

City of Cambridge

MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council

Feb. 24

1992

C. Cyr.

Agenda # 14B Re: Food Pantry Networks

	YEA	NAY	ABSENT	PRESENT	
Mr. Ed Cyr	✓				
Mr. Francis H. Duehay	✓				
Mr. Jonathan S. Myers	✓				
Mrs. Sheila T. Russell	✓				
Mr. Walter J. Sullivan	✓				
Mr. Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.	✓				
Mr. William H. Walsh	✓				
Ms. Alice K. Wolf	✓				
Mayor Kenneth E. Reeves	✓				

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

February 24, 1992

INTRODUCED BY CITY MANAGER ROBERT W. HEALY

AN ORDER CONCERNING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 1991

ORDERED: That in addition to sums previously appropriated by the City Council for the fiscal period 1991-92 the following sum is hereby appropriated in the General Fund of the City of Cambridge:

FUNCTION	DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM	SALARY \$ WAGES	OTHER ORDINARY MAINTENANCE	TRAVEL & TRAINING	EXTRAORDINARY EXPENDITURES	APPROPRIATIONS
Human Resource Department	Human Services		\$43,000.00			\$43,000.00

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED: That the above appropriation in the General Fund to be financed by estimated revenues drawn from the following sources:

FINANCING PLAN	REVENUE
Free Cash	\$43,000.00

In City Council February 24, 1992.

Adopted by a yeas and nays vote:-

Yeas 9; Nays 0; Absent 0.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy:

ATTEST:-

Joseph E. Connarton
City Clerk



City of Cambridge
Department of Human Service Programs

51 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
(617) 349-6200, Fax (617) 349-6248

TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

FROM: Jill Herold *JH*
Assistant City Manager for Human Services

RE: Response to City Council order #32 of 1/27/92
Food Pantry Network

DATE: February 21, 1992

In response to the above mentioned Council order two meetings were held with staff from the Department of Human Services and CEOC representing the Food Pantry Network. Attached please find a proposal which responds to the immediate need for supplementing the nutritional resources of food pantries and meals programs.

DIVISIONS:

Childcare
349-6200

Community Learning Center
349-6363

Community & Youth
349-6231

Council on Aging/Elderly Services
349-6220

Low Income Fuel Assistance
349-6247

Planning & Development
349-6200

Recreation
349-6230

MultiService Center/Homeless Services
349-6340

Proposal to Assist Hungry Cambridge Residents

Need

Almost ten percent of Cambridge households interviewed this past November as part of a just-released citizen survey, indicated that they had needed and/or received assistance (not including Food Stamps or WIC coupons) in putting food on the table sometime during the previous twelve months. The survey, conducted by the University of Massachusetts and funded by the City, asked respondents whether they had used a food pantry or soup kitchen, been hungry, and/or sought help because of problems affording food.

[If survey results are indicative of an ongoing problem, then we can anticipate that approximately 3,900 Cambridge households will have trouble putting food on the table sometime during 1992.]

Putting aside the underlying causes of poverty, there are two barriers to adequately addressing the problem: inadequate pantry resources and underenrollment in benefits programs like the Food Stamp program.

(1) Inadequacy of Pantry Resources

According to CEOC and the Food Pantry Providers Network, approximately 1,500 households (20% of which are households with elders) use the food pantry system each month. Some 1,800 households have signed up over the past 18 months.

A survey of local food pantries conducted by DHSP earlier this month (1/29 - 2/3/92) found that most pantries have or anticipate having inadequate resources to address the needs of their constituents. Pantries variously reported inadequate funds for staffing and outreach, increasing demand, a need to cut back on hours of operation, a need to reduce the value of foodstuffs distributed, and a need to limit the number of repeat visits by food pantry clients. As inventories built up with holiday donations dwindle, the problem will get worse.

The anticipated closing of the Red Cross Pantry in Harvard Square will only put additional stress on the remaining pantries.

(2) Underenrollment in the Food Stamp and Other Benefits Programs

According to Project Bread's "Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project," 33% of eligible Massachusetts households are non-participants in the Food Stamp program. The USDA national estimate is 40%.

A Red Cross Pantry survey indicated that 50% of their Boston and Cambridge clients did not participate in the Food Stamp program.

Elements of the Proposal

(1) Bolster Pantry Resources (\$40,500)

- (a) Appropriate an additional \$40,500 to ensure that providers in the emergency food distribution network (i.e., pantries and meals programs) have adequate food resources to meet the needs of hungry Cambridge residents.

