

City of Alameda



Interdepartmental Memorandum

Date: October 10, 2017

To: Honorable President, Vice-President and Members of the Alameda Civil Service Board

From: Nancy Bronstein, Human Resources Director *h.B*

Re: Recommendation to Revise the City's Civil Service Rules

BACKGROUND

The Human Resources Department continues to look for opportunities to improve the recruitment process. The goal is to ensure the department is consistent and efficient in its service delivery and is meeting the merit principles identified in the City's Civil Service Rules.

One area that has come to our attention is the method used to break ties in final scores when certifying the eligible list. As a result, staff are recommending a revision to the rules in order to change the way ties are broken. More specifically, these revisions eliminate the need to break ties in final scores and allows candidates to be certified by rank instead of number of names.

DISCUSSION

Current rules provide for the certification of eligible candidates to Departments based on the type of examination. Because the rules limit the number of candidate names that are certified, it is necessary to break ties in final candidate scores.

Currently, the rules state that the applicant receiving the highest rating on the most heavily weighted portion of an exam be given priority. Further, if there is no weighted or written portion to the examination, the rules require the examination announcement state the basis for the breaking of ties.

Presently, the most frequent way of breaking ties is based on application submission date and time with first priority to candidates who submitted their applications first. Staff believe these types of method do not align with the City's merit principles. The goal of

the merit principles is to ensure candidates are evaluated based on their relative knowledge, skills and ability to do the job as demonstrated in the examination. Not based on who expresses interest in the job first.

The changes proposed by HR staff would eliminate the need to break ties by certifying candidates by number of ranks rather than by number of names. Candidates with equal final exam scores would then be equally ranked and have the same opportunity. Not only does such changes align better with the City's merit principles, but the outcome would produce a higher number of equally qualified candidates referred to Departments.

- Revise the following language to Article V Section 3

ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXAMINATION

All examinations for positions in the City shall be publicly announced by posting announcements in the City government building on official bulletin boards, and in such other places as the Human Resources Director deems advisable. The announcement shall specify the title and salary range of the classification for which the examination is announced, the nature of work to be performed in general terms, minimum qualifications, the date, time and place and manner of making application, the general scope of the examination and such other pertinent information as is deemed to be appropriate or desirable. ~~Whenever possible, the manner in which tie scores will be broken shall be specified.~~

- Revise the following language to Article VII Section 1

ESTABLISHMENT OF LISTS

(a) As soon as possible after the scoring of the examination, the names of those applicants who passed the examination shall be placed on an eligibility list ~~in the order of final ratings received, from the highest score down to the lowest passing score.~~

(b) Prior to finalizing examination final scores, qualified veterans shall be awarded an additional five (5) points in the examination process. A job applicant qualifies as a veteran if honorably discharged from active military, reservist, or National Guard duty of at least 18 consecutive months within the past five (5) years of the date of application. In cases of discharge attributable to service-connected injuries or illnesses, the 18 months active duty requirement need not be fulfilled. ~~Whenever identical ratings are received, the applicant receiving the highest rating on the most heavily weighted portion shall be given priority. If there is no written portion to the examination, the examination announcement shall state the basis for the breaking of ties.~~

(c) Candidates shall be ranked on the eligibility lists in the order of final score received, from the highest score down to the lowest passing score. Final scores that are tied shall receive equal ranking.

(d) For recruitments which require continuous examination, the Human Resources Director may authorize an eligible list to be established, to which additional names may be added, and certified to the hiring authority to make an appointment.

(e) For a regular or part-time employee serving either in a civil service or non-civil service capacity, who successfully completes a City-sponsored police academy or apprenticeship program, the Human Resources Director may place the employee's name on a civil service-covered classification eligible list for which the employee is qualified.

- Revise the following language to Article VIII Section 1 (a)

(a) The names of persons appearing on the appropriate list who are willing to accept appointment shall be certified in the order in which they appear on the list. [1] For promotional exams, the number of names ranks certified shall exceed by two (2) the number of vacancies to be filled. [2] For entry-level classification exams, the number of names ranks certified shall exceed by nine (9) the number of vacancies to be filled. [3] For classifications which require specific professional certifications or specific advanced degrees, the entire eligible list shall be certified. [4] In all other instances, the number of names ranks certified shall exceed by four (4) the number of vacancies to be filled. The City shall use sequential ranking where the rank number is NOT advanced by the total number of tied candidates. For example, if there is a three way tie at rank 1, the next candidate would receive a rank of 2.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to revise the City's Civil Service Rules establishing how eligible candidates shall be scored, ranked and certified on the City's Eligibility Lists. These revisions align with the merit principles outlined in the City's Civil Service Ordinance and will provide for more efficiency of operations for Departments.

Nancy Bronstein
Human Resources Director

Attachment: Draft of Revised Civil Service Rules