

At this time, Vice-Mayor Vellucci submitted the following motion for consideration by the full City Council at the meeting of February 23, 1987:-

"Ordered: That this City Council go on record supporting the creation of a new unit at the Cambridge Hospital designated specifically for the care of the elderly of the City of Cambridge, due to the acute shortage of beds at the Neville Manor and the strong need for care of the elderly."

The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 a.m..

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Alfred Vellucci".

Vice-Mayor Alfred E. Vellucci
Chairman.

Mr. O'Brien responded by stating that he was considering down-sizing the Hospital in terms of the number of patient beds for the time being; this he said was due generally to present trends which indicate the need for surgery is done, and rather than the need for sixty beds in a surgery unit, the Hospital may only need thirty.

Councillor Duehay questioned what barriers currently exist which would prevent Mr. O'Brien and the Hospital administrative staff from moving forward on these innovative programs.

Mr. O'Brien responded by stating that it is his belief that one of the areas to be addressed is the issue of wages relative to the Union employees at the Hospital. He stated he feels it's imperative that the collective bargaining process should be done separately for employees of the Hospital and Neville Manor, due to current fiscal constraints.

At this time, City Manager Robert Healy stated that he agreed with that position and, in fact, the non-union employees at the Hospital and Neville Manor have received a different wage increase, and although he realizes this is difficult, he feels it's important to the fiscal strength of the Hospital.

Vice-Mayor Vellucci stated that until recently, employee benefit costs, such as Blue Cross Blue Shield coverage and pensions were always borne from the General Fund, but are now assigned to each department.

The City Manager responded by stating that was correct, but that the costs are still being paid from City funds.

Mr. O'Brien stated that in addition to program development improvements, he is also working to improve the physical image of the Hospital, constructing new signs, developing public service announcements on radio and increasing community involvement.

At this time, Vice-Mayor Vellucci stated that the 7th floor of the Hospital should be studied for improved utilization for which revenue could be received as opposed to its current use for office space. He further stated that the original design plan for the Hospital did not call for a 7th floor.

Mr. O'Brien responded by stating that there are several committees within the Hospital currently working on the appropriate usage of the entire facility.

At this time, Ms. Barbara Ackermann, Chair of the Health Policy Board, stated her agreement with the perception that there is a great need for the addition of elderly beds, but a balance must be developed for the use of any new beds by those individuals who are neither in need of medical/surgical care or of direct nursing home care.

At this time, Mr. Alan Steinert of the Health Policy Board stated that it is imperative that the City allows appropriate staffing patterns to develop at the Hospital and that during last year's budget hearing an attempt to do this failed.

Councillor Graham responded by stating that although no member of the City Council could support wholesale layoffs, vacancies through attrition and early retirement incentives would be more palatable.

Councillor Russell questioned why it seemed that the morale among Hospital personnel was so low.

Mr. O'Brien responded by stating that had been the case because he believed middle management was not listening to complaints being received but that this has been corrected and mid-level managers are being trained to be more sensitive and respond to the needs of employees.

City of Cambridge

In City Council..... March 9, 1987

The Health & Hospitals Committee conducted a public hearing on Thursday, February 19, 1987 beginning at 8:00 a.m. in the Boardroom of the Cambridge Hospital. The purpose of the hearing was to discuss current Hospital programs; to receive a status report on current Fiscal Year operations; as well as to discuss the projected Budget for FY88.

Vice-Mayor Alfred E. Vellucci, Chairman of the above-Committee opened the meeting by stating he wanted the Committee to receive a first-hand report relative to the general operations of the Hospital and its fiscal needs.

At this time, the Committee heard from John O'Brien, the Hospital Administrator, who stated that prior to submitting a status report that the Dean of the Harvard Medical School, who had been invited to the meeting, would be unavailable to come at this time but would arrange for an opportunity to meet the Committee in the near future.

Mr. O'Brien informed the Committee the Hospital has made great inroads in the area of program development, having already conducted an environmental assessment of its medical facility and the programs administered by the Hospital. He stated that the Hospital was in the process of developing increased women's health programs and is addressing the overall quality of care for all services provided at the facility. Mr. O'Brien further stated that a strategic business plan was currently being developed for the Hospital and should be ready for review by the Committee by early summer. He further stated that the Hospital may require an additional \$3 million appropriation during this Fiscal Year, in an effort to see these programs through and to make the Hospital fully competitive in the public health field.

Mr. O'Brien further stated that he and the administrators of the Hospital are currently developing new health care programs which would entice increased patient day activity and a better working relationship throughout the community, with particular emphasis being placed in the Portuguese and Latino areas. Furthermore, he stated that anticipated revenues from Medicare increases have not equalled projection and all elective surgery work required by the Harvard Community Health Care patients is being done at the Mt. Auburn Hospital, resulting in an approximate \$1.2 million shortfall.

Vice-Mayor Vellucci stated that in retrospect, the originally agreed upon affiliation with Tufts Medical School should have been executed and questioned whether or not any real contribution to the Hospital is made from the Harvard Medical School.

Councillor Wolf stated that she strongly supports Mr. O'Brien's initiatives in the area of program development but questioned whether or not anything could be done about the number of un-utilized beds.

REPORT

Committee on Health & Hospitals

Re: current Hospital programs, status report
on current Fiscal Year operations & the pro-
jected Hospital Budget for FY88.

In City Council,

March 9, 1987

Placed in file