

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
ACTIONS
AUGUST 6, 2003
6:00 P.M.
CIVIL SERVICE CONFERENCE ROOM
3RD FLOOR, CITY HALL

Roll Call

Chief Examiner Julio Lopez called the meeting to order. In attendance: Chairman Michael Finn, Commissioner Wendy Kuhn; Julio Lopez, Chief Examiner; Carol DeSantie, Director of Personnel, Marty Sturgess, Highway Department employee, and Alex Roberts, Highway Department employee.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Alex Roberts has a concern regarding his application for the position of General Foreman (promotional) in the Highway Department. Initially, his application was rejected. Upon further review of his application and his personnel file, it was determined that he was qualified to participate in the testing, which he did. Mr. Roberts still wishes to address the Commission. The Commission will listen to Mr. Roberts and then respond.

Mr. Roberts wants to find out why his application was rejected. He thought he stated everything on the application. Prior to examining, he felt that the Commission would have examined his personnel file and would have seen that he had been acting as a Foreman on an interim basis with the City. He also listed other qualifications he felt were relevant. After he received the rejection, on June 16, he called Mr. Lopez. On the same day he spoke to Mr. Lopez, he received an entry slip to the Foreman (Level II) exam but not the General Foreman exam. Mr. Roberts never applied to the Foreman (Level II) position. His application stated he was applying for the General Foreman position. He is asking if this was an attempt to have him "bumped down" a step. Due to a death in the family, it was difficult to contact Mr. Roberts regarding the upcoming test. Because of this, he had one day's notice to take the test. He felt he had no time to prepare. Mr. Roberts pointed out that Duke Hart and Kevin Murphy were allowed to work for two weeks in Tommy Lechner's presence to "learn the ropes." Mr. Roberts took the test. He feels that a series of incidents singled him out. He feels there have been other problems regarding Personnel when he was acting as Foreman. When he was Acting Foreman, Mr. Roberts was held responsible for one of the employee's in his department for losing his job due to a failed drug screen.

Mr. Lopez interrupts to ask what bearing does this have pertaining to the issue. In Mr. Lopez's opinion, one issue does not relate to the other.

Mr. Roberts answers that he is trying to give the history of the situation.

Mr. Lopez responds that Mr. Roberts is trying to create the impression that there was some sort of conspiracy to prevent Mr. Roberts from participating in the test. Mr. Lopez mentions Mr. Roberts's claim that "he was not afforded the opportunity that Duke Hart and Kevin Murphy were allowed to work for two

weeks in Tommy Lechner's presence to learn the ropes." Duke and Kevin were allowed to work for two weeks in training because both of them were in the position of Foreman. None of the other individuals that applied for the General Foreman position were trained.

Mr. Roberts states that he is an Acting Foreman whenever someone was out under any circumstance or if Frank needed a third hand.

Mr. Lopez states that Chairman Finn reviewed Mr. Roberts's personnel file and found that he had worked the position of Foreman at times, and Mr. Roberts was allowed to take the test.

Mr. Lopez is concerned that Mr. Roberts is implying that the Commission was influenced by the administration of that department in denying him the opportunity to participate in the testing. Mr. Roberts doesn't understand why he was initially denied entry into the exam.

Ms. DeSantie states that there appears to be lot of other issues that are really important but that the Civil Service Commission is not really here to hear and a another time should be set up to discuss these issues further. Ms. DeSantie explains that it's important that they stick to the issues at hand in terms of Civil Service. Personnel issues need to be addressed in another forum.

Mr. Roberts feels that this seems to be an escalating situation. He wanted to find out if Frank Cavagna influenced the decision making of the Commission. Mr. Cavagna said he recommended Mr. Roberts for the position. Mr. Lopez states that Mr. Cavagna was one of Mr. Robert's biggest advocates and that the implication that the Commission was influenced by whatever incident occurred inside the Highway Department was not true.

Commissioner Finn explains how recommendations are made for positions. The Commissioners do not speak to supervisors or co-workers. All applications are reviewed by each Commissioner separately. They make recommendations who should take the test. They also explain why an applicant was rejected and not recommended to take the test. Outside performances are not considered in the application.

