OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

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D. MARGARET DRURY
CITY CLERK

JOHN E. FLYNN
DEPUTY CITY CLERK

MEMORANDUM

TO: Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Chair
Councillor Francis H. Duehay
Councillor Katherine Triantafillou

FROM: D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Achievements, Goals and Objectives and Other Requested Information

DATE: May 5, 1995

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INTRODUCTION

By letter of April 25, 1995, Councillor Sullivan requested that I provide the Government Operations Committee with information as to my goals/objectives, strengths and weaknesses, concerns, and a mission statement. That information is set forth below along with information regarding my achievements over the past three years. I found the review and analysis required to assemble this memorandum to be thought-provoking and useful. I look forward to your consideration of this material.

MISSION

To ensure that the City Clerk's Office continues to do an excellent job of serving all of the citizens of Cambridge in its responsibilities for recording, preserving and communicating vital information.

To ensure that office resources are properly allocated to all of the information responsibilities of the Office, including:

- providing documents and information regarding the vital statistics of citizens' individual lives,
- providing the records and information to enable the City Council to fulfill its legislative purposes and to fully inform the public regarding City Council activities,
- providing answers to the enormous variety of questions about the City which the public brings to the City Clerk's Office.

To develop a City Clerk's Office which can provide a high quality of service in the twenty first century by making use of updated technology and methodology without sacrificing the benefits which the city and citizens gain from the City Clerk's Office's traditional concentration on conservation and preservation.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND GOALS

I. Public Information

Achievements

1. Worked with the MIS Department to make information about City services available online via Internet. All city departments were surveyed about what questions they were asked most frequently by members of the public. This information, along with much other information about the city and city government is now available to the public at the Main Library and to anyone who has access to Internet.

2. Worked with the City Manager's Office to develop a tracking and response system for quick response to requests for public records.

3. Improved notification through City Council agenda of hearings at the State Legislature on home rule petitions.

4. Through the City Council Office, produced and distributed brochures on City Council and domestic violence.

5. Increased the amount of information it gives out by telephone without requiring a written inquiry.

Goals

1. Continue to work on implementation of electronic public information, with emphasis on review and update of quality of information and increase of public access.

2. Increase public access to automated Municipal Code.

3. Implement and provide public access to automated index of City Council actions, with key word search system.

4. Increase multilingual capacity of City Clerk's Office.

II. Use of Technology to Improve Efficiency

Achievements

1. For the first time in 25 years, this year the permanent record of the City Council will be published in the calendar year immediately following the record year because it is now done by computer instead of typewriter. When I began my term, the Clerk's Office was working on the permanent record for the calendar year six years before the present year.

2. Notices which city departments are required by law to be posted at the Clerk's Office can now be posted electronically by using the city computer system, instead of having to be hand-delivered or mailed.. The notice will go simultaneously to the Clerk's Office, Cable TV and a public bulletin board on the VAX office automation system.

3. The Municipal Code is available online in a networked personal computer system accessible to the City Clerk's Office, the City Manager's Office and the Law Department. This technology allows the ordinances to be searched by key word, a major improvement in search power over that possible through use of the index system in the ordinance books. The new system will allow for future production of the Municipal Code in house, with resulting cost savings.

4. Record-keeping for non-criminal disposition ticketing has been automated to increase staff efficiency and enable easier access to the information for citizens and other departments.

5. The City Clerk's Office worked with the City Manager's Office and the MIS Department to modify the City Manager's complaint system so that it can be used

by City Councillors. The system allows City Councillors or their secretaries to utilize the VAX computer system to record constituent's complaints about city services. At the same time as the complaint is transmitted to the City Manager for resolution, a letter is automatically generated from the City Councillor to the constituent. Each City Councillor has an individual password to ensure confidentiality of constituent names and complaints.

Goals

1. Continue progress on elimination of backlog in production of City Council permanent record.

2. Produce the Municipal Code in-house. Currently, the book is updated and printed by an out-of-state private firm. The City Clerk's Office will update the Code, and produce an original which can be printed and bound by the City Print Shop.

3. Expand the pilot program for electronic posting at the City Clerk's Office of statutorily required notices.

4. Continue to track the progress of the state in automating vital statistics to evaluate, in light of state developments, whether it becomes feasible and desirable to automate the recordation of birth certificates.

III. Staff Development

Achievements

1. The Officer Manager position was upgraded to Operations Manager, with some changes in job description and functions to allow for additional focus on overall management and systems improvement. The Operations Manager has attended training in supervision techniques.

