

Councillor Duehay said that most employees everywhere are not meaningfully involved. His idea is that TQI actually involves employees in designing improvements. With regard to the public, the City is not good at getting information out to people. There is not even a directory in City Hall. He hopes this is a way to build citizen input into improving performance.

Els Knopper stated that she worked in a corporation that was a TQM organization. She emphasized that TQM is a system not a program. She stated that she thinks about the transactional aspect of the system. Margaret Drury said that she understands TQM to be a way of involving staff in making improvements.

Councillor Sullivan stated that he has observed and worked with the strategies in his capacity as a member of the Postal Advisory Committee which has developed methods of improvement of the delivery of postal services.

Michael Gardner said that he understands TQM to be a fad that the hospital jettisoned when it decided that CQI was what was really needed. He has some skepticism but takes it as a mindset toward looking at improvement and evaluation.

Mary Jane Kornacki said that she thinks there are three components. One is the technique. For her, the biggest part is the paradigm shift. She said that city workers have to understand that the public is the customer. Another component is leadership. John O'Brien and Jim Schlosser are role models. There has to be leadership that "walks the talk" or it will be only a fad.

Councillor Duehay said that we have to understand it before we can embark upon it.

Dr. Jim Schlosser then made a presentation on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and distributed an outline. Attachment A. He started his discussion with the quality definition.

Councillor Sullivan asked what part outside audits play, for example, Neville Manor. Mr. O'Brien said that the poor outside audits were just a symptom of a system issue.

Dr. Schlosser said at the time he came, Cambridge Hospital had won the Foster McGaw Award, John O'Brien was CEO of the Year, but there was a sense that Cambridge Hospital was not where they wanted it to be.

Dr. Schlosser said that customer loyalty is very important in the modern health care network.

John O'Brien said that at the time the Cambridge Hospital had made tremendous progress in a collaborative culture.

Councillor Duehay said that there has been tremendous improvement in many city departments, but there still needs to be more. Nobody knows what is going on in Cambridge. There is great affordable housing, a great Cambridge Housing Authority, but no one knows about how outstanding these programs are on a comparative scale.

Dr. Schlosser agreed that the Hospital has found that it needs to distribute more information internally as well as externally about its improvements.

Councillor Duehay said that we have a cable tv station that is not used. We have dedicated employees who work hard, and are frustrated. The public doesn't have the information.

Dr. Schlosser said that the problem is not to work harder but to work better.

Mary Jane Korhacki said that she does not believe that the majority of employees see the public as their "paying customers." There also need to be systems that support them.

Councillor Sullivan said that there is a mutual mindset to address. The public does not always give the same respect to government employees as to those in private industry.

Dr. Schlosser presented a story board based on seclusion and restraint as an example of a tough customer relations situation and how the staff improved quality in this area. Dr. Schlosser said that the first question is, "what is the aim?" Here it was to minimize the use of restraint and seclusion.

The next question is "how would you measure improvement?" Then they came up with possible changes. The staff had a lot of input. They then tried the changes, measured, and evaluated the results.

Councillor Sullivan asked whether the change cost money. Dr. Schlosser said that it did not involve additional funds, except in so much as the hospital is making huge overall investments in quality improvement.

John O'Brien said there are some structural barriers, but the possibilities of improvement without spending money are endless.

Councillor Sullivan noted the importance of recognizing a good job. Dr. Schlosser asked whether Cambridge Hospital had told other hospitals about its quality improvements. Mr. O'Brien said that the hospital has not yet fully mastered sharing improvements internally.

Councillor Duehay described an incident in which a person had to come back six times to get a permit and kept being told that the only person who issued the permit was at lunch or otherwise unavailable.

Vice Mayor Born noted that people call the City with a range of problems, from difficulty in getting a gun permit to problems with truck noise at night. This complicates how to deal with calls.

Dr. Schlosser said that this is the almost universal initial response to CQI. The question for every system is how to improve it. Every system is perfectly designed to give the results it gives.

Vice Mayor Born asked how you would start this in the City.

Els Knoppers stated that she is concerned about the divided power of city government and the need for strong management of TQI. The question of who is the customer becomes more complicated in such a system. Elected officials have a strong need to emphasize responsiveness to constituents. TQM is a more long-term oriented approach.

Councillor Duehay said that constituents are not interested in ten year solutions.

Dr. Schlosser said that one of the biggest constraints in industry has been short term thinking.

Councillor Duehay pointed out that the City Council has a certain amount of built-in dislike for each other because of competition engendered in proportional representation elections.

Dr. Schlosser said that the difference between the vision of what we want for the city and the current reality creates a tension for change.

Councillor Sullivan said that the Government Operations Committee has been discussing the problem of never being able to reach the issue of change.

John O'Brien said that he hears from City Councillors that customer focus by city employees makes their job easier.

Councillor Duehay agreed.

Councillor Sullivan asked what are the components of CQI that are similar across different industries.

Vice Mayor Born noted that in city government there is a distinction between owners and customers, who may have different needs.

Councillor Sullivan said that it tends to come back to the issue of giving the employees the tools.

