



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of
Andrew Marchica, Fire Captain
(PM1140S), Rahway

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2016-2836

ISSUED: **NOV 16 2016** (RE)

Andrew Marchica appeals his score for the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Captain (PM1140S), Rahway. It is noted that the appellant passed the subject examination with a final average of 89.200 and ranks fifth on the subject list.

It is noted for the record that this two-part examination consisted of a written multiple-choice portion and an oral portion. Candidates were required to pass the written portion of the examination, and then were ranked on their performance on both portions of the examination. The test was worth 80 percent of the final score and seniority was worth the remaining 20 percent. Of the test weights, 31.35% of the score was the written multiple-choice portion, 22.49% was the technical score for the evolving exercise, 7.53% was the supervision score for the evolving exercise, 4.28% was the oral communication score for the evolving exercise, 19.23% was the technical score for the arriving exercise, 7.53% was the supervision score for the arriving exercise, and 7.59% was the oral communication score for the arriving exercise.

The oral portion of the Fire Captain examination consisted of two scenarios: a fire scene simulation with questions designed to measure the knowledge of safe rescue tactics and procedures to safeguard citizens, supervision of fire fighters and the ability to assess fire conditions and hazards in an evolving incident on the fireground (evolving); and a fire scene simulation designed to measure the knowledge of safe rescue tactics and procedures to safeguard citizens, supervision of firefighters and the ability to plan strategies and tactics based upon a building's

structure and condition (arriving). Knowledge of supervision was measured by questions in both scenarios, and was scored for each. For the evolving scenario, candidates were provided with a 15-minute preparation period, and candidates had 10 minutes to respond. For the arriving scenario, a five minute preparation period was given and candidates had 10 minutes to respond.

The candidates' responses were scored on technical knowledge and oral communication ability. Prior to the administration of the exam, a panel of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) determined the scoring criteria, using generally approved fire command practices, firefighting practices, and reference materials. 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, 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. Each performance was evaluated by two SMEs who currently are a first level supervisor or higher. If the SME scores differed by 1 point, the score was averaged. If they differed by more than 1 point, the SMEs were required to confer with each other until they agreed on a score. Scores were then converted to standardized scores.

Candidates were rated on a five-point scale, with 5 as the optimal response, 4 as a more than acceptable passing response, 3 as a minimally acceptable passing response, 2 as a less than acceptable response, and 1 as a much less than acceptable response. For each of the scenes, and for oral communication, the requirements for each score were defined.

For the evolving scenario, the appellant scored a 5 for the technical component, a 3 for the supervision component, and a 5 for the oral communication component. For the arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 5 for the technical component, a 3 for the supervision component, and a 5 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his scores for the supervision components of both scenarios. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

The evolving scenario involved a report of a fire in a historic, small, single-story brick church built in the 1940s. It is 2:30 PM on a Saturday in February, with a temperature of 23° F, overcast skies, and a wind blowing from west to east at 10 miles per hour. The candidate is the commanding officer of the first arriving engine company, who is on-scene and has established command. There are parked cars along the front of the building, and wood frame homes on sides B and D. Upon arrival, the candidate does not notice any fire but sees smoke coming from the windows near the peak of the slate roof on side A. A neighbor approaches and

indicates a custodian may be in the church, cleaning it for services on Sunday, and a crowd of onlookers begins to gather. There were two technical questions. The supervision question indicates that the pump operator hooked to a frozen hydrant and failed to notify the candidate via radio of the delay in obtaining a primary water supply. This allowed heat in the fire building to build up to flashover conditions which resulted in the injuries of the two firefighters. This question asked for actions that should be taken after returning to the firehouse. The question asked what specific actions should now be taken, based on this new information. Instructions indicate that, in responding to the questions, the candidate should be as specific as possible in describing actions, and should not assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to a score.

For the supervision component, the assessors noted that the appellant missed the opportunities to inform the accused fire fighter of the consequences of the action, and to review any applicable Department Standard Operating Procedures/Standard Operating Guidelines (SOPs/SOGs). On appeal, the appellant argues that he explained the reason for the meeting, told him he would be held accountable for his actions, and developed a solution together with him.

In reply, the appellant does not argue that he took the action started by the assessors, but states that those actions are implied because he explained the reason for the meeting and told the fire fighter he would be held accountable for his actions. Candidates were told that they would not receive credit for information that was implied or assumed. The appellant's academic response, "...and let him know my side of the story," is not specific. The appellant did not tell the firefighter that because of his failure to notify the incident commander of a delay in obtaining water, there was a flashover. The appellant received credit for interviewing the pump operator, and for recommending appropriate disciplinary actions, as he gave him a written reprimand, but he did not inform the pump operator of the consequences of his actions. Nor did he review applicable SOPs/SOGs. His performance was acceptable, but not more than acceptable, and his score of 3 for this component will not be changed.

The arriving scenario involved a report of a fire in a single-story, wood-frame constructed house built in the 1970s. Similarly constructed houses are 10 feet away on sides B and D. It is 3:30 PM on a Saturday in September, with a temperature of 78° F, partly cloudy skies, and a wind blowing from the west to the east at 5 miles per hour. The candidate is the commanding officer of the first arriving engine company and is the first officer on scene. Upon arrival, the candidate notices smoke coming from the garage door on side A. Dispatch indicates the caller is in the bedroom, and indicated he was napping when he awoke to smoke in the house and is unable to get out. The supervision question indicated that the candidate has returned to the firehouse when he receives an alarm for the same address. The fire

has reignited due to poor overhauling at the initial alarm. This question asked for actions to be taken after returning from the second alarm to ensure an incident like this does not happen in the future.

For the supervision component, the assessors indicated that the appellant missed the opportunities to determine the fire crew/personnel assigned to overhaul, and to review any SOPs on overhaul. On appeal, the appellant argues that he said he would meet with all members who are on the scene, and by process of elimination, find out who the firefighters were. He also states that he already knew it was one of his truck companies.

In reply, in response to this question, the appellant stated, "Back at the firehouse I would meet with, at first I would meet with my full shift, and go over situation, and see what everyone has to say. If there happens to be specific members who were held responsible for that action, then back of the firehouse I will schedule separate meetings with each member to hear all their sides of the story." In this passage, the appellant will schedule a meeting with any specific members who had been held responsible for that action. However, the appellant's response lacks sufficient detail to determine how the appellant will identify those responsible, and credit is not given for information that is implied or assumed. The appellant does not state that he is holding any specific person responsible, and he does not indicate that he will determine who was assigned to overhaul. The appellant missed the actions noted by the assessors, as well as other actions, and his score of 3 for this component is correct.

CONCLUSION

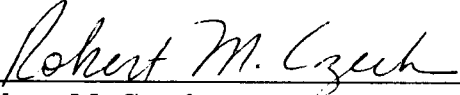
A thorough review of the appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record, and the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

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
THE 10th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2016



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