

BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
City of Newton, Massachusetts

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: Ald. Verne Vance, Chairman      DATE: Sept. 28, 1987  
Legislation and Rules  
Committee

FROM: Ald. Susan M. Basham *SMB*      SUBJECT: Report on  
Chairman, Sub-committee      Reorganization  
on Reorganization

\* \* \* \* \*

The attached report, "Recommendations on Reorganization of the Offices of City Clerk and Clerk of the Board of Aldermen," is the result of over a year of active deliberation and analysis by the Clerk, the Assistant Clerk and the Chairman of the Sub-committee on Reorganization created by the L & R Committee, with periodic input from other members of the staff of the Clerk of the Board, the President, and members of the L & R Committee. It represents a consensus of the Clerk and the Chairman of the Sub-committee, arrived at after consideration of the recommendations of Deloitte Haskins and Sells in their report of July 29, 1985 and assessment of various options for gaining the increased productivity so vital to the management of these offices under budgetary constraints and under the increased workload of the Board of Aldermen in current years.

The recommended plan is an integrated one, as follows:

- \* The essential component is the creation, from existing positions, of three Committee Clerks with responsibility and authority for independent action, thus offering the Clerk and Assistant Clerk opportunity for more deliberate and effective management.
- \* With the advent of new zoning ordinances which promise to bring many more matters before the Board of Aldermen, and the continuation of the Zoning Amendment Committee's work for some time to come, we have also recommended the creation of a new position of Land Use and Zoning Clerk, responsible for the work of those committees with the specific knowledge necessary to function effectively in the position.
- \* We have strengthened the role of City Archivist as an archivist, while relying on her accumulated knowledge of land use and zoning matters during a transition in which the new Land Use and Zoning Clerk will be hired and trained.

- \* The City Clerk's office, which functions reasonably well, will benefit from new microfilming and record generating capability, from additional software for list management, and from modest changes in supervisory responsibility.

The budgetary impact of our recommendations will require a one-time capital expenditure in an amount yet to be determined and additional operating expenses of approximately \$40,000 (including the three committee clerks already budgeted for FY88).

The implementation of reorganization will include a process for regular monitoring of progress from within the Offices and through the L & R Committee, with a formal review of the functioning of the new organization at the beginning of FY89. The reorganization will also call upon the Board of Aldermen, particularly committee chairmen, to change some of the ways they relate to the Clerk's office, and to be more accountable in general. It has become painfully clear that we, as members of the Board, are at the heart of some of the difficulties we have spent so long trying to correct, and without full cooperation and support of the Board, a reorganization is doomed to failure.

I have appreciated and have truly enjoyed having the opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with the workings of the Clerk's office and to get to know and understand the people who are affected by this proposed reorganization, and I have tried to keep their best interests foremost in the recommendations. I would be pleased, as Chairman of the Sub-committee, to continue to work with the Clerk and Assistant Clerk during the transition to full operation under the reorganization plan and beyond, if the L & R Committee so desires.

All in all, we believe that our recommendations are practical and represent a major step forward, and I am pleased to submit the report for consideration of the L & R Committee and the full Board. I look forward to the meeting of September 30 when Ed English and I can discuss the recommendations more fully with the Committee.

cc: Michael A. Malec, President  
Members of L & R Committee  
Richard Kelliher

Recommendations on Reorganization  
of the Offices of City Clerk and  
Clerk of the Board of Aldermen

Background and Methodology

The need for a reorganization in the Clerk's office, some say, dates back to the untimely death in 1984 of Miss Theresa Fickett, whose prodigious efforts, it is told, equalled the workloads of at least two average employees. There have been other changes, too: the arrival and departure of other employees, the change in available technologies and systems, an increase in the number of items before the Board of Aldermen, and the obvious increase in the paper work associated with the Board's committees. While the causes of the problems can be debated, the effect has been readily apparent: a growing backlog of followup work, erratic work patterns, inefficiency, and low morale.

During the past three terms of the Board of Aldermen, there have been diligent attempts by members of the Board, under the direction of the Legislation and Rules (L & R) Committee, to assess the problems and recommend changes. Ultimately finding it difficult to systematically reorganize the Clerk's office as part of the ongoing Board process, the Board, following the recommendation of Alderman Paul Coletti, voted April 16, 1985 to appropriate \$15,000 to retain the consulting firm of Deloitte Haskins and Sells (DHS) to undertake an objective assessment of the two offices and make recommendations on how to improve the efficiency and productivity.

