

May 8, 1991

Good Morning:

We are here today to discuss the Weld's Administration's proposed merger of Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services with three Boston Home Cares and South Shore Home Care Services.

Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services has been serving the Elders of the two communities for 19 years. For those of you who do not know what SCES does, let me tell you:

They are the ones who provide Home Health Care;

They are the ones who provide Transportation for Elderly and disabled;

They are the ones who provide Meals on Wheels to homes and meal sites;

They are the ones who provide Protective Services to Elders who are abused;

They are the ones who help with Nursing Home Placement;

They are the ones who provide Respite Care;

They are the ones who provide Escort for shopping trips and medical appointments;

They provide the Nursing Home Ombudsman Program;

They serve 1625 clients per month;

Their service enables many frail elders who would perhaps have to be put in Nursing Homes to remain in their own homes. The cost of the state of maintaining an elder at home is \$3,100, as opposed to \$35,000 per year in nursing homes.

The proposed merger would make this office the largest in the state. Responsiveness to elders is best done at the local level. The larger the agency, the farther it will be removed from elders and their families. The elders ability to effect change and access services would be adversely imputed.

Over the years, SCES has developed close working relationship with individuals, agencies, local busiensses, hospitals, community groups, the constellation of people who make up a community. This network would be lost.

Community Base Care is what has worked, is working well, and will work. Better services can be provided more efficiently and more effectively, and ultimately money will be saved.

We want to send the message to Governor Weld in a loud, clear voice. We will not stand silently while our elder care is threatened. Never in the history of Home Care has there been such a significant challenge. Many of these seniors are not able to be here this morning. I am thinking, in particular of a longtime friend of mine, Clair McDonough who lives at 700 Huron Avenue. For many years, Clair was an active member of the Council on Aging. She is now frail and home bound, and depends on SCES and its services to stay in her own home. She is still a vibrant member of our community and wanted me to speak for her, and tell Governor Weld that she does not want to become part of the large bureaucracy that this merge will create. She does not want to be lost in the large maze that will be servicing Boston, Braintree, Cohasset, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Milton, Norwell, Quincy, Randolph, Scituate, Weymouth, Somerville and Cambridge. She needs the local delivery system that has worked so well for her and many like her.

Today we will hear from some elected officials, SCES - Council on Aging and Members of the Public. We will hear from some elected officials first who are on a tight schedule and have a short time to spend with us.

Introduce officials

Thank you all for coming this morning. We have made a tape of this meeting. We will be sending a copy along to Governor Weld, Speaker Flaherty, Senate President Bulger and Secretary of Elder Affairs Frank Oliveirre.

We want them to hear it from us first hand. Our Seniors are precious to us. They deserve the best care we can give them, and reducing the state's deficit will not be done on the backs of our most vulnerable people.

City of Cambridge

The Elder Affairs Committee conducted a public hearing on Wednesday, May 8, 1991 beginning at 10:04 a.m. in the Sullivan Chamber, City Hall.

Councillor Sheila T. Russell, Chair of the above referenced Committee convened the hearing and stated that this date's agenda was to discuss the proposed budgetary reduction and merger of the Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services Program (SCES) as offered by Governor William F. Weld and the State Office on Aging and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Present at the hearing were: Councillor Edward N. Cyr, Vice Mayor Kenneth E. Reeves, Councillor Walter J. Sullivan, Councillor William H. Walsh and Deputy City Clerk John E. Flynn.

To outline the impacts of the proposed budgetary reductions as well as the present empirical data of SCES, Councillor Russell read from a prepared text (a copy of which is attached).

At this time the Chair recognized the members of the Cambridge Legislative delegation or their designees for any and all comments on the proposed consolidation plan.

Ms. Karen Uminski of Representative Peter A. Vellucci's office stated that the Representative had been in contact with Somerville Senator Charles E. Shannon and Secretary of Elder Affairs Ollivierre and that it was his understanding that no merger would take place without public comment. Ms. Uminski further urged the Elders to contact Representative Vellucci to form a broad-base coalition to combat this proposal.

Mr. Andrew Rudalevige of Senator Michael J. Barrett's office stated the Senator's support for home based services and called the action inappropriate by the Administration.

Representative Alvin Thompson cited the togetherness of the Cambridge delegation on this issue and that the delegation would work to save the program.

Councillor Cyr stated that the proposed merger was an outrage and that Seniors will pay the price if the Governor is successful. He further stated his willingness to assist in putting resources into place to mount a legal challenge if necessary.

Councillor Sullivan stated his opposition to the proposed merger calling it a local issue affecting all citizens of Cambridge and indicated his willingness to assist in any and all ways to defeat the proposed merger.

Ms. Pat Matsume of Senator Michael LoPresti, Jr's office stated the Senator's willingness to do everything within his resources to fight the proposed merger of SCES. Ms. Matsume outlined to those present that the Senator had been effective in a similar situation in the Town of Winthrop.

At this time the Committee heard from the following individuals who expressed their strong opposition and concern for the proposed Home Care Consolidation:

Mr. Duffy Maragioglio, 15 Lambert Street
Ms. Ruth F. Piltier, Miller River Apartments
Mr. John O'Neill, Executive Director SCES
Ms. Mary Mullen, President, SCES Board
Ms. Kathie Filsinger, Cambridge Council on Aging (CCOA)
Ms. Anita Shipman, Cambridge Council on Aging (CCOA)
Mr. Joseph Daly, Elder Service Specialist, Cambridge Housing Authority
Ms. Jan Solet, Putnam School Apartments
Ms. Mary Samp, SCES Board
Ms. Virginia Kahn, SCES and CCOA Boards
Mr. Kenneth D. Holmes, SCES and CCOA Boards
Ms. Pat Watts, Windsor House
Mr. Charles Ash
Ms. Frances Segal
Grey Panthers
Mr. Dow Wieman, Executive Director, Geriatric Services
Ms. Nanette Glenney, Cambridge Department of Health and Hospital
Ms. Elizabeth Hatie, Executive Director, Paine Social Services
Former Mayor Barbara Ackermann, Health Policy Board
Mr. Richard Griffin

Upon conclusion of the public testimony and comment, Councillor Russell recognized the Committee members for their closing statements.

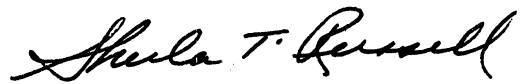
Councillor Cyr stated his belief that the system currently in place in the delivery of Home Care services is working and meeting the real needs of real people. The system is based on a simple premise - people who know one another helping one another. A system deserving of continuation and fighting for.

Vice Mayor Reeves stated to the audience his position that there exists no better advocate for you than you and urged an aggressive writing campaign to the Governor making him aware of the feelings of the Cambridge Community. He further stated his strong support for the current system and the many services provided by it.

Councillor Russell, in closing, stated that this morning's proceedings were cablecast live throughout Cambridge and tapes would be furnished to the Governor, Speaker Flaherty, Senate President Bulger and the legislative delegations.

The hearing was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

For the Committee

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sheila T. Russell".

Councillor Sheila T. Russell, Chair

(Note: In Committee, two motions were made and carried. On Monday, May 13, 1991, Full City Council adopted these orders. Refer to Council Order Numbers 15 and 18 of that date.)

2. 5-694

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communication received from the Committee on Elder Affairs for a hearing held on Wednesday, May 8, 1991 regarding the proposed budget reduction and merger of the Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services Program.

In City Council,

May 20, 1991

Report accepted
Placed on file