



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

April 26, 1982

To the Honorable, the City Council:

The City has entered into an agreement to acquire a computerized accounting and budgetary control system. The computer hardware will be supplied by Sperry-Univac and the computer software package will be supplied by Main Hurdman, one of the largest CPA firms in the United States.

The computer, Sperry Univac's System 80, and the software package, TAG (Total Accounting for Governments), is "state-of-the-art." In the rapidly changing world of computer technology, state-of-the-art means the most current and sophisticated electronic data processing (EDP) capability available.

The recent "Proposition 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " puts the City of Cambridge under continuing pressure to increase the level of services provided to residents while observing strict budgetary constraints. The new computerized accounting and budgetary control system is expected to help the City achieve this goal. The City began exploring possible EDP solutions to meet its budgetary control needs over a year ago. It was decided that the City should evaluate software packages designed for governmental accounting and budgetary control, rather than developing a custom-made system from scratch.

In October 1981, an eleven-member task force made up of representatives from the major city departments began a process of review and analysis to determine the City's EDP needs and to find the combination of computer hardware and software package that would best meet those needs. A total of nineteen (19) proposals were received from computer hardware manufacturers and CPA firms. Based on an analysis of the 19 proposals, performed by the task force and the consulting firm of Bremer Associates, finalists were selected to give demonstrations of their systems. After a thorough review and comparison, the City Manager awarded the contract to Sperry Univac and Main Hurdman.

The City of Cambridge had several key reasons for selecting the System 80/TAG combination. One was that the City requires its new computerized system to be fully installed and operational by July 1, 1982, and it was felt that Sperry Univac and Main Hurdman have the capability

To the City Council (cont.)

April 26, 1982

to meet that deadline. Another reason for selecting System 80/TAG was that the System 80 is superior computer hardware and the TAG governmental accounting and budgetary control package is the most sophisticated of its kind from the financial management point of view. The System 80/TAG combination is completely "on line" and "real time" -- which means that data is entered into the system through video terminals and that records kept in the system are immediately and automatically updated to reflect the new input.

Although the City of Cambridge was looking for a sophisticated system, ease of use was another important criterion. Since the City has no previous experience operating a major computer system, it was important that the system selected be easy for our staff to learn and operate -- what is called "user-friendly" in data processing jargon. The System 80/TAG system is user-friendly because the display screens that show up on the video terminals for putting in data or obtaining information are as easy to understand as bookkeeping forms for a manual accounting system.

The City of Cambridge received an added benefit in purchasing the System 80/TAG combination. At no additional cost to the City, Sperry Univac will also supply an easy-to-use, nontechnical programming language called "Escort". Escort enables staff with no programming knowledge to use the computer to write their own computer programs and create computer files. This will give the City the capability of using the computer system for future data processing needs without having to hire special programmers at additional expense. For the City, it means a cost-efficient way of putting the power of the computer to work in solving a variety of different government management problems.

Since the City will operate the new System 80/TAG with its current staff, no additional expense will be required in that area. The coordinators of the new system will be Louis DePasquale and Edward Seffilian, and the system operator will be Michael DiFava. They will receive the training they need to perform their new responsibilities from Sperry Univac and Main Hurdman. Sperry Univac and Main Hurdman will also provide training as needed to other City personnel.

The City Manager's office is convinced that Univac and Main Hurdman are committed to providing whatever support it takes for the City to make the transition to the new computerized system. Both Univac and Main Hurdman believe the City of Cambridge can be a model for other government units in Massachusetts that are considering the move into computerization.

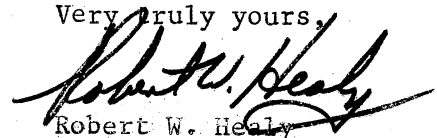
The City's investment in the new system is secure -- the City's computer capability can be expanded up to eight times its current size without having to convert to a different system.

To the City Council (cont.)

April 26, 1982

The City of Cambridge believes that its investment in computerization will be repaid many times over as a result of the improved control over finances made possible by the new system. Under the new system, finance officers responsible for budgetary control will be able to obtain up-to-the-moment information about spending and use of funds, and they will be better equipped to determine how the City's financial resources can be used to produce an increased level of service within existing budgetary constraints.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/b

Agenda Item Number One F 106

Re: Notification that the City has entered into an agreement to acquire a computerized accounting & budgetary control system.

In City Council,

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Placed on File -