

Recommendations of the Massachusetts Municipal Association on the Reform of Civil Service

November 1996

Eliminate civil service for local governments. In its place, require municipalities to establish merit-based personnel systems with policies and procedures for recruiting, selecting, promoting, training and terminating employees. Allow municipalities the ability to design systems for their own specific needs.

MERIT PRINCIPLES

Local governments would be required to adhere to the following basic merit principles as guidelines for their merit-based systems:

- Recruitment from all segments of society;
- Selection and advancement on the basis of ability, knowledge and skills, under fair and open competition;
- Compensation on an equitable basis;
- Motivate public service employees to achieve and sustain first-rate performance by demanding a commitment to excellence through continuous improvement and by insuring that standards are fair, and that monetary and non-monetary incentives are consistent and effective;
- Training and development as needed to assure high-quality performance by all employees;
- Retention of employees on the basis of their performance. A reasonable effort should be made to assist employees in correcting inadequate performance; and if, following such effort inadequate performance cannot be corrected, separation shall occur;
- Fair treatment of applicants and employees in all aspects of personnel management without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, political affiliation, age, disabled status, sexual orientation, or other non-merit factors, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights;
- Protect employees from undue political influence;
- Municipalities must be in compliance with the requirements of the state ethics and conflict of interest law, MGL Chapter 268A;
- Systems must be in compliance with affirmative action plans as approved by MCAD;
- There should be a capacity for residency requirements at local option.

PERSONNEL SYSTEMS

Merit-based personnel systems could include the following, based on the specific needs of a municipality:

- the classification of positions, based on duties, authority, and responsibility of each position;
- pay plan;
- announcement of employee vacancies and acceptance of applications for employment;
- preparation and administration of examinations, if appropriate;
- establishment and use of eligibility lists if appropriate;
- establishment of promotion policies and procedures;
- transfer, demotion and reinstatement of employees;
- performance evaluations of employees, including those on probationary periods; merit increase based on the performance appraisal;
- disciplinary procedures;
- grievance and appeal procedures;
- separation of employees from the classified service by resignation, suspension, dismissal, layoff, or incapacity to perform required duties;
- establishment of a probationary period for employees prior to final appointment;
- development of employee morale; safety and training programs;
- residency requirements at local option.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil Service Status under New System

Civil service employees who were permanent should retain their civil service status (for job protection, layoff, and discipline), however if the employee changes job or title the civil service status would not remain. Provisionals would not be given civil service status, since they do not have it now.

Civil Service Commission Backlog Elimination

There should be an infusion of funds eliminate the backlog at the Civil Service Commission.

Eliminate the Labor Service

The Labor Service should be eliminated. There is no merit in this system. It is based on a "first in first out" system. There is no pretense of finding out who is the most qualified person for the job. The labor service is very dysfunctional system and is completely anti-merit.

Donna,

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
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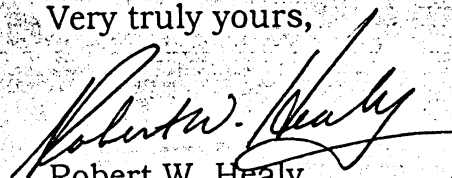
November 18, 1996

To the Honorable, the City Council:

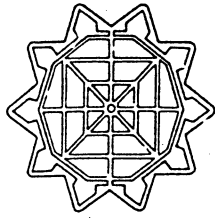
In the past the City Council has raised issues about and expressed interest in civil service reform. I would like to inform you that the City's Personnel Director, Michael Gardner, has been appointed to the Massachusetts Special Commission to Study Civil Service Reform, as a Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) representative. This commission, jointly chaired by the Honorable Senator Marion Walsh and the Honorable Representative Joan Menard, was established by Section 584 of Chapter 151 of the Acts of 1996 to study the existing civil service system in the Commonwealth and for cities and towns, and to make recommendations for an improved performance-based merit system.

I encourage you to contact Mr. Gardner on issues that you may want him to raise in during this process. I will keep you updated on developments with this Commission as they occur.

Very truly yours,


Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Attachment: MMA position paper on Civil Service Reform



**Massachusetts
Municipal
Association**

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October 11, 1996

Robert Healy
City Manager
City of Cambridge
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. Healy, *B.H.*

Section 584 of Chapter 151 of the Acts of 1996 created the Special Commission to Study Civil Service Reform. The Massachusetts Municipal Association has four representatives on this important commission, and has designated Cambridge Personnel Director Michael Gardner as one of the MMA's commission members. Mr. Gardner is one of the state's foremost experts on municipal personnel systems and civil service, and we are grateful for his willingness to serve on the commission. We are confident he will be a strong representative of the interests of local government.

The MMA looks forward to working on civil service reform, and is hopeful significant change will be made. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Geoffrey Beckwith
Executive Director

GCB/mej

S-579
**Recommendations of the Massachusetts Municipal
Association on the Reform of Civil Service**

In City Council November 4, 1996.