



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
FROM: Jill Herold *[Signature]*
RE: Response to City Council order #42, April 26, 1993
DATE: May 12, 1993

On July 1, 1993 the City of Cambridge, through the Department of Human Services' Council on Aging, assumed responsibility for the operation of the Cambridge Committee of Elders, Inc. senior center located at 15 Pearl Street in Central Square.

The decision to merge the Committee of Elders with the Council on Aging came about as a result of the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult for small, non-profit corporations to sustain their operation without consolidation or merger with other organizations. The philanthropic community and the public sector, the primary funding sources of non-profit agencies, are targetting their dwindling resources on agencies which can demonstrate low overhead and rigorous management systems, both of which are difficult for small, non-profit agencies to achieve. As evidence of this situation, Cambridge has recently experienced the closing of three non-profit agencies and the merger of two agencies with similar missions.

In the winter of 1991, the Board of Directors of the Committee of Elders approached the Department of Human Services requesting consideration of a merger of their organization into the Council on Aging. As an element of the City's long range planning for elderly services, it was determined that a merger of the Committee of Elders with the Council on Aging would complement the plan already underway to establish a citywide senior center just a few blocks from the 15 Pearl Street site.

After a thorough review by the City of the financial status of the Committee of Elders, including an analysis of financial audit reports, a decision was made to proceed with the dissolution of the Committee of Elders, Inc. as an independent organization and the merger of their program and operation into the Council on Aging. This merger became effective on July 1, 1993. (Attached is a copy of the merger agreement.) A closeout financial audit was conducted as of January 31, 1993, seven months following the date on which the City assumed the responsibility for and the management of the Committee of Elders, Inc.. That audit indicated a final fund

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

balance of zero with a cash balance of \$6,210.

A commitment was made by the City to maintain all existing programs and services that the Committee of Elders had been providing and, where possible, to expand services. The accompanying proposal to The Cambridge Foundation outlines just what additional resources have been made available to the participants of the 15 Pearl Street Senior Center since the merger.

PROPOSAL

Pearl St. Senior Center
15 Pearl St.
Cambridge, MA

The Pearl St. Senior Center, formerly the Cambridge Committee of Elders, has been in operation since 1969. We provide a broad range of services to Cambridge's large low-income elderly population. Since 1974 the center has provided multiservice and drop-in activities in Central Square.

After several years of struggling to survive in a poor economy with a shrinking funding base, the Board of Directors of the Committee of Elders approached the City of Cambridge to assist in keeping the vital services of the center in operation. The City had been undergoing its own long range planning for elderly services. In an attempt to cut overhead costs and provide greater efficiency, coordination, and access to services, the City began to plan to consolidate many of its elderly services in one multipurpose, centralized senior center. The building acquired for the center was located one and a half blocks from the Committee of Elders Center.

Plans were then made to merge the Committee of Elders program with the new senior center. Concurrently, the Council on Aging, the City's division for elderly services, incorporated a private, non-profit agency, Friends of the Cambridge Council on Aging, Inc. (FCCOA). FCCOA incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in July of 1992. At that same time the Committee of Elders entered into a corporate merger agreement with the Friends of the Council on Aging, Inc. so that services of the CCOE would continue in tact in the interim before the new senior center opens, projected for November 1994.

The Cambridge Committee of Elders has had a close out audit and final paperwork is in the process of being submitted to dissolve their 501(c)(3) and to officially merge fiscal functions with the Friends of the Cambridge Council on Aging, Inc. All programs of the CCOE are now under the management of the Cambridge Council on Aging (COA). The Committee of Elders is now called the Pearl St. Senior Center. The COA has continued to provide the same or higher level of service and has done so without a disruption in programs.

Our location in the middle of one of the highest concentrations of elders living at or below the poverty line in the State of Massachusetts makes us ideally suited to provide emergency services and support to seniors in crisis. In addition, Central Square has attracted a significant number of homeless and deinstitutionalized individuals who have come to take advantage of the area's two shelters, numerous fast food restaurants, large department stores, easy transit, and social service agencies.

Day-to-day operations are overseen by a full-time Senior

Center Coordinator who reports directly to the Executive Director of the Council on Aging. Other staff include a 31 hour/week Nutrition Manager, a part-time administrative assistant, a food pantry coordinator, and three volunteer elder receptionists who are stipended. In addition, the Council on Aging has outstationed its Benefits Specialist, Information and Referral Specialist, Housing Specialist, and Substance Abuse team to increase the level of social services and casework done for this population in need of so much assistance. We have also arranged with Somerville Cambridge Elder Services to outstation their Protective Services supervisor on a weekly basis at the center to assist with the most difficult cases, many of whom are homeless, mentally ill, or substance abusers.