[CEOC estimates that a three day supply of food for a family of four costs, on average, nine dollars. A supplemental appropriation of \$40,500 would enable pantries to make one such "food bag" available to 1,500 families for each of three months. In combination with residual FY 92 resources for emergency food distribution, this appropriation would enable pantries and meal programs to serve additional households and to offer existing clients higher quality food in more sufficient quantities.]

Specifically, the money would be used to support

- > bulk purchases by CEOC of basic nonperishable foods for distribution to pantries and meal providers
 - > purchases by independent pantries and meal providers of certain other non-perishables from the Boston Food Bank and other sources
 - > purchase (and distribution to pantries and meal providers) by Food For Free of perishable foods (produce and dairy).
- (b) Actively encourage SHARE participants to volunteer their time at the Boston Food Bank. (Each volunteer hour entitles a sponsoring pantry to approximately 20 pounds of "free" food.) Because the Food Bank is located in Roxbury, it would be necessary to coordinate transportation of volunteers.

(2) Fund Peer Outreach / Benefits Enrollment Assistance (\$1,500)

Appropriate \$1,500 in seed money to fund a pilot outreach effort wherein stipended, trained pantry clients would assist other pantry clients from their communities in applying for Food Stamps and finding out about other public benefits for which they may be eligible. Participation by pantries in this effort would be voluntary, and contingent upon their willingness/ability to provide supervision for volunteers.

- > Project Bread would provide free training to outreach workers, free telephone backup support (to answer questions about eligibility, documentation, etc.), and free outreach material.
- > Stipended outreach workers (receiving, say, \$6.50/hour) would staff participating pantries during normal hours (or, if normal hours are too hectic, by appointment) for, say, a 10 week period in March, April, and May).

(Note that some of the stipended volunteers could designate two of their volunteer hours as SHARE hours, and could use the \$13 from two of their volunteer hours to meet their up-front costs as SHARE participants.)

Strengths of the Proposal

- All of the money goes toward the purchase of food or into the pockets of the stipended food pantry clients who participate in the Food Stamp outreach effort. (i.e., The only cost of the outreach effort is the stipends for volunteers.)
- Outreach and assistance with Food Stamp enrollment are provided by linguistically and culturally appropriate persons from the community.
- The cost of outreach is small in comparison to the amount of federal (Food Stamp) assistance obtained by newly enrolled families.
- Encouraging/enabling SHARE participants to volunteer their hours at the Boston Food Bank expands the buying power of the Food Pantry network.



City of Cambridge

Federal.

32.

IN CITY COUNCIL

January 27, 1992

VICE MAYOR CYR

WHEREAS: An empty pantry can signal a crisis for a family, empty shelves in our City's Food Pantry Network, signal a problem that is evermore profound, the elimination of options for families in crisis; and

WHEREAS: The city faces just such a possibility this year with donations to food drives down, federal supports down and the stock of available food stuffs dwindling; and

WHEREAS: The demands on local food pantries has grown dramatically as an obvious and painful indication of the impact of higher unemployment rates, frozen or cut benefits and a deepening recession; and

WHEREAS: The voters of Cambridge voted overwhelmingly to support the development and implementation of a Cambridge food policy; and

WHEREAS: In doing so they have set before this City Council the responsibility for feeding our people; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That this City Council calls on the City Manager to assign all the appropriate staff to work with advocates and providers, food vendors and concerned citizens to develop appropriate plan to stock the shelves in our food pantry network; and be it further

ORDERED: That recognizing the emergency nature of this problem that appropriate short term measures be prepared for presentation to this City Council on or before our meeting of February 10, 1992 including a request for a required allocation.

In City Council January 27, 1992.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy; *Joseph E. Connarton*

ATTEST:-

Joseph E. Connarton
City Clerk



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL 349-4300
FAX 349-4307

14.

February 24, 1992

To The Honorable, The City Council:

With reference to Awaiting Report Item No. 27, regarding the Food Pantry Network, please find attached a response from Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, relative to this issue.

Also attached is an order requesting an appropriate for \$43,000 to supplement the Food Pantry Network.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
attachment

Consent Agenda Item # 14 *F-77*

- A. Awaiting Report Item Number 27,
regarding the Food Pantry Network
- B. Appropriation of \$43,000 to supplement the Food Pantry Network.

In City Council,

February 24, 1992

14A. Placed on file

14B. Order adopted

9-0-0.