

City of Cambridge

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND RULES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Councillor David P. Maher, Chair
Councillor Anthony D. Galluccio
Councillor Brian Murphy
Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves
Councillor Timothy J. Toomey*

In City Council October 28, 2002

The Government Operation and Rules Committee held a public meeting on October 9, 2002, beginning at 4:15 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber. The purposes of meeting were as follow:

- Discussing an evaluation of the Hansen software system used by the city for work orders and constituent and City Council requests for repairs and other work,
- The possibility of providing a way for citizens to enter requests for repairs and other city services on the city's web site,
- Greater use of the Municipal Cable television channel for public service announcements and information on current issues.

Present at the hearing were Councillor David P. Maher, chair of the committee, Mayor Michael A. Sullivan, Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis, Councillor Brian Murphy, Councillor E. Denise Simmons, City Clerk D. Margaret Drury and Sandra Albano, Assistant to the City Council. Also present were Robert W. Healy, City Manager, Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager, Mary Ellen Carvello, Assistant to the City Manager, Lisa Peterson, Commissioner of Public Works, Mary Hart, Director of Management Information Services, Calvin Lindsay, Director of the Municipal Cable TV Office and Ini Tomeu, Public Information Officer.

Councillor Maher convened the hearing and explained the purpose. He invited Vice Mayor Davis to begin with a discussion of the Hansen issues, which she had moved to refer to the committee.

Vice Mayor Davis noted that the City has used this system for a few years now. It serves internal purposes for the administrative staff, and it is also the tool that members of the City Council can use to enter requests for repairs on behalf of constituents. She knows that there has been no evaluation of the City Council piece of the system, and she believes it would be a good idea to look at how well it is serving its purpose. Vice Mayor Davis explained that the second issue is one of increasing the public's access to city services and specifically, increasing computer access. There should be a way for citizens to go to a web site and enter a request for repair of the sidewalk, etc.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Carvello described what happens after a request is entered into the Hansen system. All requests from the City Council and the Mayor's office come to her, and she forwards them to the appropriate department. Not all members of the City Council use the system. Some, like Mayor Sullivan and Vice Mayor Davis, use it frequently.

City Manager Healy suggested looking at the operation of the Hansen program from two perspectives, the systems perspective and the human behavior perspective. He asked Ms. Hart to describe the issue from a systems point of view.

Ms. Hart said that the MIS department has performed an evaluation of the Hansen customer relations management system from the technical side. When the City acquired the system three years ago, it was one of the best. It has worked for three years, and has a clearance record of 95%, which is quite impressive. However, there have been major advances in customer relation management systems over the last three years. Proactive systems have been developed and such systems can do electronically much of the tracking of deadlines, contacting department heads to investigate delays, and general oversight that Ms. Carvello now does. The Hansen is a reactive system; it is based on a lot of manual actions and really is quite paper-based.

Mr. Healy added that a new system will be integrated with e-mail and the internet will be more proactive and user-friendly. He cautioned that the human behavior piece is more difficult to update. He said that in connection with evaluation of the City Council customer request functions of Hansen, he would like to discuss the letters he sends to the City Council and councillors' double entry of repair requests as a Hansen item and a council order. If a constituent sends a letter to all nine members of the City Council, there can be nine separate Hansen entries and nine separate response letters from the City Manager to each city councillor, which in turn can be sent out by the Council Office as nine individual letters to the constituent, one from each councillor. He is confident that there is a way to improve this aspect of the operation.

Mayor Sullivan said that when he makes both a Hansen request and a council order for a particular item, it is because he knows that the constituent wants to see the item scrolled on the cable television summary of the upcoming agenda that is broadcast over the weekend before the meeting. He added that he likes the Hansen system because it is a good tracking system. However, he recognizes that it has created more work, especially for Ms. Carvello. Mayor Sullivan added that he would like to have access to be able to look up what requests that he has entered are still outstanding.

Ms. Hart said the Hansen system did not come with that kind of reporting system three years ago. The newer systems typically have a profiling system with an "executive management privilege" that allows such access.

Vice Mayor Davis concluded this portion of the discussion by observing that the Hansen system answered a really important need for the members of the City Council when it was adjusted, soon after its acquisition, for use as a constituent request system. She suggested that as the MIS department is embarking upon the selection of the next system, the City Councillors themselves be consulted about their needs and preferences. Perhaps MIS could produce an informal questionnaire for all councillors to fill out. All present agreed that this would be a good idea.

Councillor Maher asked when a new system will be up and running. Ms. Hart said that such a system generally takes three to six months to implement. However, MIS is working on the installation and implementation for many other projects. The plan is to present the options this year and to choose a system for installation during the next fiscal year.

Councillor Maher asked whether the public will be able to enter repair requests into the new system. Ms. Hart said that there are systems that allow for such requests to go into a database, but then something has to be done with the requests. It becomes a work management issue.

Mayor Sullivan said that the public already has easy access to the city administration through the web site. From the web site, members of the public can email questions directly to the City Manager, the Mayor and various department heads. Perhaps there should be more publicity about this function.

Councillor Maher then moved the discussion to the issue of a public information kiosk and requested an update. Ms. Tomeu said that she has been working on the project with an interior designer, Ms. Rooney. The information center will be located on the first floor, in front of the switchboard operator's office. It will consist of two 30" x 60" literature racks and a new table. There will also be a new building directory with a glass-encased area for changeable notices.

Vice Mayor Davis stated that a place for bus schedules must be provided.

Councillor Simmons said that there has to be some limit on the information displayed, or the whole display will just become a clutter center.

Councillor Maher said that perhaps bus schedules could be placed in the front vestibule, between the outer and inner doors to the front lobby.

Vice Mayor Davis requested that Ms. Tomeu consult with Ms. Rooney to find a place for the bus schedules.

Councillor Maher then moved to the discussion of the cable television office to produce public service announcements and programs.

Councillor Davis asked Mr. Lindsay if the cable office has the capacity to produce information pieces about new programs that the city has begun. Mr. Lindsay answered in the affirmative. He explained that his office does not generate the information. His staff can take care of all of the technical matters, but they must rely on the department for the in-depth information about the program.

Councillor Maher suggested an "Ask the Mayor" show. Mr. Lindsay said that the Municipal Cable Office does not have a studio right now, but it is in the process of getting a studio. It will have a connection to the Rindge School for Technical Arts (RSTA) and may be located in the Solomons Transportation Center. The studio will increase the capacity for in-house programming. In response to a question from Councillor Maher, Ms. Peterson replied that the new studio would not be a joint venture with the School Department.

Mr. Lindsay stated that has been a significant increase in the programming broadcast by the municipal channel in recent years. He stated that he would provide the council with a description of the current programming. Councillor Maher requested that Mr. Lindsay also provide more information about the new studio, how it will work and what the involvement of students will be.

Councillor Maher thanked all those present for their attendance and participation. The meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

For the Committee,

David P. Maher _{DMH}

Councillor David P. Maher, Chair

S-312

Committee Report #6

Committee Report from Councillor David P. Maher, Chair of the Government Operation and Rules Committee, for a meeting held on October 9, 2002 to discuss the performance of the Hansen System, the possibility of a web-based public complaint system, information kiosk and public information on Cable TV.

In City Council October 28, 2002

**REPORT ACCEPTED.
PLACED OF FILE.**

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