The report of DHS was submitted to the Board July 29, 1985; it was referred to the L & R Committee and not taken up until March, 1986. In May, after lengthy discussion within committee, the Chairman of L & R, Alderman Verne Vance, determined that a sub-committee should be formed to study further the DHS recommendations and make a final report on a reorganization plan. Ald. Susan Basham was asked to chair the sub-committee, and when members were asked to volunteer for membership, it became apparent that all members of L & R were interested in the process. Therefore the sub-committee became a committee of the whole L & R Committee.

It was the goal of the Chairman of the sub-committee to conduct an active, open process with the Clerk, Edward English, and the Assistant Clerk, Grace Lennon, in which the recommendations of DHS would be systematically reviewed and a plan for reorganization generated. There were, between June, 1986 and September, 1987, at least fifteen meetings of the Chairman and Clerk, many of which included the Assistant Clerk and some of which included Board President Michael Malec or other members of the staffs of either office. The Clerk kept all staff apprised of progress as needed. The Chairman and Clerk reported to the Sub-committee, assembled as the L & R Committee, on at least

seven occasions, explaining progress to date and seeking input on steps being proposed. L & R Chairman Vance included these reports and discussions in his meeting reports for June 25, 1986; July 9, 1986; August 11, 1986; December 18, 1986; February 25, 1987; May 27, 1987; and August 26, 1987.

Phase I. The analysis process began with several meetings in which the Chairman (Ald. Basham) solicited the concerns of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk about what was not working well, gathered an inventory of actual tasks undertaken in both offices, and developed an understanding of individual responsibilities and the Clerk's assessment of strengths and weaknesses of staff members. It was clear that there was a backlog in filing and followup tasks, and members of the L & R Committee expressed concern that this problem be dealt with first, since it was not possible to put a reorganization in place in time to make an impact when it was needed.

On July 11, 1986, the Clerk prepared, at the request of Chairman Basham, a breakdown of backlogged items and a distribution of responsibilities among members of the staff to be accomplished over the summer months. This process was undertaken with some success, at least enough to sustain the office while the reorganization plan was being developed. The office also retained a summer intern who made considerable progress in the organizing, microfilming and binding of Board of Aldermen documents for the years 1979 and 1980. In addition, Board records for the years 1981 through 1984 were organized and made ready for microfilming. Some work was done on 1985 records, and 1986 and 1987 records are still in the "settling" process.

We also initiated automation during this period with the acquisition of the Syntrex word processing system, selected because of its installed base and specialized applications.

Phase II. Concluding in the final months of 1986, after a number of discussions, that the DHS study was deficient in its understanding of the actual work flow and assignments of individuals, Chairman Basham conducted a two week audit of the Office of the Clerk of the Board early in January, 1987. The audit had two goals: to provide the Chairman with a better sense of the range of work undertaken by each person and to assess the quantity of each type of work undertaken in the office during a normal two week period (e.g., how many hours per week are spent on reports compared to other things?). The Assistant Clerk participated, as well.

The audit was more successful in the provision of information on range than on quantity, since each person had gaps in their audit

reports, for whatever reason, and since the period was not truly "normal," with budget preparation in process, a new phone system, and recently new word processing system. This process provided a valuable supplement to the information gathered in discussions, since it is often difficult for anyone in a job to accurately estimate how much of his or her time is given to certain tasks, and since members of the Board often do not see how much time is spent on the "invisible" tasks, such as bookkeeping, cleaning committee books, room bookings, etc.

Phase III. Soon after the audit was completed, the Chairman met with the staff of the Clerk of the Board to discuss the results of the audit and together they developed the concept of committee clerks. Clerical personnel were provided with a draft job description and were asked to consider whether they would be interested in such a position. With positive feedback, the Chairman and Clerk and Assistant Clerk proceeded to take steps toward revising the management job descriptions accordingly, and to look at the details of how responsibilities would be distributed and how reorganization would be implemented. The Committee Clerk position was reviewed with the Personnel Department at length, and after much discussion was regraded at Grade 11.

We had not had time to complete our assessment of the office of the City Clerk when the Board's review of the FY 88 budget was undertaken, and thus did not have a report ready for the Board's consideration. During the Board's review of the Budget of the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen, members of the Board expressed a desire to increase the salaries of the clerical personnel within the budget process rather than wait for the reorganization report to be completed and accepted. Consequently, Chairman Basham explained the concept of the reorganization to the Board and proposed that the budget reflect an increase in salaries for the three clerical positions to reflect Grade 11 maximum, with the understanding that the vote was an endorsement, in principle, of the change in responsibilities of these individuals.

