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City of Cambridge

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING
AND EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**
Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair
Councillor Marjorie C. Decker
Vice Mayor David P. Maher

In City Council January 8, 2001

The Economic Development, Training and Employment Committee conducted a public meeting on Tuesday, December 12, 2000 at 1:00 p.m. at Career Source, 185 Alewife Brook Parkway, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the services offered by Career Source.

Present at the meeting were: Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair of the Committee, Ellen Semonoff, Deputy Director of Human Services, Sue Walsh and Susan Mintz, Office of Workforce Development, Jason Marshall and James Henry, Mayor's Office, Robert J. Hebert, Director, Career Source, Thomas Belski, Executive Director, Employment Resources, Inc. (ERI) and Donna P. Lopez, Deputy City Clerk.

Councillor Davis opened the meeting and stated the purpose. She stated that the Committee was at Career Source to see how Career source functions and to see how Cambridge residents are linked to employment resources.

Robert J. Hebert, Career Source Director, informed the Committee that Career Source provides services to job seekers and employers. Job seekers include persons with no skills or persons with advanced skills. The job seekers skills need to be identified. If training is needed some training is provided. A variety of free workshops are available. There is a program to enhance professional development, such as time or stress management. A partnership has been developed with an interactive e-learning group, he said. Twenty cities and towns are served by Career Source. Employers are offered a variety of services. Job seekers are matched with employers. Job Fairs are held monthly. Employer Forums are held to provide seekers with information on companies. The database, he said, is Career Sources best asset. Newsletters and calendars are printed every other month. Career Source has an interactive web site. The address is www.yourcareer-source.com. A fee is charged to the employers, he said. Thirteen different workshops are offered. Debt counseling is offered to any person.

Thomas Belski, Executive Director, ERI, informed the Committee that a name is received from the Welfare Office and the recipient is followed for a long period of time. Two hundred eighty-seven women have been placed in jobs, he said. A program is in process to develop savings accounts for recipients to be able to purchase homes. There are 23 different funding sources and it is a challenge to do the reporting and meet the many requirements of the different funding sources and jobs.

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Councillor Davis asked about the geographical area served. Mr. Hebert responded that East Boston, Somerville, Everett and Arlington are areas served. There are 6,500 people enrolled. Ms. Sue Walsh, Office of Workforce Development stated that there are 817 Cambridge residents enrolled. Ms. Semonoff, Deputy Director of Human Services, stated that 50% of people enrolled have a high school diploma or a GED. Mr. Hebert stated that 30% are non-English speaking.

Councillor Davis asked about the capacity for job outreach. Mr. Hebert stated that in July 2000 a new system, Moses, was implemented. It is very limited.

Councillor Davis asked how do employers find Career Source to list the jobs. Mr. Hebert responded that a business development group and a telemarketer are used. Stop & Shop, he said has used Career Source frequently. Council Davis stated that incentives could be offered to businesses that list jobs for Cambridge residents which would limit the impact on traffic in the City.

Councillor Davis asked if employers are charged a fee for the employer forums. Mr. Hebert responded in the negative. Mr. Belski stated that the perception needs to be overcome that Career Source is not a Welfare Center. This is the reason outreach is so important, he said. The economy has shifted the employers to look at the population that it might not have looked at in the past. Publicity needs to be done to advertise the professionalism of the Career Centers, he said. New college graduates use the resources at the Career Center. Performance based contracts are tied to the hard to serve, he said. Ms. Walsh stated that there is a bias in the business community about using public funded Career Centers.

Mr. Belski stated that the reputation of the Center is changing. Marketing, he said, needs to be done to promote the positive aspect of Career Source. More than 50% of minorities are being served by the Center, with an increase in the revenue flow. Public funding, he said, cannot be totally depended upon. Employers are charged \$200.00 to join the Job Fairs.

Councillor Davis asked who is doing the advertising to bring people into Career Source. Mr. Hebert responded Career Source. In response to an inquiry from Jason Marshall, Assistant to the Mayor, Mr. Hebert stated that he would send Mr. Marshall information on the Job Fairs.

Councillor Davis stated that the City Council could facilitate the connection for Career Source. She spoke about the top 25 employers in the City who now are listed on the City's web site. Mr. Hebert stated that Career Source will link to the City's web site.

Councillor Davis stated that Cambridge businesses should be encouraged to link to the City's web site to obtain Cambridge residents as job seekers. Mr. Semonoff asked

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if recruitment could be targeted for Cambridge businesses. Mr. Hebert responded that because of the reporting process it was not possible today, but was hopeful for the future.

Councillor Davis asked how far do the services go to meet the needs. Mr. Hebert responded that mailings are done to get job seekers to Career source. Ms. Walsh stated that the Cambridge Employment Plan gets the information. Case managers review their lists and provide some level of intensive career search. Mr. Hebert stated that is trying to institute a plan to provide transportation to get low-level job seekers to jobs outside of Cambridge. Ms. Semonoff stated that the availability of the T in Cambridge provides Cambridge residents access to good jobs outside the City.

Councillor Davis spoke about the use of shuttles provided by businesses. Cambridge businesses can be encouraged to give priority to Cambridge residents for jobs.

Councillor Davis asked what could the City do to help Career Source provide better service. Mr. Hebert stated the following:

- Promoting Career Source to job seekers and to the business community. He would like to see more high-end resumes come to Career Source.
- Leads to employers so that seekers and jobs can be matched.

Ms. Semonoff stated that it should be a goal to increase the ability of Career Source to provide information to make it possible for Cambridge business to get a link to the job seekers. Mr. Marshall further suggested that the non-profit community be tapped also.

A discussion ensued regarding the issue of monitoring. Ms. Semonoff stated that Job Fairs would be something to review. Cambridge businesses could be made aware of the resources of Career Source to provide jobs to Cambridge residents. Mr. Hebert stated that he would be happy to send a letter if the database of employers could be provided.

Councillor Davis thanked all that attended the meeting. She thanked the representatives from Career Source for their hospitality and time.

The meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

For the Committee,



Councillor Henrietta Davis,
Chair

Committee Report #3

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Committee Report from
Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair
of the Economic Development,
Training and Employment
Committee for a meeting held on
December 12, 2000 to discuss the
services offered by Career Source.

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Report Accepted

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