Mr. Roberts states that the applications asks for skills that would be applicable to the job.

Commissioner Finn states that he noted that on Mr. Roberts's application, it said, "Functioned as an Acting Foreman on as needed basis when situations, vacations, or maybe a day off occur." In Commissioner Finn's opinion, that is not enough time as a Foreman to take over the Senior Foreman's job. The Commission agreed. It was recommended that Mr. Roberts take the Foreman II test.

Mr. Roberts claims he did not receive a letter recommending he take the Foreman II test because that was not the position he applied for.

Commissioner Finn stated that it is not the Commission's responsibility to investigate people at their jobs or review their personnel file. But someone did recommend Mr. Roberts for the Foreman II position because he had acted as a Foreman. Commissioner Finn noted that the Acting Foreman information was not on Mr. Roberts's resume. Commissioner Finn called Commissioner Kuhn and said that they had made mistake; that it was in the file that he was a Foreman. Consequently, Mr. Roberts was allowed to take the test.

Mr. Roberts claims he did not receive any letter or a phone call. He found out he could take the test when Frank Cavagna told him. Mr. Roberts feels that someone dropped the ball and gave him last minute's notice. He stated that a candidate who was denied entrance to an examination or who is notified of a failing grade has the right to a review or appeal the examination process.

Mr. Lopez does not like the implication that the Commission did something improper or based its decision on past history in the Highway Department. As Ms. DeSantie stated earlier, that needs to presented in

another forum preferably with his supervisor and the Union. Mr. Roberts does not want to involve the Union.

Mr. Sturgess states that he is the Union Steward for the department and will leave the Commission meeting if requested. Mr. Lopez tells him it's an open meeting and that he can stay.

Ms. DeSantie tells Mr. Roberts that she understands that he is still very angry and upset as to what transpired. However, he has received his answer from Commissioner Finn in terms what transpired and Mr. Roberts also has to take some obligation and some responsibility with regard to the fact that his resume did not, clearly reflect his abilities. It is not the Civil Service's obligation to go into employee's personnel records and do the checking. An extra step was taken because Commissioner Finn is very thorough. Ms. DeSantie wants Mr. Roberts to understand that he has to take some ownership as the applicant, who did not in fact, clearly reflect his qualifications in his resume. Otherwise, it would not have been rejected to begin with.

Ms. DeSantie explained that his application wouldn't have been denied because after taking a step that Commissioner Finn not have to take, reviewed his personnel file and said, "Okay, we'll let the guy take the exam because he deserves to."

Commissioner Finn explains again to Mr. Roberts that nothing was done to hurt him intentionally. The Commission reviewed his application independently. When the call came from his supervisor and said Mr. Roberts was an Acting Foreman, and that he should get some credit on that and be allowed to take the test. Mr. Roberts was notified he could take the test. Commissioner Finn asks to move onto the next subject.

Mr. Sturgess states that he took the Foreman II test and came in first with a score of 71. He was told the passing score was 70. He received a notice telling him that he was number one, but they lowered the passing score to 63. Then he was informed last Thursday that another employee got the job. The other employee scored lower than Mr. Sturgess. How could the employee get the job without an interview? Mr. Sturgess knows the Mayor can pick one of the top three, but if the decision is based on test scores, Mr. Sturgess was the number one candidate. He feels he has more experience. He just doesn't understand how someone with a lower score was appointed. Does this mean Mr. Sturgess is removed from the list?

Mr. Lopez explains how the process works. The Mayor is the sole appointing authority. Civil Service Rules call for a promotional position, the Mayor has the option of interviewing the top three candidates. He doesn't have to. We don't know what prompted the Mayor to recommend the other individual. Mr. Sturgess will have to discuss the issue with the Mayor. This is not the first time that the Mayor appointed someone who is number three or number two. In the Civil Service Department, the department does not get involved with appointments by the Mayor. The Personnel Department receives a letter from the Mayor saying who he wants to appoint and Personnel generates a Notice of Appointment.

Ms. DeSantie informs Mr. Sturgess that Personnel tells candidates during the interview process that Personnel makes recommendations to the Mayor. It is not up to Personnel to decide either way. Often, the Mayor may or may not choose to interview the candidates. He could just make a decision that is entirely up to him.