Phase IV. With both the Board's and the Clerk's attention appropriately focused on the new zoning ordinance, it was not possible to pursue the reorganization actively during the months of June and July. The Chairman and Clerk resumed regular meetings in late summer to resolve a few remaining issues and focus attention on the City Clerk's office. The budget process had also produced approval for a \$100,000 commitment to an Archives Microreproduction Project, designed to produce microfilm of records of the Board of Aldermen, City Clerk, Assessors, and Treasurer offices under the direction of the City Archivist. Since the Archivist had been actively involved in the staffing of

the Zoning Amendment Committee, we wanted to be sure that there was a complete understanding of her role in the reorganized offices, and therefore met with her several times to review the options before completing our report.

The process of developing our recommendations has been lengthy because it was not enough simply to come up with suggested changes, no matter how intelligent or well-formed. That part was easy. The rest of the process was time-dependent -- thinking through new ways of accomplishing old tasks, trying them out in small ways, giving key players an opportunity to decide for themselves what will work and to get behind the reorganization plan, figuring out how to get from here to there in reasonable steps -- and all of that in the context of ongoing work in the Clerk's office and a particularly time-consuming period for the Board. To some extent we were working against the odds, what with general disappointment and frustration in the outcome of the DHS study, a lack of confidence in the process, and some impatience on the part of the majority of Aldermen who were necessarily removed from the ongoing process and anxious for a conclusion.

The following analysis of the DHS recommendations and Subcommittee proposal for reorganization represent the consensus of the Clerk and the Chairman, with considerable input from the Assistant Clerk and other personnel and review by the L & R Committee, the President and other committee chairmen. It should be thought of as an integrated plan whose components are interdependent. Together they promise to improve productivity and efficiency in the work of the Clerk's office for the foreseeable future and to improve the quality of work to the benefit of the City and the individuals involved.

#### Summary of DHS recommendations

DHS was charged with a review of the procedures and duties of the Offices of the City Clerk and Clerk of the Board of Aldermen. Their recommendations focused on steps that could be taken to improve efficiency in the two offices. Although the City Clerk and the Clerk of the Board are legally distinct entities, functionally they "could be combined to allow cross-office sharing of resources for efficiency reasons."

Central to the DHS recommendations was creating a position of Office Supervisor to assume day to day administration of the combined office structure. This person should restructure work flow and procedures to optimize the effectiveness of existing personnel, coordinate the education of personnel in the application of personal computer and word processing technology, and document resource requirements in terms of tasks and

determine levels of human resources required. There was a difference of opinion with the Clerk and Assistant Clerk as to whether the Office Supervisor should report to the Assistant Clerk and should be responsible for both offices, and ultimately DHS included two possible organization charts in their report.

It should be noted that DHS was advised not to consider an organizational structure that would displace existing personnel. Thus they essentially assumed not only the individuals but also the positions as they then existed. They then introduced the concept of functional specialists within each office who would facilitate the implementation of changes in the performance of office activities and work methods and procedures.

On the issue of work methods and procedures, they were critical of assigning responsibility for office activities to different people. Their idea was that the functional specialist should be an expert in a particular area, and responsible for supervising activities within the function (although not the only person who would carry out the activities). It appeared that the "functional areas" they defined were as broad as "Board of Aldermen documents" and as narrow as "counter coverage."

Their final assessment was that the two offices needed:

- a) Work methods and procedures -- Steps to improve work methods based on a functional approach;
- b) Records management -- Formal document retention and storage policy and hire an assistant Archivist; and
- c) Automation -- implementation of microfilm retrieval equipment, personal computer word processing, customized personal computer data base applications and spreadsheets.

#### Analysis of DHS recommendations

Our goal was to assess the DHS recommendations and to develop a final plan for reorganization and implementation. In fairness to DHS, the consulting team admittedly was not experienced with municipal management situations, and undertook the analysis without full recognition of the complexities involved -- the history, the constraints, and the subtleties. Thus it should not be surprising that their assessment fell short in several ways. They did a good job of cataloguing the work of both offices according to rules, orders, legislative requirements, and state standards, but failed to fully understand the way those official tasks are carried out in practice, what they mean in terms of real jobs and daily work. They did not focus on the actual

amount and type of work of each individual, nor did the consulting team fully understand the necessary flow and timing of work. They seemed not to fully comprehend the enormity of work involved in supporting the Board of Aldermen, particularly in the activities of committees and the followup to Board actions, and thus missed the central concern of the Board in initiating the study in the first place. And they failed to make practical recommendations for translating their concepts into a new way of doing things, focusing instead on a detailed assessment of computer options (with which they were obviously more conversant).

