



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**DECISION OF
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of D.B., Fire Fighter
(M1509T), City of Camden

CSC Docket No. 2017-3761

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Medical Review Panel

ISSUED: AUGUST 2, 2018 (DASV)

D.B. appeals his rejection as a Fire Fighter candidate by the City of Camden and its request to remove his name from the eligible list for Fire Fighter (M1509T) on the basis of psychological unfitness to perform effectively the duties of the position.

This appeal was brought before the Medical Review Panel (Panel) on May 18, 2018, which rendered the attached report and recommendation. No exceptions were filed by the parties. It is noted that the appellant submits that he is “willing to accept testing for a cognitive assessment based” on the Panel’s suggestion.

The report by the Panel discusses all submitted evaluations and the information obtained from the meeting. The negative indications related to the appellant’s testing, as he was below average in the Wonderlic Personnel Test which raised concerns with his ability to complete the academic aspects of a Fire Fighter academy. In addition, the Candidate and Officer Personnel Survey and the Personality Assessment Inventory demonstrated possible problems with rule compliance, acceptance of supervision, integrity, interpersonal conflict, anxiety, irritability, and lack of energy. The appointing authority’s evaluator, Dr. Robert Tanenbaum, also found that the appellant had his driver’s license suspended, received motor vehicle violations, and had academic and behavioral issues in school. Dr. Tanenbaum concluded that the appellant was not psychologically suited for a Fire Fighter position. The appellant’s independent evaluator, Dr. Ange Puig, re-administered the Personality Assessment Inventory and found that the appellant

was at low risk in all areas tested. Dr. Puig stated that there was no indication that the appellant possessed problematic, abhorrent, or antisocial behaviors. The Panel noted that Dr. Puig did not conduct a cognitive test on the appellant.

During the Panel meeting, the appellant reported that he works for a day program for developmentally disabled children and had no disciplinary issues. Moreover, he clarified his driving history. The Panel reviewed several critical items found in the appellant's testing. The appellant had repeatedly responded that he was uncertain as to what was meant by the test questions. Upon its evaluation, the Panel was not concerned with the appellant's behavioral history, noting that he had no issues in his work performance or had legal or substance abuse issues. Although the appellant may have had motor vehicle accidents, the Panel determined that there was no other evidence of impulsivity in his motor vehicle history which may be indicative of a psychological factor that would disqualify the appellant from employment. However, the Panel had concerns with the appellant's cognitive ability, given that he scored at the third percentile in the Wonderlic Personnel Test and did not understand the meaning of certain test questions. The Panel indicated that the Wonderlic Personnel Test does not provide a thorough assessment of cognition. Therefore, based on the evaluations, the test results of the appellant, and his presentation at the meeting, the Panel requested that the appellant undergo an independent evaluation "which should include more in-depth cognitive assessment" of the appellant.

CONCLUSION

The Civil Service Commission (Commission) has reviewed the report and recommendation of the Panel. The Commission notes that the Panel conducts an independent review of the raw data presented by the parties as well as the recommendations and conclusions drawn by the various evaluators and that, in addition to the Panel's own review of the results of the tests administered to the appellant, it also assesses the appellant's presentation before it prior to rendering its own conclusions and recommendations which are based firmly on the totality of the record presented. The Commission agrees with the Panel's recommendation and finds it necessary to refer the appellant for an independent evaluation by a New Jersey licensed psychologist which shall include an in-depth cognitive assessment of the appellant.

ORDER

The Commission therefore orders that D.B. be administered an independent psychological evaluation. The Commission further orders that the cost incurred for this evaluation be assessed to the appointing authority in the amount of \$530. Prior to the Commission's reconsideration of this matter, copies of the independent

evaluator's report and recommendation will be sent to all parties with the opportunity to file exceptions and cross exceptions.

D.B. is to contact Dr. Robert Kanen, the Commission's independent evaluator, in order to arrange for an appointment within 15 days of the issuance of this determination in order to arrange for an appointment. Dr. Kanen's address is as follows:

Dr. Robert Kanen
Kanen Psychological Services
76 West Ridgewood Avenue
Ridgewood, New Jersey 07450
(201) 670-8072

If D.B. does not contact Dr. Kanen within the time period noted above, the entire matter will be referred to the Commission for final administrative determination and the appellant's lack of pursuit will be noted.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 1ST DAY OF AUGUST, 2018



Deirdre L. Webster Cobb
Chairperson
Civil Service Commission

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and
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Attachment

c: D.B.
Jason Asuncion
Dr. Robert Kanen
Kelly Glenn
Annemarie Ragos