get to – support for the Pearl Street victims.

Councillor Reeves said that when he first came here, the salary was \$30,000 and he spent \$20,000 to hire someone. He could also use the flexibility of someone who could work later than 5:00 o'clock. People do not understand what City Councillors do. With computerization, the space issue is not as important. He suggested part-time staff for each individual member of the City Council.

Councillor Braude said that everyone he has talked to has said it will be very difficult to find the right kind of staff for nineteen hours a week. The City Council needs to look at this issue institutionally.

Councillor Born noted that the City Council is elected to be the policymakers, not to get potholes fixed.

Councillor Reeves said that there is a very serious policy role that the City Council could be playing, but as long as councillors are always trying to catch up on returning phone calls, they are not going to get there.

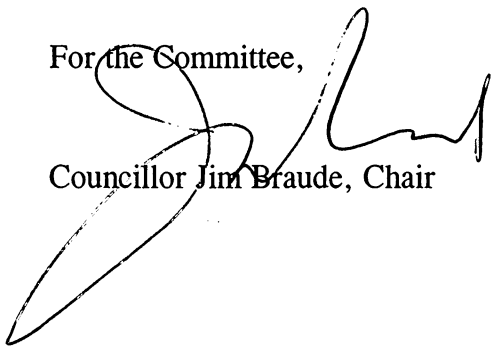
Councillor Braude suggested holding the issue in committee and authorizing the chair to have individual conversations with staff and the individual members of the City Councillors and to bring back a draft recommendation to the committee in two weeks or so, based on the input from these individual meetings. All committee members present agreed on this plan. It was further agreed that this will be discussed again at 4:00 to 5:30 on May 25th.

Councillor Braude thanked those present for their attendance.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

For the Committee,

Councillor Jim Braude, Chair



City of Cambridge

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, RULES

AND CLAIMS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Councillor Jim Braude, Chair
Councillor Henrietta Davis
Vice Mayor David P. Maher
Councillor Michael A. Sullivan
Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.*

In City Council June 5, 2000

The Government Operations, Rules and Claims Committee held a public hearing on May 2, 2000, beginning at 4:10 P.M. in the Ackermann Room for the purpose of considering the staffing and other administrative needs of the City Council.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Jim Braude, Chair of the Committee, Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio, Vice Mayor David P. Maher, Councillor Kathleen L. Born, Councillor Henrietta Davis, Councillor Marjorie C. Decker, Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves, Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr., and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury. Also present were Robert W. Healy, City Manager, Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager, Donna Lopez, Deputy City Clerk and Sandra Albano, Assistant to the City Council.

Councillor Braude convened the hearing and explained the purpose. He invited City Manager Healy to summarize his February 14, 2000 memo to the City Council in which he provided cost analyses of three different models for staff assistance to the City Council (Attachment A). Mr. Healy explained the three options. Mr. Healy also outlined his concerns about Council assistants giving directions to the City staff.

Councillor Braude said that the problem seems fairly similar to the City Councillors making the same phone calls themselves. The critical issue is job description. The terms of employment and the parameters must be clear. Mr. Healy agreed that his major concern is a very clear line as to what these staff could do or not do.

Councillor Davis said that her concern is more support for committees. Richard Rossi said that if a councillor has a committee meeting, asks the City Manager to send staff to the meeting and then request that the staff do some research for this committee, that staff person has been taken away from her or his regular, fully scheduled tasks.

Councillor Davis said that there is not now even the capacity to do basic research on how other communities handle these issues. She would also use more staff time to set up mailing lists and to do outreach for committee topics and meetings.

Committee Report #1

16/S

A report from Councillor Braude,
Chair of the Government Operations,
Rules and Claims Committee, for a
public hearing held on May 2, 2000
for the purpose of considering the
staffing and other administrative
needs of the City Council.

S-161

In City Council June 5, 2000

Report Accepted.
Placed on file