The essential problem with their recommendations is that there was not much new and no way to make change happen. They sought to impose new positions or change the responsibilities of existing personnel primarily to institute responsibility for further organizing existing work and recommending changes. In other words, they did not propose to set up the offices in such a way that change would be motivated from within, nor did they give existing personnel credit for being able to undertake change themselves. They presented the functional specialist as someone who would take the DHS recommendations, turn them into procedures, and implement them somehow with the full cooperation of everyone; they did not anticipate how the office would function or what role the functional specialist would have once such procedures were in place. It was, in large part, a typical approach to organizational problems: when in doubt, add more layers of management. Most important, they seemed not to consider the interests, talents and personal and professional goals of current personnel, and thus missed the opportunity to create both an improved organizational structure and give present staff new opportunities for job satisfaction in making better use of the strengths they bring to the job.

#### Goals of the Sub-committee beyond DHS Recommendations

During the course of our review, it became clear that members of the Board had an additional goal: the "upgrading" of clerical personnel in the Clerk of the Board office. It was reasoned that two of these people had been loyal, hard working support to the Board for many years and should be somehow rewarded for that effort. Although the Clerk's office is managed by the Board and does not have to follow the City's personnel standards and job classifications under Section 6.1 of the City Charter, the Clerk felt strongly that the best possible solution would be one that continued the positions within the City's structure. Since the salaries were already at the top of their grade, the question was one of upgrading the positions. The upgrading of positions fit well with our assessment of how productivity might be increased

by giving those people responsibility for organizing their own work and managing their own deadlines.

The Sub-committee focused directly on the goal of giving current personnel an opportunity to grow in their positions and undertake more rewarding work. At the heart of the problem, as we came to understand it, was dependence by staff and by members of the Board alike on the Clerk, and to a lesser extent on the Assistant Clerk, for all knowledge and all authority. There are surely some things that can best be done by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk, and their responsibilities should be organized so that they have the time and presence to manage those responsibilities. But it is also essential to give responsibility for the other things to other people and to allow each person in the office to acquire particular expertise and manage certain responsibilities independently.

In short, we went to the roots of the DHS recommendations and eventually put together an organizational structure that validated the DHS study in concept.

#### Recommendations of Sub-committee

##### A. Personnel and Positions

We took the functional specialist concept a step farther than DHS contemplated. To our way of thinking, the concept of creating "mini-experts" within the two offices was on target, and an appropriate result of how individuals naturally become somewhat specialized in their work over time. However, the functional areas DHS defined were largely meaningless. On the Clerk of the Board side, we sought instead to define functions around whole jobs that would have meaningful variety and consistency, responsibility and authority, with significant consequences to the work. On the City Clerk side, we looked at a general supervisory function as well as experts in vital records, bookkeeping, and licenses and permits. The decision to create more meaningful positions in the two offices, particularly on the Clerk of the Board side, complemented the goal of developing opportunities for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk to exercise management skills, with less "hands-on" responsibility.

The new organization chart appears on the page following. It illustrates several new or re-defined positions: in the Clerk of the Board office, three Committee Clerks and a Land Use and Zoning Clerk; in the City Clerk's office, a Supervising Clerk and a bookkeeping specialist. It should be noted that the recommendations for personnel in the City Clerk's office, with the exception of the City Archivist, are preliminary at this point, and are somewhat dependent on how two vacant positions are

filled. Thus this report asks the Board to endorse the concept for reorganization of the City Clerk's office if it proves to be effective with available personnel.

Job descriptions for the Clerk of the Board positions, with the exception of the Land Use and Zoning Clerk, are included in Appendix 1.

#### Office of the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen

Committee Clerks. The three clerical positions in the Clerk of the Board office have been primarily those of typists who receive materials to be prepared (reports, agendas, etc.) from the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. Their productivity has been dependent on the timeliness of Committee chairmen, the sequence of meetings, and the availability of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. Although the sequencing of meetings may always be difficult, it is possible to control the other two factors. We propose that the three current employees, Rosalie Myers, Marjorie Chalmers, and Dolores Alvin, become Committee Clerks at Grade 11. Each Committee Clerk will have responsibility for organizing her own work, meeting deadlines, and communicating directly with committee chairmen.

We believe that these are the proper positions for the department and reflect the distribution of responsibility needed to maximize productivity. The positions have been offered to, and accepted by, the three current employees, and we believe that all are fully capable of fulfilling their new duties with proper training and guidance. Whether the grade is correct and whether each individual has been assigned the most appropriate responsibilities will be subject to further review.