2. The Deputy Clerk has attended training sessions in Lotus software and in the area of total quality management.

3. At the beginning of my term, none of the front office clerks had computers. All staff now have computer terminals on their desks. All have been trained on the business certificate system and wordprocessing. Wordprocessing is being utilized

in a significant number of tasks that were previously done by hand writing or typewriting.

4. The Assistant to the City Council has attended training in supervision techniques.

5. Conflict resolution techniques have been utilized to assist in the resolution of staff disagreements to improve the working environment.

Goals

1. Continue to seek ways to reduce routine secretarial tasks assigned to Operations Manager to enable her to continue to develop and coordinate new systems.

2. Additional cross-training of staff on tasks associated with the Council agenda.

3. Some additional computer training for front office staff.

4. Regular staff meetings.

IV. Other

Achievements

1. Timeliness and comprehensiveness of committee reports to City Council have been improved.

2. Staff work for City Council committees has included research on rules and ordinances of other jurisdictions, redrafting of City Council rules and drafting a travel policy.

3. Together with the Deputy City Solicitor and the Assistant to the City Manager, I drafted Cambridge's home rule petition to provide a transition from rent control.

4. Wedding ceremonies are now performed in Spanish for Spanish-speaking couples who so choose.

Goals

1. Develop system to circulate City Council committee reports to relevant city departments and personnel.

2. Work with City Manager's staff to develop improved City Hall directory.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Strengths

Ability to work and communicate effectively with a wide variety of people.

Enthusiasm for change combined with respect for tradition.

Team-oriented and consensus-building management style.

Excellent writing skills and problem-solving skills.

Fairness and an ability to look beyond labels.

Longterm Cambridge resident involved with my community.

Weaknesses

Some tendency to want to insist on established procedure when more flexibility would better assist in achieving a solution.

Proofreading.

CONCERNS

My major concerns relate to areas to which I would like to devote additional resources, but I have not yet been able to identify ways to reduce current staff workloads or rearrange responsibilities to free appropriate staff resources. One area is that of policy and research assistance for the City Council. In the last three years I have seen many Councillors engaged in projects in which they could have used additional staff research assistance. The other area is the Operations Manager's job responsibilities. She has the depth of experience in the procedures of the office and the creative grasp of how to use and modify automation techniques to make significant contributions to developing computer systems that really work to improve the efficiency and service of the office. However, she continues to have a very full load of more routine clerical responsibilities, which limit the time that she can devote to overall management and systems.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139 . TEL. 349 - 4240

James A. Lindstrom

City Auditor

TO: Councillor Michael A. Sullivan
Chair, Government Operations Committee

FROM: James A. Lindstrom
City Auditor

RE: Goals/Mission Statement

DATE: May 10, 1995

GOALS/OBJECTIVES & MISSION STATEMENT

As per your request, enclosed please find materials we have prepared in the past that show the mission statement, goals and objectives, and our progress on meeting them over the past year.

In addition to the enclosed, we have also worked on projects specifically for the Council. We have prepared special reports on the City's investments, workers' compensation expenses, and assisted in the development of a travel policy for the Council. We have been working with Councillor Born on her order regarding a meaningful way to report periodically the City's financial operations to the Council. Finally, we are working with Assistant City Manager James Maloney to develop a trial performance budget program using several elements of the Finance Department as "guinea pigs". We plan on using our experience with this trial to evaluate expanding it City-wide and incorporating it into the City's formal budget process.

TRAINING

I believe very strongly in employee training and have fostered several programs within the Department. Some of these came out of our monthly "how are things going" meetings we have to improve our performance and ease the changes that are occurring within the Department. As a result, we have sent one staff member to the Annual School run by the Massachusetts Municipal Auditors' and Accountants' Association for the first of a three-year program leading to certification of her proficiency in governmental accounting. We have also undertaken an in-house training program to teach all staff members how to use LOTUS 1-2-3 spread sheets, which will prove useful as we develop more in-house/specially prepared reports.

STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES & CONCERNS

Regarding strengths, weaknesses and concerns, I would say that the one area that really needs to be worked on in the coming years is improving our service to the City Council. Contacts between our office and the Council have been sporadic at best. To improve the relationship, I would propose that the City Auditor serve as the designated staff person for some of the City Council committees. Finance is the obvious one, but there may be others (Government Operations, Health & Hospitals, Housing and Community Development, Economic Development, Training and Employment come to mind) where my background in finance and urban renewal may be useful. I would also hope, as the FY96 Goals state, that the Council would look on our office as a resource in developing your plans to cope with our skirting with the levy limit, since I have spent over a decade developing budgets in communities where the levy limit had been reached.

