

MINUTES
FIRE EXAMINATION DIVERSITY REVIEW COMMITTEE

May 28, 2014
Civil Service Commission
9:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Cecilia Mascarenas, Commissioner, President
Earl Peterson, CSC Executive Director
Antoinette Torres-Janke, CSC Human Resources Supervisor
Jeff Wilson, CSC Senior Human Resource Professional
Brian Kellogg, CSC
Chris Marez, CSC Administrative Support
Captain Desmond Fulton, Local 858
Captain Greg Pixley, DFD
Captain Steven Holtz, DFD

Issue #1: Approval of Minutes

Earl Peterson called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. A motion was made by Jeff Wilson and seconded by Antoinette Torres-Janke to approve the minutes of March 11, 2014. The motion carried.

Issue #2: Entry Level and Promotional Testing Update

Entry Level

Jeff Wilson noted that 120 applicants are currently in the process for Entry Level Firefighter. The first CPAT practice test was administered with 72 applicants passing and 16 failing. So far 40 applicants have been scheduled for the second CPAT practice session. Captain Fulton asked if CSC noticed any pattern in gender and ability to pass CPAT. Earl Peterson confirmed that of the women that took CPAT they tend to struggle with it. Captain Steve Holtz asked how many people have failed suitability. Jeff answered about 30 people have failed suitability so far. A question arose about the chance of a second judgment on suitability. Earl stated that there is slim to no chance that applicants will be given a second judgment. One judgment was overturned during this testing process for a cadet where Earl Peterson couldn't determine why the psychologist had given the rating of unsuitable. Earl explained that we are the only department that offers a copy of the failed suitability report and we even provide an opportunity for applicants to meet with the psychologist to review their findings.

Promotional

Jeff Wilson announced that Booth Research Group, Inc. was selected as consult for the 2014 Assistant Chief promotional exam. Jeff handed out a tentative schedule for Assistant Chief testing and stated that registration would open June 16, 2014 and close July 18, 2014. Orientation sessions will be held on September 23-24, 2014. Jeff explained testing has been scheduled to ensure that the old eligible register would have its full life of two years.

Jeff noted that 59 candidates have tested for Fire Engineer with 29 passing. To pass candidates had to score 95 out of 120 questions correct. All 29 whom passed, showed up to the practical. Overall, the practical went smooth even with inclement weather. There was 1 critical fail. Commissioner Mascarenas asked for clarification on what a critical fail was. Jeff and Earl confirmed that it meant the candidate hit the window and when that happens the candidate is generally allowed to go on for practicing purposes. The Commission will approve the eligible register for Fire Engineer on June 6, 2014 for posting on June 16, 2014.

Jeff Wilson stated that 46 candidates took the written test for the 2014 Fire Captain promotional exam on May 5, 2014. The cut off has been set to 94 out of 120 correct. Of those that tested, 25 passed. The assessment center will be held June 10 through June 12, 2014. CSC will approve the eligible register on June 20, 2014 for posting on July, 7 2014 in order to give the old list a full two-year period. Captain Fulton confirmed that the feedback he heard was that candidates enjoyed a harder test this time around.

Captain Fulton asked if there was a way to tally promotional testing scores sooner. Jeff answered no, the reason being that candidates would start to compile a list by comparing scores. Captain Fulton explained that candidates put in a significant amount of effort to prepare for testing and afterwards wait almost a month to hear how they did and, the candidates wonder why it takes so long. Earl Peterson confirmed that it shouldn't take that long, there definitely won't be a list given sooner and it would have to be individual unofficial scores. Earl also mentioned that the Commission doesn't want the chance of giving preference to the new or old list and that the chief would have to confirm that the department wasn't planning on hiring before the new list was in place. Captain Greg Pixley agreed that scheduling to release scores after CSC meetings seems practical. Commissioner Mascarenas mentioned that she didn't realize what Firefighters go through and agreed that peace of mind and transparency are both important. Jeff Wilson noted that the Fire Engineer scores specifically take a long time because the consultant does the scoring for the practical and it's all on paper from being on the field when testing. The Commission is set to vote on releasing scores earlier for promotional tests at the June 6, 2014 meeting.

Captain Fulton said that another question that candidates ask is why CSC sets the cut off score after the test. Jeff answered that no two test are alike and we don't always know how candidates will do, also diversity must be considered. Captain Fulton mentioned another issue that came up for the engineers practical, candidates have expressed that they wanted to know right when they fail, this issue can be resolved easily by having the safety officers present. Fulton also questioned if there was a possibility of recording applicant practical tests. Earl Peterson explained that it's not feasible right now and that generally prepared people do well and we always provide written feedback to candidates.

Issue #3 and #4: Diversity and Recruitment

Diversity

Earl Peterson stated that diversity still looks good, we just won't know the official results until we have the final applicant pool. Captain Fulton stated that we should require applicants to specify their race correctly on the application as it is important information that helps with diversity.

Recruitment

Captain Fulton stated that guaranteed testing positions for the tutored group made a significant impact on testing. We are looking at upping the number of guaranteed testing slots to 50% of the overall number testing slots available. Captain Greg Pixley will help take this to the next level. Captain Pixley asked for direction/recommendations to help improve recruitment efforts. Jeff Wilson stated that the only issue with early testing is the timeline. CSC is looking at testing at different times.

Issue #5: Set Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be August 20, 2014 at 9:30 AM in room 7.H.10 of the Webb Municipal building.