Land Use and Zoning Clerk. This position as currently envisioned will be much like the position of Committee Clerk with the added requirement of specialized knowledge and greater consequence to the work, given legal ramifications in the handling of land use and zoning matters. The Land Use and Zoning Clerk will provide ongoing interface with the Building and Planning Departments and will report directly to the Clerk on most matters. As the position develops, it may be realistic to have this Clerk provide additional assistance in other capacities.

Assistant Clerk of the Board/Assistant City Clerk. DHS was correct in recognizing the need for an Office Supervisor,

but did not fully appreciate the obvious and appropriate role of the Assistant Clerk in that regard. The Assistant Clerk, Grace Lennon, has made it her responsibility to master the new Syntrex computing system and the software being installed on the Compaq PC for licenses and permits and list management. She functions well in the role of day to day operations manager, and if she could avoid having to take on routine clerical tasks in the absence of knowledgeable assistance, she could focus on the development of better policies and procedures, formats, consistency among documents, indices, further development of individual skills in the use of automated systems, and the functioning of the office in general. She is an able and committed assistant to the Clerk in decision-making and should have the opportunity to devote more of her time to management.

Clerk of the Board/City Clerk. The position of the Clerk of the Board was evaluated in depth. It is clear that the Clerk, Edward English, is a wealth of information and knowledge by virtue of his tenure in the position and his dedication to the work. His frustration in recent years over backlog and lack of adequate followup reflects his commitment to excellence in the management of the two offices. However, his expertise has been an albatross, as well, because there is constant reliance on his judgment and his input. The reorganization will seek to focus his attention away from routine decisions, providing instead regular, more formal opportunities for staff to receive his input, and to give him the assistance he needs to ensure that the Board is functioning smoothly.

In summary, the promotion of current employees to the positions of Committee Clerks with responsibility for routine matters, and with certain independent judgment on matters specific to their committees, will make it easier for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk to be the managers they should be. We believe these are the appropriate positions for the department and are responsive to the individuals who will fill them currently. We further recommend, in response to the concern of the Board that these individuals be treated fairly, that the Board re-examine their responsibilities six months after implementation and re-open the question of grade within the city personnel structure or moving the positions out of that structure if the actual level of responsibility warrants.

Office of the City Clerk

City Archivist. The City Archivist, Priscilla Ritter, is a consultant under contract to the city for 30 hours per week, to be provided during flexible hours. The position is linked to the office of the City Clerk because there is a certain logic to the relationship: many of the records with which the Archivist works are generated and stored in the Clerk's office. The storage will change to some extent, however, when the new main library is built in several years.

Since the Zoning Amendment Committee began its efforts in early 1986, Priscilla Ritter has served as its clerk, and has gradually accepted responsibility within the office of the Clerk of the Board for the day to day management of many land use and zoning matters, including the preparation of public notices and abutters notices and attendance at Land Use meetings. These hours were spent over and above the hours for which Mrs. Ritter served and was compensated as City Archivist.

The Board approved in the FY88 budget a \$100,000 expenditure for a microfilming project under the Archivist's supervision, which will copy many critical records of the City Clerk, Board of Aldermen, Assessors and Treasurer offices. It is expected to require the full time attention of the Archivist for at least a year, as well as dedicated space in which the project can be carried out with minimal risk to the documents. In this context and as part of the one-time expenditure, the Archivist will retain a part-time assistant for the duration of the project. Whether an assistant is needed full time will be ascertained after the project is completed and the ongoing workload reassessed.

In contemplating the distribution of committee responsibility among committee clerks, the issue of land use and zoning was critical. Since Mrs. Ritter had developed considerable expertise, it seemed logical to discuss whether she would like to move into that role full-time. Although Mrs. Ritter is quite willing to assist in the training of a full time clerk, it is her preference, finally, to remain an archivist up to 40 hours per week. We support that position, recognizing that increasing demands will be placed on the Archivist not only during the microfilming project but in subsequent years with cataloguing of archives and reorganization of the archives in anticipation of storage in the new library. However, it is Mrs. Ritter's intention to remain available to the Clerk to assist in the orientation and training of the new Land Use and Zoning Clerk.

We have asked Mrs. Ritter to catalogue her responsibilities, to assess her rate in comparison with the rate of

compensation for similar positions elsewhere, and to maintain a log of her hours by project so that we can better assess in the future what her use of time has been and consider compensation adjustments accordingly. It is our recommendation that Mrs. Ritter receive a retroactive one-time bonus for the extra work provided the Board during this term, at an amount to be determined, and that the Board consider a salary increase once a comparison with other positions has been completed.

