

INTRODUCED BY CITY MANAGER ROBERT W. HEALY

AN ORDER CONCERNING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2000

ORDERED: That in addition to sums previously appropriated by the City Council for the fiscal period 2000-01 the following sum is hereby appropriated in the General Fund of the City of Cambridge:

FUNCTION	OTHER DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM	SALARY & WAGES	ORDINARY MAINTENANCE	TRAVEL & TRAINING	EXTRAORDINARY EXPENDITURES	APPROPRIATIONS
Human Resource & Development	Human Services		\$25,000.00			\$25,000.00

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

FINANCING PLAN	REVENUE
Free Cash	\$25,000.00

In City Council December 18, 2000.

Adopted by a yeas and nays vote:-

Yeas 9; Nays 0; Absent 0.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-


D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

Department of Human Service Programs

19



sharing resources...building community

Jill Harold
Assistant City Manager

December 6, 2000

Ellen Scronoff
Deputy Director

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Jill Harold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services

Re: Status of Rental Assistance Fund

Childcare & Family
Support Services

Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Community Schools

Community
Learning Center

Coordinating Council for
Children, Youth and Families
(Kids' Council)

Council on Aging/
Elderly Services

Low Income
Fuel Assistance

Multi-Service Center/
Homeless Services

Office of Workforce
Development

Planning & Development

Recreation

Youth

Utilization of the Rental Assistance Fund by Multi-Service Center clients has been particularly high over recent months, and the available balance at this time is less than \$4,000. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you the possibility of replenishing the Fund. To give a clear picture of how financial needs are being met for Cambridge residents at risk of having to relocate outside of the city, it is important to give some sense of the partnerships that exist among funding sources. There are several funds available to staff at the Multi-Service Center for direct financial assistance for clients who are homeless or at risk of losing their housing. These resources include the following:

- The **Cambridge Fund for Housing the Homeless** is administered by the City and receives private donations and proceeds of special events such as the annual golf tournament. Traditionally it has been reserved for people who have already entered the homeless services system. A total of \$4,293 has been disbursed on behalf of five individuals this fiscal year.
- The **Family-to-Family Project**, a private non-profit organization located in Somerville and serving clients of various agencies in the area, has been generous with Multi-Service Center clients. In the most recently completed fiscal year, Family-to-Family assisted 48 families referred by the Multiservice Center. Total disbursements from this fund were \$18,255, ranging from \$69 to \$869 and averaging \$380.
- The **Cambridge Housing Assistance Fund** was established in 1998 by the Cambridge Board of Realtors with CASCAP, which administers the Fund. The Multi-Service Center, CASCAP, HomeStart and the Cambridge Housing Authority jointly decided upon each request. Over the past 12 months, the Cambridge Housing Assistance Fund (CHAF) has assisted 24 families and 11 individuals referred by the Multi-Service Center. The CHAF made available \$24,060, in grants ranging from \$102 to \$1,700 and averaging \$687. The CHAF has been used primarily for establishing new tenancies for Cambridge households that would otherwise have had to leave the city.
- The **Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund** assists victims of fire and other disasters with privately donated funds. This source provides up to \$750 per head of household plus \$100 for each additional dependent.



- Smaller, supplementary funds operated by the **Salvation Army** and **Lend-A-Hand** are able to contribute at most \$100 per client in partnership with other funders when the need arises. The City's Fuel Assistance Program administers approximately \$8,000 per year in FEMA monies for utility arrearages, a decreasing sum over recent years.