The City connection with the program has allowed us to create more systemized intake and case records, more consistent social support services and more day-to-day programs. The heart of the center's program is its extensive nutrition component which serves very basic needs. This center is the only place open for seniors 365 days/year. Daily breakfast (serving 20/day) and lunch (serving 20-40/day) is provided 7 days/week and homeless dinners twice per week. In addition holiday meals are offered on all holidays and a special holiday food pantry for take home. The center's food pantry provides weekly supplements of staples and sometimes special items to approximately 135 individuals per week, many of whom do not have sufficient resources to have adequate nutrition.

Staff work together to offer all program participants a warm place for the day and attempt to link each person up with services to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, good health, quality of life, and companionship. Each person is given much individual attention to assure that they have what they need to make it through the day. Once basic needs are met, the center offers programs for enjoyment, education, and support. We offer bingo three days/week, weekly movies, health screenings, health education, outings, breakfast, lunch, and sometimes dinner. Heavy emphasis is placed on meeting the person where they are and helping to create a level of comfort and pleasure, which is everyone's right, regardless of economic circumstances. Many of our members live in low-income housing. Some are homeless. Typical daytime center user is an older person with few, if any, social or economic supports. On an average day between 50-75 different individuals use the center. In a year we will serve about 1,000 different individuals. We estimate that of all people using the center nearly 25 % are marginally adjusted or homeless. Our center helps to provide shelter and stability as well as work toward longer term improvement of their life circumstances.

Problems faced by our clients include eviction or threat of eviction, how to eat when the money has run out at the end of the month, to get basic homecare or health services, to fight the isolation and loneliness, to cope with grief, or the simple need to be with people who care about them. Social isolation and limited resources, if left unresolved, can end in premature

institutionalization or even homelessness. Center staff try to offer assurance that they are not alone, that people care and are there to aid them. Our center serves as the family they never had for many of our members.

An extensive description of our center programs and services follows on the Project Workplan. We are requesting \$4,000 from Cambridge Community Foundation for our meals program. This money will help us purchase food for the food pantry, pay for breakfast, and partial payment of homeless dinners.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN

THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE AND THE CAMBRIDGE COMMITTEE OF ELDERS, INC.

As of July 1, 1992, the Cambridge Committee of Elders, Inc. (CCOE) will transfer control of and rights to all of its assets, operations, properties and programs to the City of Cambridge (City), as allowed by law.

All existing CCOE employees shall be offered employment with the City in their present positions or in similar positions. After July 1, 1992, all employees will be subject to City policies concerning employment. Any seniority or benefit accrual will occur beginning with the date of employment with the City, not the agency.

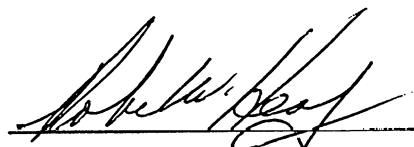
All vacation benefits accrued as of July 1, 1992, for which there is documentation, will be compensated for in a one time payment.

CCOE will turn over all program and client records to the City.

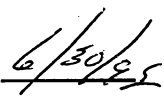
CCOE will transfer all existing grants, cash and deposits to the Friends of the Council on Aging, Inc. effective September 1, 1992, upon dissolution of the Cambridge Committee of Elders, Inc. corporation. CCOE, in collaboration with the City, will notify all funding sources of this change and request continuation of the funding in the future.

The current Board of Directors of CCOE will become an advisory council to the Pearl Street Center of the Council on Aging until the center's operation relocates to the City owned Senior Center. The advisory council will meet regularly with City of Cambridge Council on Aging staff to discuss center operations and provide input on programming.

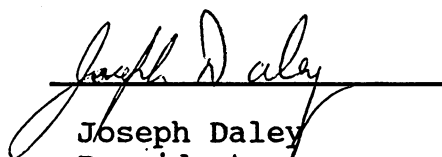
The City Manager will appoint two members of the Board of Directors of CCOE to the board of the Council on Aging.



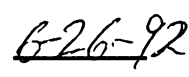
Robert W. Healy
City Manager
City of Cambridge



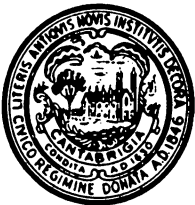
date



Joseph Daley
President
Cambridge Committee of Elders



date



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

May 17, 1993

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 39, regarding the merging of the Committee of Elders and the Council on Aging, received from Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, concerning this matter.

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

S-243
Consent Agenda # 3
Response to Awaiting Rpt. #39
RE: merging of Committee of Elders &
Council on Aging

Rep. # 36 of 5/24/93

In City Council,
May 17, 1993

Charter Right Exercised
by Councillor Walsh

5/24/93 - no action taken -
placed on file under rule 19