#### B. Work methods and procedures

##### Office of the City Clerk

In concert with the DHS recommendations, the reorganization will capitalize on certain efficiencies that can be achieved by combining certain responsibilities in the City Clerk and Clerk of the Board offices. In particular, all licenses and permits will be managed in the City Clerk office, even if they come to the Board for approvals. The bookkeeping function, now split between the two offices, will be combined in the City Clerk office.

Responsibilities in the City Clerk office are currently distributed among personnel according to expertise developed over time. This system has worked reasonably well, except for turnover in the office during the current term. Because there are now "senior" people in relation to new people coming in, it seems appropriate to consider a formal allocation of responsibility so as to increase the job status of one or more individuals. Whether this will happen depends on the skills of two new people who are to be hired to replace other personnel who left voluntarily. It is intended that job satisfaction be increased for new employees through better defined roles so as to diminish turnover.

##### Office of the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen

The activity of the Clerk of the Board office will begin to focus on the Committee Clerks as the individuals primarily responsible for the day to day management of committees. They will keep track of docket items via a log that will be available to their associates when they are not present, and they will meet regularly with the Clerk to discuss the progress of all items. It will be their responsibility to work directly with committee chairmen, producing all agendas and reports of the committee and ensuring that dockets and reports dockets are accurate. They will attend night meetings on request, although it is anticipated that new procedures for committee chairmen should make such attendance unnecessary under most circumstances. The Assistant Clerk will work with them directly to develop and institute

appropriate procedures within the office for maximum control and effectiveness, particularly in the use of automated systems.

The initial distribution of responsibilities in the Clerk of the Board office is proposed as follows:

Rosalie Myers

Committees

Public Facilities  
Public Safety  
Real Property

Additional  
Responsibilities

City Hall room bookings  
Bulletin board postings  
Tape file inventory  
Tape recorder custodian  
RSVP coordinator  
Ald. counter inquiries  
Graduation activities  
Monthly schedule  
Aldermanic roster  
Packet distribution  
Maintain Ald. docket books  
Public utility grants  
Traffic ord. (Re-Cod.)

Marjorie Chalmers

Committees

Finance  
Legislation and Rules  
Programs and Planning

Additional  
Responsibilities

Oath Book custodian  
Mayoral appointments  
Conflict of Interest records  
Ethics Commission information  
Refreshments for Aldermen  
Ald. counter inquiries  
Inaugural activities  
Board Rules and Orders  
Ord. filing (Re-Codification)  
Packet Distribution  
Maintain Ald. docket books  
Ald. mailbox distribution  
Dept. coord. - Annual City audit

Dolores Alvin

Primary Responsibilities	Entry/Exit maintenance Ald. Committee books Assist Clerk in docket preparation Docket distribution Prepare reports docket Assist Clerk in Board Order prep. Board Order distribution Maintain Board index
Additional Responsibilities	Board Officers' correspondence Clerk's correspondence Routing of daily mail and Ald. corresp. Record and distribute legal claims Betterment lien coordinator Prepare Ald. records for microfilming and binding Packet distribution Researsch/retrieval of Ald. documents

[It should be clear that the initial distribution of responsibilities gives Dolores Alvin more administrative assistance responsibilities than the other two clerks, whose work is dominated by committee assistance. The option exists to distribute two committees to each of the three clerks. However, the Clerk feels that, in the transition to the reorganized department, it is important to maintain the continuity of the work Mrs. Alvin is currently carrying out with considerable skill, and that the work loads in the distribution of committees to the other two clerks is appropriate. All tasks itemized in the responsibilities for the three clerks are legitimate components of the Committee Clerk job description, and therefore the question of distribution of tasks should be at the Clerk's discretion. With the change in committee chairmen next term, the distribution will be re-examined.]

We believe that, with the addition of the Land Use and Zoning Clerk, the staff complement of the Clerk of the Board office will be sufficient to carry out the work of supporting the Board at a reasonable level of productivity. Under the reorganization plan, the Committee Clerks will have the authority to act independently and organize their own work, thereby increasing their efficiency. It is possible that, following a reasonable period of experience under the reorganization, we will recognize a need for a shift in responsibilities or additional staff at one level or another. However, the reorganization is dependent on a commitment to use every possible means of increasing productivity to a maximum before any additional positions are considered.

