

B-41



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Jason Zebrowski,
Battalion Fire Chief (PM1491T),
Bayonne

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2017-1463

ISSUED: **JAN 23 2017**

(RE)

Jason Zebrowski appeals his score on the examination for Battalion Fire Chief (PM1491T), Bayonne. It is noted that the appellant passed the examination with a final average of 92.460 and ranked second on the eligible list.

This two-part examination consisted of an integrated system of simulations designed to generate behavior similar to that required for success on the job. The first part consisted of 70 multiple-choice items that measured specific work components identified and weighted by the job analysis. The second part consisted of three oral scenarios; a Supervision, Administration and Incident Command scenario. All candidates received the same multiple-choice exam, but differing versions of the oral exercises were given based on the day the oral exam was administered. The examination was based on a comprehensive job analysis conducted by the Civil Service Commission, which identified the critical areas of the job. The weighting of the test components was derived from the job analysis data.

For the oral portion, candidates had 60 minutes to prepare for all three scenarios and had 10 minutes per scenario to present their response. For all three oral exercises, the candidate was to assume the role of a Battalion Fire Chief. Candidates were scored based on the content of their response (technical) and the how well they presented their response (oral communication). Both of these dimensions were scored on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating.

Each candidate in a given jurisdiction was scored by a team of three different Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), who were trained in current technical and oral

communication scoring procedures. Each SME is a current or retired fire officer who held the title of Battalion Fire Chief (or Fire Officer 2) or higher. As part of the scoring process, an SME observed and noted the responses of a candidate relative to the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that each exercise was designed to measure. An SME also noted any weaknesses that detracted from the candidates overall oral communication ability. The SME then rated the candidate's performance according to the rating standards and assigned the candidate a technical or oral communication score on that exercise.

In order to preserve the relative weighting of each of the components of the examination, the ratings for each portion were adjusted by a well-recognized statistical process known as "standardization." Under this process, the ratings are standardized by converting the raw scores to z-scores, an expression of the deviation of the score from the mean score of the group in relation to the standard deviation of scores for the group. Each portion of the examination had a relative weight in its relation to the whole examination. Thus, the z-score for the multiple-choice portion was multiplied by a test weight of 36.53%, the oral technical scores were multiplied by a test weight of 53.91% and the oral communication scores were multiplied by a test weight of 9.56%. The weighted z-scores were summed and this became the overall final test score. This was weighted and added to the weighted seniority score. The result was standardized, then normalized, and rounded up to the third decimal place to arrive at a final average.

For the technical and oral communication components of the Supervision, Administration and Incident Command scenarios, the appellant received scores of 4, 5, 5 and 4, 3, 4, respectively.

The appellant challenges his score for the technical component of the Supervision scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material and a listing of possible courses of action (PCAs) for the scenario were reviewed.

The Supervision scenario involved a firefighter with a bruise. Firefighter Delacano indicated to the candidate that he fell and hurt himself. The candidate asks Captain Connor to look into the matter and the Captain confirmed that the firefighter injured himself in an accident. A few days later, Firefighter Delacano explains that he was hit in the face with a ladder by another firefighter during a training exercise. The firefighter claimed it was an accident but Firefighter Delacano thinks he did it on purpose. Firefighter Delacano has been anxious since he was transferred to Captain Connor's company, but feels that they've been together a long time and resent him. Captain Connor was present at the training accident, and Firefighter Delacano believes he took no action since he was close friends with the other firefighter. The question asked candidates to base their responses on the text *Managing Fire and Emergency Services*, and their experience. Question 1 asked what should be said in the meeting with Firefighter Delacano. Question 2 indicated that, as a result of the

investigation, the candidate has determined that Firefighter Delacano was assaulted and Captain Connor covered up the incident. This question asked what actions should be taken now based on this new information in regards to Captain Connor.

For this question, the SME noted that the appellant missed the opportunity to tell Firefighter Delacano that he should have followed proper injury reporting procedures (i.e., reported the incident sooner). On appeal, the appellant stated that he told Firefighter Delacano to make a formal report, as this is the only acceptable documentation.

In reply, the appellant received credit for having Firefighter Delacano write a formal report of the incident, which was a separate action from that listed by the SME. The firefighter did not tell the candidate the truth when he was questioned by him in the hallway. It was explained in the scenario that Firefighter Delacano indicated he has had a hard time lately and has been feeling anxious and resented by the others. Asking Firefighter Delacano to follow proper injury reporting procedures, and report the incident to him if he felt that his supervisor was not properly addressing the situation, was an action that the appellant did not take. The appellant's score of 4 for this component is correct.

CONCLUSION

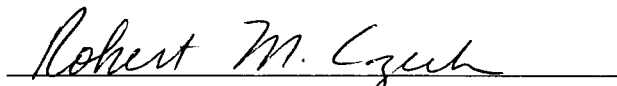
A thorough review of appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record, and the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
ON THE 18th DAY OF JANUARY, 2017



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