RESIDENCY

Finally I should discuss residency, since that has been a topic of discussion within the Council and was incorporated into my contract. While I continue to own my former residence in Chatham (like many City employees who have homes on Cape Cod), I do have a bona-fide residence on Antrim Street, which I have been renting since January 1994. I am a registered voter in Cambridge and have a valid resident parking sticker. I believe strongly in living in the community in which I work and hope that as my partner's employment can be relocated to Cambridge, we will be able to spend more time here. I have, however, tried to become involved with the community. I am a member of the Harvest Coop, serving on its Finance Committee. I have done volunteer work for the AIDS Action Committee, and am exploring with the Cambridge YMCA ways in which I may serve on one of their committees.

I hope this is helpful for your deliberations. If you need any additional documentation, please let me know.

cc. Councillor Francis H. Duehay
Councillor Katherine Triantafillou
Mayor Kenneth E. Reeves
Vice Mayor Sheila T. Russell
Councillor Kathleen L. Born
Councillor Anthony D. Galluccio
Councillor Jonathan S. Myers
Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.

ANNUAL REPORT
1993 - 1994

ments in developing clear, nonproprietary specifications to encourage many vendors to participate in City bids and to insure that qualified bidders are awarded contracts. The Purchasing Office continues to work towards streamlining the bid process and improving the computerized bid procedure.

This year the Purchasing Office administered and participated in the selection of a number of designers, engineers and architects through the Designer Selection Process. The Designer Selection Process, which is governed by M.G.L. c. 7 §38K and the City's Designer Selection Procedures, is an open process through which architects and designers are chosen based upon their written proposals and interviews. Cost is not a factor until the suggested vendor has been selected by the selection committee.

As in past years, the Purchasing Office participated as a speaker in the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce Trade Fair, in addition to speaking at seminars directed to minority and women owned businesses, encouraging all the attendees to submit their names for the City's bid lists.

ASSESSING

The Assessing Department is responsible for establishing full and fair cash values for all Cambridge real estate and business personal property. These values are the means for the distribution of the City's property tax levy on a fair and equitable basis. In order to fulfill this goal, assessors must discover and list all taxable property, maintaining accurate ownership and property information. The Assessing Department also administers the motor vehicle excise tax.

For FY94 the Assessing Department continued its policy of adjusting values annually to keep up with market trends. The FY94 legal assessment date is January 1, 1993, so the new values reflect the calendar year 1992 market activity in Cambridge. For residential properties, the new appraisals resulted in little overall change in the values of single family houses. The average condominiums value rose by about 2¼%, due largely to rising prices among the riverfront condominiums built during the late 1980's. There was little change, overall, in the market for two and three family houses and apartment buildings. 1992 saw a continued decline in rents and growth in vacancies in commercial and industrial properties, and their values fell, on average, by about 10% from FY93.

As a result of the overall real estate downturn, the value added to the City's commercial property tax base as a result of new construction was $30,784,900, down from the FY93 commercial growth of $56,966,500. On the other hand, annual growth in the residential property tax base has stabilized since completion of the riverfront condominium building boom of the late '80's. Between conversion of existing multi-family buildings to condominiums and a scattering of new houses and townhouses, $13,123,300 was added to the residential tax base which is about the same residential growth seen in the prior two fiscal years.

The Chart below compares the FY93 and FY94 Total Taxable Values for Cambridge:

	FY93 VALUE	FY94 VALUE
Commercial & Industrial	$2,877,430,944	$2,569,525,269
Residential Property	$3,974,544,295	$4,006,668,343
Personal Property	$ 200,600,000	$ 213,800,000
Total Taxable Property	$7,052,575,239	$6,789,993,612

Even though the recent New England economic decline has seriously reduced the amount of new tax base growth, Cambridge taxpayers still enjoy the benefits of the tax base expansion which took place during the late eighties. The chart below shows how the tax levy is distributed between new construction which has occurred since 1984 and the existing properties which were on the tax rolls in 1984.