### Board Policies and Procedures

The reorganization is also dependent on the Board, in particular the committee chairmen, adopting more aggressive procedures for their interaction with the Clerk's office. These are outlined preliminarily in Appendix 2, "Proposal for Revised Policies and Procedures," and should be developed more fully by the new leadership of the Board in the next term. These procedures will make sense under a Committee Clerk system, wherein each chairman has a direct working relationship with a particular clerk who is responsible for all activity of the committee. Each chairman will participate in regular review meetings with the Clerk and Committee Clerk, and will be involved in the annual review of the Committee Clerk with whom he or she works.

### C. Automation

Word processing. In August, 1986, the office of the Clerk of the Board and the Law Department made a joint decision to acquire the Syntrex word processing and document archiving and retrieval system. This purchase at approximately \$45,000 provided the Clerk's office with five terminals and a high speed laserjet printer, with an additional terminal located in the planning department to facilitate preparation of Board orders and reports. The system, widely used in law practice management, is particularly strong in its system of document editing and retrieval, and should enable several people to work on the same document and integrate their work (e.g., a docket), and to access all documents related to a particular docket item through a comprehensive index.

List and file management. The City Clerk's side has received a Compaq DeskPro as part of the comprehensive plan for the computerization of City Hall, and software should be purchased for the management and retrieval of licenses and permits. To date, all dog licenses have been indexed. This program should enable the creation of a license from the computer instead of manually filling in a form, the generation of renewal notices, and access to specific information (e.g., how many "pit bulls" are there in Newton?).

Microfilming/ vital records management. This report is also recommending the purchase of a 3M Micro-bond Reader-Printer for automating the generation and retrieval of vital records. With this equipment, past records can be duplicated and retrieved on microfilm, thus saving time for clerks who otherwise would have to search through cumbersome folios in the vault, and will permit the creation of a record. This equipment will be essential to the current

microfilming project being undertaken by the City Archivist, and will have continuous positive impact on the efficiency of the City Clerk's office.

#### Summary of Budgetary Impacts

##### Office of the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen

- 1) Replace three Grade 9 positions with three Grade 11 Committee Clerk positions. These positions are to be filled by three current employees.

Operating Budget impact: approx. \$10,000, already voted by Board of Aldermen.

- 2) Create new position, Land Use and Zoning Clerk, to be filled by new employee as high level clerical/low management position, with back-up from one of the Committee Clerks if needed.

Operating Budget impact: approximately \$28,000.

##### Office of the City Clerk

- 1) Purchase equipment for microfilming and mangement of vital records and undertake microfilming of past records.

Capital Budget impact: to be determined

- 2) Purchase software for list management.

Capital Budget impact: approximately \$1,000.

- 3) Adjust Archivist's salary retroactively to compensate her for efforts on behalf of the Board and to bring her consulting rate into line with the rates for similar positions elsewhere.

One time adjustment: \$5,000.

Operating Budget impact: to be determined.

##### Timetable for Implementation

It is the intention of the Clerk to have all new positions and responsibilities in place by January 1, 1988, coincident with the new term of the Board of Aldermen. To accomplish this transition, the following timetable has been prepared:

September

September 30 Review of Recommendations by L & R Committee

October

October 5 Report to Full Board; Board approval

Wk. of October 12 Prepare job description of Land Use and Zoning Clerk  
Clerk meets with President and Chairman of Subcommittee to prepare orientation process

Wk. of October 19 Evaluation of Land Use and Zoning Clerk position by Personnel Dept.  
Advertise position  
General orientation meeting for Committee Clerks on Board legislative process, relevant state legislation, timetable for implementation, proposed changes in Board procedure.

Wk. of October 26 Develop specifications for microfilming equipment to be purchased.  
Clerk develops outline of procedures for each committee's work and reviews with Chairman of Sub-committee.

Month of October Assistant Clerk works with Information Management to select list management software.

November

Wk. of November 2 Interviews LU and Zoning Clerk candidates.  
Clerk continues review of procedures with current committee chairmen.  
Committee chairman and Clerk begin review status and issues involved in all pending items with Committee Clerk, starting with those most pressing.

Month of November Clerk works with Committee Clerks individually to take over responsibility for new docket items, all reports and management of agendas, etc.

Decision on whether to create Supervising Clerk position in City Clerk office

Assistant Clerk begins process of developing standard formats and procedures for preparing all documents.

Installation of list management software.

Wk. of November 16 Decision on LU/Zoning candidate

#### December

Month of December Training of LU/Zoning Clerk begins; through March.

Assistant Clerk begins to work with City Clerk personnel for transfer of license and permit lists to their computer system.