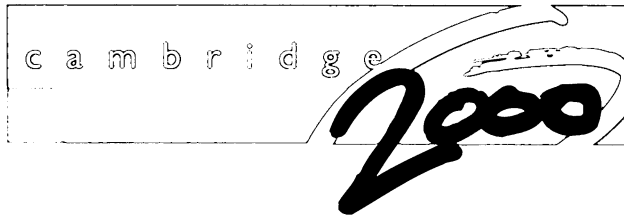
As you will recall, the City put in place the New Lease Program to offer case management, housing search and limited financial assistance for lower income households facing possible displacement as rent control was phased out. When the New Lease Program officially ended after approximately a year and a half, you recommended that the City Council continue funding for two of the three case management positions and replenish the New Lease Fund. The continuation fund, now called the Rental Assistance Fund, has been heavily used. Between July 1, 2000 and November 9, 2000 the Rental Assistance Fund assisted 45 families and 25 individuals with such needs as security deposits, rental and utility arrearage is, storage fees, moving expenses and emergency hotel stays. Generally, these households were at risk of losing their housing but had not entered the shelter system, and the main focus has been to help them preserve their tenancies. Payments have ranged from \$100 to \$2,000 and averaged \$683. With pending requests that have been approved, disbursements this fiscal year will rise to \$47,811, leaving less than \$4,000 available in the Fund.

Multi-Service Center case managers are skilled in assembling financial packages which blend resources from multiple funds not only with City monies, but also with the client's own resources. This is a guiding principle in clearing arrearages as well as establishing new tenancies. Although proportions vary according to circumstances, clients usually provide 50% or more of the needed funds from their own income. In addition to helping the Rental Assistance Fund go further, this practice assures the client's understanding of responsibility for the current financial situation, and reinforces the need to plan realistically for future expenses. Administrators of the partner funds agree with our staff that case management is essential, and that before funds are allocated, every situation must be examined carefully to assure that the tenant will be able to sustain his or her tenancy in the future. All are also in agreement that keeping households out of the shelter system is paramount. In addition to the personal and family trauma of eviction and entry into a shelter, loss of subsidized or lower-cost housing forces a tenant to compete for scarce subsidies and housing units in a market with escalating costs.

The original \$100,000 in the New Lease Fund was disbursed over a 15-month period, carrying over funds beyond the life of the New Lease Program itself. An additional \$50,000 was appropriated for the Rental Assistance Fund for FY2000, and again for FY2001. Utilization of the City's Rental Assistance Fund has been particularly high during periods when the CHAF was temporarily unavailable, pending receipt of proceeds from fundraising events. Other more fundamental factors influencing increased expenditures include the steady rise in rental rates, which engenders related increases in security deposits and realtors' fees, as well as more widespread community awareness of the availability of the assistance. Assuming that utilization will return to more normal levels, based on the current availability of CHAF and other funds, we are requesting an additional \$25,000 for the Rental Assistance Fund. We hope this would carry us through this fiscal year, although need is somewhat unpredictable. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information.

UTILIZATION OF SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS

Name of Fund	Family-to-Family	Cambridge Housing Assistance Fund	City Rental Assistance Fund
	<i>1/99-12/99</i>	<i>11/99-10/00</i>	<i>7/1/00-11/9/00</i>
# of Disbursements	48 families	24 families 11 individuals	45 families 25 individuals
Average Disbursement	\$380	\$687	\$683
Range of Disbursements	\$69-\$869	\$102-\$1,700	\$100-\$2,000
Total Disbursements	\$18,255	\$24,060	\$47,811
Purpose of Disbursement			
• <i>Security Deposit</i>	7	11	6
• <i>First/Last Month's Rent</i>	12	8	2
• <i>Stabilization/Rental Arrearage</i>	8	9	32
• <i>Utility Arrearage</i>	5	1	20
• <i>Storage Fees</i>	3	1	1
• <i>Furniture</i>	4	2	
• <i>Emergency Housecleaning</i>			1
• <i>Emergency Hotel Stay</i>	2		5
• <i>Realtor's Fee</i>	5	1	1
• <i>Moving Expenses</i>	2	2	11
• <i>Other</i>		1	3



19.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

December 18, 2000

To The Honorable, The City Council:

I am hereby requesting the appropriation of \$25,000 from Free Cash to the General Fund Human Services Other Ordinary Maintenance Account for a rental assistance as per the attached documentation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy".

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec



2000 Things 2 Do in 2000

F 147

Consent Agenda Item#19

Order requesting the
appropriation of \$25,000
for a rental assistance.

In City Council December 18, 2000

ORDER ADOPTED

9-0-0