MISSION STATEMENT

AUDITING

The Auditor's Office serves as the "watchdog" for City spending, making sure that all spending is done according to State and Federal laws, that expenses are accounted for and well documented, and that spending falls within the budgets set by the City Council and City Manager. The Auditor also assists in the preparation of the City's public financial statements. In addition, the Auditor's Office is charged with conducting independent analyses of the effectiveness of various City operations and programs. The Auditor assists the City Council in its review of the City Budget. Finally, the Auditor serves as the City's representative on the Retirement Board. During FY94, our efforts focused on tightening the City's financial controls and on issues involving the City's Retirement system. Specifically, we

- rigorously examined all contracts and invoices, ensuring that all expenditures are properly documented, consistent with the terms of the contracts and charged to the proper appropriation
- enhanced financial control by reserving funds in full when contracts are signed and, therefore, able to be paid within the appropriation
- initiated a study of the City's data processing system which showed the need for training programs and written documentation in the system's use as well as improved networking to reduce redundant data handling
- took an active role with the Budget Office and the City's independent auditors in preparing the City's annual financial report
- worked with the Retirement Office to reduce the City's payment to the retirement system by $2 million, providing significant budget relief for FY95.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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James A. Lindstrom

City Auditor

TO: City Council

FROM: James A. Lindstrom
City Auditor

RE: Progress Report

DATE: August 31, 1994

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On August 2, I completed my first year of service as your City Auditor. I thought this would be an appropriate time to discuss what we have accomplished this first year and where I see us going in the immediate future. I have also highlighted areas where Council guidance would be helpful.

Some of you have wondered what exactly the Auditor's Office does. First and foremost, we are the "watchdog" for City spending, making sure that all spending is done according to State and Federal laws, that expenses are accounted for and well documented, and that spending falls within the budgets set by the Council and City Manager. The Auditor is also charged with preparing the City's public financial statements. In addition, the Position Description states that the Auditor's Office should conduct independent analyses of the effectiveness of various City operations and programs, as well as assist the Council in its review of the City Budget. Finally, I serve as the City's representative on the Retirement Board. Thus far, most of my efforts have been spent on tightening our financial controls and issues involving the City's Retirement system.

FINANCIAL CONTROLS

Let me begin by saying that Cambridge enjoys a well-deserved reputation for sound financial management. However, as in every quality organization, there is room for improvement. My initial task has been to develop the staff capacity to more rigorously examine all contracts and invoices. To do this, we have ensured that each step in the authorization cycle is properly documented and that all subsequent documents are consistent with the terms of the underlying contracts. The Department now reviews all purchase orders and contracts for content, making sure that the purchase orders are consistent with the contracts and that the contracts themselves are well defined in terms of what is expected to be performed and the basis for payment. Purchase Orders are also reviewed to make sure that the proper appropriation is being charged. Finally, each invoice is examined to make sure it, too, is consistent with the contract; payments to date asserted by the Contractor are independently verified by the staff.

During this period, we have obviously tightened some practices. Purchase orders are issued in the full amount of the contract, unless there are extenuating circumstances. This is done to ensure that funds are reserved and, therefore, available within the appropriation to pay the City's obligations. Invoices are not processed until proper contract extensions and/or renewals have been obtained. Most significantly, we have eliminated the ability to slide an invoice from one fiscal year to the next if funds are insufficient to pay it, which was both poor financial practice and a violation of State law. Let me say that the lion's share of the City's operations already followed proper practices; what my department has done is to set up a check to make sure that proper procedures are being followed and correcting the few deviations, thereby preventing problems before they happen.

For the coming year, we will be concentrating on the financial controls for the City's major construction contracts and grant-funded programs.

DATA PROCESSING

The City's Financial Information System was installed some eight years ago and has remained relatively unchanged since. To see whether it was meeting the needs of the Departments, we initiated a study to meet with the users, learn how they were using the system and identify what improvements they would like to see. While the results indicated that the users were, on balance, satisfied, the study also showed the need for a well-developed training program in the system's use and for written documentation on the programs themselves, which is currently non-existent. The study also showed the desire of several departments to move beyond what our system provides, indicating a possible need for enhancements and improved networking among the users.

For the coming year, the Auditor's Office would be heavily involved in developing the networking procedures, if it goes forward. This would involve studying whether data entry of the invoice-paying function can be performed by the Departments themselves, thereby further focusing the Auditor's Office on oversight responsibilities.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

While the Department has historically prepared reports going to the State, it had not been involved in the preparation of the City's published financial statements. We are now taking an active role with the City's independent auditors, working with the Budget Office, which currently performs this function. The goal will be to build the capacity for the Auditor's Office to assume this responsibility, where it properly belongs.