Wk. of December 15 Meeting of new Board officers and committee chairmen and Clerk to review process.

#### Review Process

In order to ensure the smooth transition to reorganized operations and the successful "shake down" of new procedures and responsibilities during the first months of implementation, several checkpoints are proposed. The Chairman of the Subcommittee, provided she is re-elected to the Board, is prepared to continue in her role if the Committee so desires. She will participate with the President in weekly staff meetings during the transition, and beyond at the request of the Clerk. Committee chairmen will meet at least bi-monthly, more often as needed, with the Clerk and Committee Clerk. The L & R Committee should take time at each meeting to discuss the status of the Clerk's office. There will be a formal evaluation of reorganization at the beginning of FY89 (July, 1988), at which time further recommendations on additional personnel, changes in responsibilities or re-definition of positions will be made. Committee Clerks will receive an annual performance review by the Assistant Clerk, Clerk, and committee chairmen. Finally, at the suggestion of President Michael Malec, it is recommended that the Board initiate an annual performance review of its employees, including the Clerk and Assistant Clerk, and use a regular reporting format in the L & R Committee quarterly.

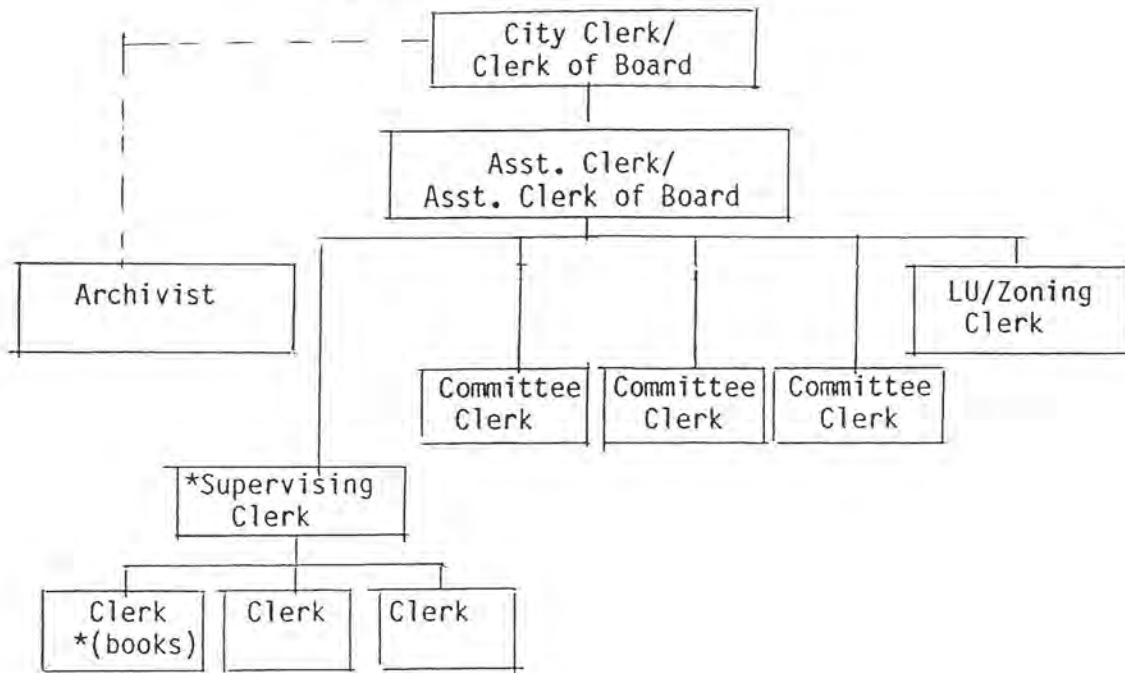
#### Conclusion

It is critical that the reorganization plan be approved by the Board expeditiously and that the process move ahead quickly so that the transition will be completed by the start of the next

term. Otherwise, it is entirely likely that the reorganization will be delayed by up to another year, given competing priorities at the start of a new term.

It has become apparent, in the final analysis, that the DHS study was an effective stepping stone to the reorganization plan currently recommended. While DHS did not capture all of the complexities or subtleties of the situation, they did provide useful concepts and tools for achieving optimal efficiency in the two offices. With the addition of practical observations and suggestions by the Chairman of the Sub-committee and the sincere efforts of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk to initiate improvements, the reorganization recommendations have become a workable plan which promises to provide, at long last, the improvements both the Board and the staff of the Clerk's office desire.

Proposed Revised Organization Chart



\* Under consideration