



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

In the Matter of Michael Mandriota,  
 Fire Officer 2 (PM2154W),  
 Jersey City

CSC Docket No. 2020-1380

:  
 : **FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**  
 : **OF THE**  
 : **CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**  
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 : Examination Appeal  
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**ISSUED:** January 30, 2020 (RE)

Michael Mandriota appeals his score on the promotional examination for Fire Officer 2 (PM2154W), Jersey City. It is noted that the appellant failed the examination.

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 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. 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). These components 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, 2, 1 and 4, 3, 3, respectively.

The appellant challenges his score for the technical component for 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.

## CONCLUSION

The Supervision scenario involved a crew who abandoned their apparatus and attended a sporting event for free when they should have been staged outside of the event. Later that evening, Engine 7's crew is late to respond to a call where the candidate arrived one minute earlier than they did, and the homeowner is upset. This question asks for specific actions to be taken now and the back at the firehouse.

The SME indicated that the appellant missed the opportunity to have the Captain and crew submit written statements of what happened. On appeal, the appellant argues that he said he would have the Captain and crew submit written statements of what happened.

In reply, in his presentation, the appellant stated, "Um, I will document, ah, the officer and the firefighter's ah... I'm going to get their side of the story and put it in

writing.” This response contributed to receipt of credit for documenting all actions taken, which was a separate action. Nonetheless, the instructions in the scenario tell candidates to be as specific as possible and not to assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to a score. There is no indication in this response that the appellant had the Captain and crew themselves submit written statements of what happened. Rather, the appellant heard the stories and wrote the narrative himself. This would not constitute direct evidence, but rather is an explanation for the investigation. The appellant cannot receive credit for information that is implied or assumed, and his score of 4 for this component will not be changed.

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 29<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JANUARY, 2020



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