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Ans'd.....

25 October 1988

To the Honorable Mayor
and Members of the
Cambridge City Council
City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139

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Gentlepersons:

I wish to bring to your attention the plight of the Cambridge Auxiliary Fire Department.

The Fire Auxiliary was, at one time, a considerable department here in Cambridge. They boasted a membership of over fifty members, officers, their own quarters, two engine companies and two lighting units. They drilled nightly, and were always available for fire duty in Cambridge and in other communities in the Greater Boston area and beyond.

In 1985, the Fire Auxiliary's quarters, located at the city's Water Yard at Fresh Pond Reservoir, were given over to the MuniLease Company. MuniLease was responsible for leasing the city's police vehicles, and was to use the space for maintenance and service. In 1986, MuniLease went out of business; the police department kept the two garage bays formerly used by MuniLease. (The adjacent drill tower had been condemned by the city as unsafe.)

In 1986, many of the members resigned in frustration over the lack of progress in acquiring new quarters; by December 1986, the Fire Auxiliary was down to two members.

In early 1987 a meeting with Fire Chief Thomas Scott renewed hopes that the Auxiliary might survive. The Chief indicated that he did indeed want the Auxiliary to continue. A new membership drive was started; old equipment was repaired or replaced. The two fire trucks, now old and in disrepair, were given hope of returning to service.

Continued lack of success in locating new quarters resulted in a direct inquiry to City Manager Robert Healy in November 1987. Mr. Healy replied that no facilities were available; that indeed it was not even a high priority, since "fire trucks can survive outdoors." This was to prove a death sentence for the two fire trucks, as the severe winter weather resulted in damage deemed not repairable by the Fire Department Mechanic.

Currently the Fire Auxiliary consists of eight members, two officers, a Fire Department Lieutenant, and the Director of Emergency Management who oversees their operations. (The Fire Auxiliary operates under the authority of the Office of Emergency Management and is indirectly funded through that office.) The two pumpers and one lighting unit were sold at public sale this past summer; the monies went into the General Fund. The remaining piece of equipment, Lighting Plant Two, has been given permission by the Fire Chief to be housed at Engine 8 in Taylor Square. However, the Auxiliary must travel to Fresh Pond or Fort Washington to conduct its drills. The officers have no radios or pagers, so they must depend on the Fire Alarm Office or their own personal radios for notification of emergencies or fires.

I request help from the City Council in providing assistance to this fine organization. The members are all volunteers, and average sixteen years of age. Over 60% of the men currently employed as city firemen can trace

their initial interest in firefighting back to their days as members of the Auxiliary. I myself have seen them operate at fires, parades and at drills. They are dedicated and dilligent.

There are sites around the city that could be used as suitable quarters. These include the new parking garage on First Street; the old Snapple Beverage building at the rear of the Fresh Pond Cinema; the Fresh Pond Cinema itself; or other buildings. Or perhaps the garage bays and drill tower at Fresh Pond can be renovated and reopened; it had originally served the Auxiliary for over thirty years.

I would also ask that the Council inquire with the Watertown Fire Chief as to the disposition of his two Auxiliary fire trucks that currently sit in storage in Watertown. I believe they would be quite suitable for use as units for the Cambridge Fire Auxiliary.

Thank you for your time and consideration. The efforts you make today will be the foundation for the careers of future figefighters tomorrow.

Very Truly Yours,



C. William Jones
160 Norfolk Street
Cambridge 02139

It has also come to my attention, that the City of Boston has used fire apparatus for sale, available to municipalities.

I would also suggest that Council members visit the Malden Emergency Center's new facility on Route 60 in Malden, and see their newly-acquired rescue vehicle.

Comm. from C. William Jones, transmitting a brief history of the Cambridge Auxiliary Fire Dept., its efforts to survive & its plight in acquiring new quarters; said comm. requesting the Council's assistance in this matter.

In City Council,

October 31, 1988

10-31-88

Placed on file. Copy
to the City Mgr.

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