John O'Brien said that there is much more to TQI than just money.

Councillor Duehay stated that the atmosphere of the workplace has to change.

John O'Brien noted the problem created by the modern economy. You cannot create a pact with your employees in a situation where a bad quarter means a huge layoff.

Vice Mayor Born asked how the city will know there is a problem. Councillor Sullivan said it is by complaints. Councillor Duehay said that you see a downward spiral of fewer people running for City Council, fewer resources being made available and then the system just sits there, with people not interested enough to make change.

Jim Lindstrom, City Auditor, said that some of the processes associated with TQI are going to happen because of the new budget that requires reporting on performance measures.

John O'Brien said that he lives in Wayland, which is not anywhere near as good as Cambridge in providing services to its citizens. Cambridge is actually quite good.

Councillor Duehay said that he agrees, but the public does not know anything about how good Cambridge is.

Councillor Sullivan said that this past winter is a good example. The City did a very good job overall on snow removal, but he still got many complaints. People didn't know how good Cambridge was doing, especially in comparison to other cities.

Dr. Schlosser asked what would happen if there were small improvements, and they were measured and noted and publicized.

Ms. Semonoff said that until three weeks ago, the Cambridge Hospital was a department of the city and all those changes were done by one department. One question is whether you look at it department by department.

Councillor Sullivan said that the city does not have the PR capacity needed to "get the story out."

Dr. Schlosser said just start anywhere, and this will grow understanding and capability.

Ms. Knopper said that it is important to think about the system-wide implications. Dr. Schlosser said that the hospital faced the same issues. You have to start somewhere.

Councillor Sullivan said that the goals and objectives for different departments are different.

Dr. Schlosser said that this is the role of leadership, to articulate the shared purpose.

John O'Brien said that the efforts around domestic violence are a very good example.

Councillor Sullivan asked whether it started with a customer survey. John O'Brien said no, it started with recognition that change was needed to serve customers' needs long-term. At the same time, the hospital saw great models for making improvements.

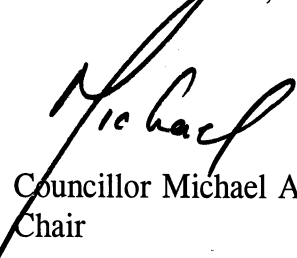
Mr. Gardner said that the Personnel Office would make department heads more aware of availability of CQI training through the Cambridge Hospital.

Ms. Knopper suggested taking more time to define the case for action for the city.

Councillor Duehay said that the City Manager has to do this. Councillor Sullivan thanked those present and suggested that the issue remain in committee and that at least one more meeting on this topic occur. It was agreed without objection that the matter will remain in committee.

The hearing was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

For the Committee,



Councillor Michael A. Sullivan
Chair

City of Cambridge

The Government Operations Committee held a public meeting on July 25, 1996, beginning at 10:15 a.m. in the Sullivan Chamber for the purpose of an informal discussion of Total Quality Management, public service as "customer service" and other related topics.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Chair of the Committee, Vice Mayor Kathleen L. Born, Councillor Henrietta Davis, Councillor Francis H. Duehay and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury and Jim Lindstrom. Also present were John O'Brien, Administrator, Cambridge Hospital Community Health Network; Dr. Jim Schlosser, Chief Clinical Officer, Cambridge Hospital Community Health Network; Michael Gardner, Director of Personnel, City of Cambridge; Ellen Semonoff, Deputy Director, Human Services; Mary Jane Kornacki, Cambridge.

Councillor Sullivan convened the hearing and explained the purpose. He stated that Councillor Duehay had brought the issue of Total Quality Management to the attention of the Government Operations Committee and invited Councillor Duehay's comment.

Councillor Duehay said that he is very impressed with the parts of Total Quality Management that get evaluations from customers and build that information back to adjust operations accordingly.

Mr. O'Brien stated that the hospital uses "Continuous Quality Improvement" (CQI). He said that when the discussion about this began, the hospital didn't really have the tools to measure. He went to a conference at Babson where he met Jim Schlosser in 1991. He introduced Dr. Schlosser, a national expert in CQI who has both an MBA and an MD. That conference convinced John O'Brien that the hospital should use CQI. They did six days of staff training for forty employees at a time, and have now trained over six hundred people.

Mr. O'Brien emphasized that this is an intensive long term effort but that the results at the hospital have been truly amazing. It was a gradual transformation at the hospital. Fifty people are trained each month, including some city administration people. They would be happy to open it up to more city staff.

Dr. Schlosser asked everyone at the table to state what they currently know about TQI.

Ellen Semonoff said that she associates the term with a strategy to get all staff to come up with plans to improve service, try it and then together evaluate its effectiveness. If the plans were not effective, move on, using the same strategy to try new plans.

Committee Report #3

S-448

A communication was received from D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk, transmitting a report from Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Chair of the Government Operations Committee for a meeting held on July 25, 1996 for the purpose of an informal discussion of Total Quality Management, public service as "customer service" and other related topics.

In City Council September 9, 1996

Report Accepted

PLACED ON FILE