RETIREMENT SYSTEM

This has involved more time than one might expect, but that is understandable for a system with over $175 million in assets and six separate investment managers. This year we have focused on trying to make our investment strategy match our near and long term needs. The purpose is to make sure that we maximize our return (within appropriate safeguards) while ensuring we have enough cash on hand to meet the obligations of those who are retiring in the immediate future. With the assistance of our investment advisor and our actuary, we are developing an investment strategy to meet these twin goals.

We have also taken steps to explore whether the system's assets can assist the City's efforts in the development of affordable housing and in economic development. We have met with the City's Housing Coordinator to see what links could be possible; while this is still being explored, it appears it will be difficult to develop a program which provides financial assistance while still meeting the System's financial targets. We have had more luck on economic development and are in the process of reviewing proposals from six venture capital firms to invest up to $6 million in start-up companies. All of the firms we are interviewing have provided assistance to Cambridge companies in the past and, in some cases, are based in the City as well.

Finally, we have developed more effective links with the State in learning how they arrive at their numbers. As a result, the Executive Director and I were able to reduce the City's payment to the retirement system by $2 million, providing significant budget relief for FY95.

INTERNAL AUDIT/PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Given the lack of staff resources and the need to focus on the basics of the office, this area did not receive as much attention as I would have liked this past year. As I noted in my budget material to the Council, we need to define what the Council would like to achieve in this area. On the one hand, we could develop a program which would focus on specific operations or programs of individual departments. On the other, we could begin developing performance measures for all departments, allowing us to measure what it is the City produces and how efficiently it accomplishes its tasks. This material would also be useful to the Council in its budget review. Consequently, I need some feedback from the Council so we can develop a program that meets your needs.

BUDGET REVIEW

This is also an area where I need some guidance from the Council. While I believe we managed to provide Councillor Triantafillou with the assistance she requested, the path there was rocky, again because this new role for the Auditor's office had not been defined in advance. The issue was referred to the Government Operations Committee, and I hope we can actively discuss it in the months ahead. This should be done prior to the next budget hearings so we can provide the assistance you desire.

In closing, let me say that I have experienced very good cooperation from the City Manager, and have developed a helpful working relationship with the Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs and his staff. This was important since many of the functions which should be performed by our office had been assumed by the Finance Department. I look forward to hearing any of your thoughts on the above.

FY96 GOALS

FINANCIAL CONTROLS

Work with the Finance and MIS Departments to review processing operations in order to reduce redundant handling of data and related use of paper (schools/hospital)

Work with Finance and MIS Departments to develop a periodic financial reporting system that is easy to read and summarizes data in a manner useful for the Council and senior management

Work with the Finance Department to implement system of fixed assets

Develop directory of all contracts, lease-purchase agreements, loan agreements and other documents to facilitate measurement of City's outstanding liabilities

Develop policy for retention/storage of City's financial documents that facilitate retrieval and minimize loss by physical destruction

INTERNAL AUDIT

Work with the City Council, City Manager and Finance Department to develop an internal audit/program evaluation system that can be achieved within the City's potential resources

Conduct a pilot audit of a program mutually chosen by the City Council, City Manager and the department to be audited

Work with the City Council, City Manager and Finance Department to develop a long-term strategy for dealing with the limits of Proposition 2 1-2

EXTERNAL REPORTING

Work with the City's outside Auditing firm so that City's Comprehensive Financial Report is completed by the end of September

Work with Budget and MIS staffs to automate preparation of Schedule A

Continue training staff so that principal staff members are fully conversant with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and the Uniform Massachusetts Accounting System (UMAS)

Continue implementing monitoring of monthly reports to ensure accuracy in reporting

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

Training:

- develop training program for staff in word processing, spread sheet and other general applications
- provide training/redesign forms to ensure they are completed fully and uniformly

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Michael Brandon
27 Seven Pines Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK
1995 JUN -1 PM 4:45
CAMBRIDGE MA.

June 1, 1995

Cambridge City Council
c/o City Clerk
City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02108

Re: Goals and Objectives of the City Auditor and City Clerk

Councilors:

Attached are copies of the mission statements, goals, and objectives recently submitted to your Government Operations Committee by the incumbent auditor and clerk. These materials were not included in the committee report the council received at its last meeting.

Since you will soon be deciding whether to extend the tenure of these city officials, I respectfully ask that the enclosed items be placed on your formal agenda so that they are more widely available to members of the press and public who may want to raise questions or comment on them.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Michael Brandon

Michael Brandon

encl.

S-205

Consent Communication #12

Comm. was received from Michael Brandon re: the goals and objectives of the City Auditor and City Clerk.

In CIty COuncil June 5, 1995

Placed on file.