



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

In the Matter of Sean Wasacz,  
Battalion Fire Chief (PM3380C),  
Elizabeth

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION  
OF THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

CSC Docket No. 2023-1969

Examination Appeal

**ISSUED:** December 20, 2023 **(ABR)**

Sean Wasacz appeals his score on the promotional examination for Battalion Fire Chief (PM3380C), Elizabeth. It is noted that the appellant passed the examination with a final average of 86.090 and ranks ninth on the eligible list.

The subject promotional examination was held on May 19, 2022, and 16 candidates passed. 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: Supervision, Administration and Incident Command. The examination was based on a comprehensive job analysis conducted by the Civil Service Commission (Commission), which identified the critical areas of the job. The weighting of the test components was derived from the job analysis data.

Each candidate in a given jurisdiction was scored by a team of three different Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), who were trained in current technical scoring procedures. Each of these SMEs were current or retired fire officers who held the title of Battalion Fire Chief (or Fire Officer 2) or higher. Candidates were also assessed by three Commission employees trained in oral communication assessment. 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 assessor also noted any weaknesses that detracted from the candidate's

overall oral communication ability. Each assessor then rated the candidate's performance according to the rating standards and assigned the candidate a technical or oral communication score on that exercise. Scoring decisions were based on SME-approved possible courses of action (PCAs) including those actions that must be taken to resolve the situation as presented. For a performance to be acceptable in the technical component for some scenarios, a candidate needed to present the mandatory courses of action for that scenario. Only those oral responses that depicted relevant behaviors that were observable and could be quantified were assessed in the scoring process.

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 Supervision scenario, the appellant scored a 5 on the technical component and a 4 on the oral communication component. On the Administration scenario, the appellant scored a 5 on the technical component and a 4 on the oral communication component. Finally, with the Incident Command scenario, the appellant scored a 4 on the technical component and a 5 on the oral communication component.

The appellant challenges his score for the technical component of the Incident Command scenario.

## CONCLUSION

The Incident Command scenario involves the response to a report of smoke at a local food mart that is part of a strip mall. Question 1 asks candidates what specific actions they would take upon arriving at the scene. Question 2 states that during firefighting operations, part of the roof over the fire collapses, trapping an interior crew, and the crew transmits a MAYDAY. Question 2 then asks what specific actions the candidate would take based on this new information.

On the Incident Command scenario, the assessor awarded the appellant a technical score of 4 because he missed several additional PCAs, including conducting a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR). On appeal, the appellant asserts that he stated that he would conduct a PAR at a specific point in his presentation.

Upon review of the appellant's appeal, the Division of Test Development, Analytics and Administration (TDAA), agrees that the appellant should have been credited with the PCA of conducting a PAR. The Commission agrees with TDAA's assessment on appeal. Accordingly, based upon the award of this additional PCA, the appellant's technical component score for this scenario should be increased from 4 to 5.

### ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that the appellant's score for the technical component of the Incident Command scenario be raised from 4 to 5. It is further ordered that this scoring change be given retroactive effect.

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 20<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER, 2023

*Allison Chris Myers*

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