

489 Broadway
Cambridge, Mass. 02138
February 1, 1988

Cambridge City Council
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Dear Councillor,

I find it necessary to respond, concerning Article 5 of City Council business dated January 25, 1988. This un-signed open letter to members of the City Council, has since been referred to the City Manager for a complete report.

In brief, this anonymous letter lists a series of complaints concerning all members of the City of Cambridge Electrical Department. My comments reflect on the Fire Alarm Division only, and my position as a Fire Alarm Operator and Chief Operator.

I have been a resident of the City of Cambridge, since date of birth December 15, 1935. I have been a homeowner and taxpayer of this great city since 1967.

My childhood dream of being a firefighter was not to be, which resulted in my bringing myself the closest I could within the Public Service Fire Related Field, which was that of a Fire Alarm Operator.

In February of 1961, after a minimum of two years of study, I was successful in passing the Civil Service exam for Fire Alarm Operator for the City of Cambridge. The Civil Service formula at that particular time, was to take the results of the written exam, in this case my mark of 95, and apply an experience mark determined by Civil Service, in this case 70. The two grades were then added together and divided by five, to result in a final grade of 80. I bring this to your attention, for the purpose of having the written grade of 95 recognized.

Fifteen applicants took this exam, with five applicants attaining the passing grade of 70. Not being eligible for veterans preference, I was placed fifth on the eligible list.

continued

On August 5, 1963, I had the privilege and good fortune of being appointed as a Fire Alarm Operator for the City of Cambridge.

I can honestly state, that from the August 5, 1963 date to present, I have given 100% effort in the performance of my duties, and to the best of my knowledge have had an excellent working relationship with my co-workers.

In 1974, an attempt was made by the Department Head to upgrade the operation of this office, and the position of Chief Fire Alarm Operator was re-instated. This position of course, was to have an Operator in addition to his regular duties, supervise the daily operations and act as liaison between the Fire Alarm Operators and the City Electrician. The City Electrician is responsible for the function and performance of the entire Electrical Department. The Chief Operators position is also one that requires, one having a good working relationship with the Cambridge Fire Chief.

In 1974, in order of seniority, all operators were asked and showed no interest in accepting this temporary position. I did accept.

In 1983, this position was once again offered on a provisional basis with minimum compensation. Once again a statement was signed by all operators showing no interest at that particular time. Once again I accepted.

If any operator so listed on this statement, is now interested in this position of Chief Fire Alarm Operator, it seems reasonable to expect they approach the Department Head and express their feelings.

The submission of this un-signed letter, which has made its way through out the City, has also had a personal impact on my family. With three school age children, the phone calls to my home from concerned employees and friends has been encouraging, but also disruptive.

In conclusion, I would like to add, that with the present renovations and installation of what must be considered one of the most modern and sophisticated offices in the Nation, our hard working and dedicated Department Head George Fernandes and other electrical department employees, do not need the aggravation or loss in time responding to this gutless individuals un-signed open letters.

TFC/tc

Respectfully yours,

Thomas L. LaBill

Copy; Mr. Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Mr. George Fernandes, City Electrician

5-73

Comm. from Thomas L. Cahill relative to an unsigned open letter to members of the Council which appeared as an item before the Council on January 25, 1988 & was referred to the City Manager for a report.

February 1, 9188