Chairman Finn explains the list still remains and Mr. Sturgess will remain on the list. If something happens to the other employee, the Mayor will review the list again. Mr. Lopez states that the names on the list are the ones who passed the test. If you did not pass, you're not on the list. If someone is appointed to the position, the other candidates move up the list. If the appointed employee is unable to complete the probationary period of one year, the list is good for one year. Depending on whatever happens, it would be extended another year. The list may be good for two years. Mr. Lopez wants Mr. Sturgess and Mr. Roberts to understand that Personnel/Civil Service doesn't get involved in the

appointments. The decision comes from the Mayor and Personnel/Civil Service abides by it. If they ask our opinion, we provide it. If they ask for personnel records, we provide personnel records.

Mr. Roberts thanks the Commission Members.

Information on Positions:

Julio Lopez gave information on the following positions:

General Foreman and Foreman II, Highway Department – The Mayor made an appointment for the General Foreman's position: Mr. Wellington Hart. He was the number one candidate and he has been appointed to that position. For the position of Foreman II, the Mayor appointed Mr. Thomas Vecchiarino.

Assistant Building Inspector – Eligibility List. The test was administered on July 22, 2003 and the list was promulgated on July 28, 2003. The list is in the hands of the Mayor. He's reviewing it and interviews will be scheduled soon for the candidates to meet with the Personnel Department, the Department Head, and the Mayor.

Senior Lab Technician, Water Utilities – Nothing has been done with this position. The candidate they were looking at was candidate number two, but there was an issue pertaining to the distance. The candidate was not too certain he wanted to commute. Mr. Lopez will provide an update soon.

Assistant Manager, Information Technology – An appointment was made and the employee is working now.

Claims Processor, Finance Department – The test was administered. An appointment was made this week, candidate number 3, Valiquiria Joseph. She is undergoing the background check and medical check.

Chief Operator, Public Utilities – Mario Ricoszi has requested that we re-advertise because they are trying to adjust the salary of the position. According to information received from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, the requirements were high and the salary low in comparison to municipalities similarly situated. They are going to try to find a mid-point here to attract qualified candidates.

Truck Driver, Highway Dept. – We're in the process of advertising right now and are receiving applications. It is quite active and we are closing on the 25th of August. We should be ready for the next meeting to present applications.

Operator, Water Utilities – This position has opened up. There is an employee who will be promoted to the position of Lab Technician because he participated in that test. Once he is promoted, that will create a vacancy for the Operator position.

Review Applications:

Senior Computer Technician

The applications were sent ahead of time to the Commission for their review. The Commission reviewed the applications and voted which applicants were qualified to proceed. Out of 27 applicants, 6 of the applicants did not meet the minimum requirements. Mr. Lopez will notify everyone. Mr. Lopez will also notify the company that has been selected for this test, Cogswell Associates, so they can plan accordingly. A job analysis is being conducted to design the test. We requested bids from three companies and Cogswell was the only one that responded.

Technical Services Librarian

There were only three applicants for this position. Chairman Finn had the opportunity to review these applications. Commissioner Kuhn needs to review these applications with Chairman Finn. An employee is covering this position temporarily. In Chairman Finn's opinion, of the three applicants, two have the necessary qualifications. One who has the qualifications is an employee of the City since 1995 at the Library. Chairman Finn does not think there should be a test for this since there are only two applicants. It should be submitted to the Mayor and he can choose the candidate. Chairman Finn put this forward as a Motion. Commissioner Kuhn seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. A list showing the two candidates will be submitted to the Mayor. The third candidate does not have the Masters Degree of Library Science.

Review of Extension of Eligibility Lists

Mr. Lopez would like to recommend the following lists be extended: Reference Services Librarian, Associate Planner and Cashier. Mr. Lopez states that these lists have viable candidates, even though these lists expire in September and October. Commissioner Kuhn enters a motion to extend the eligibility lists. Chairman Finn seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Because there was no previous meeting, there were no minutes to accept.

Chairman Finn made a motion to adjourn at 7:25 P.M. Seconded by Commissioner Kuhn. Motion passed unanimously.