



City of Cambridge Police Department

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Ronnie Watson
Police Commissioner

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Cristina Beamud, Esq.
Legal Advisor

December 30, 1998

Harold F. Murphy
Superintendent

Mr. Robert W. Healy
City Manager

David J. Degou
Superintendent

subject: City Council Order #26, dated 11/2/98

Michael D. Giacoppo
Deputy Superintendent

Sir:

Yvonne M. Hall
Deputy Superintendent

The City of Cambridge consistently attempts to hire the best available candidates for police officer positions from the police certification lists provided by the Human Resources Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This process is undertaken consistent with civil service law and rules, and a court consent decree as a result of the federal case of *Castro v Beecher* which outlines certain obligations in the hiring of police officers in affected communities.

Thomas F. O'Connor
Deputy Superintendent

Gloria A. Pimentel
Deputy Superintendent

Lieutenant Steven Williams
Community Relations

During the tenure of former Police Commissioner Perry Anderson, the Police Department urged a "no-hire" policy for any candidates with any prior illegal conduct or arrests and for repeated traffic violations. The City followed these recommendations and by-passed certain candidates for appointments.

Raymond T. Santilli
*Planning, Budget
& Personnel*

Officer Frank Pasquarello
Public Information Officer

The Civil Service Commission reviewed several of these cases on appeal by the candidates. In most cases, the City's by-pass decision was upheld. In a couple of cases, the Commission decided that the incidents used as a basis for the by-pass were in the too distant past and overturned the by-pass.

In one case involving a very serious violation, the Civil Service Commission overturned the City's by-pass based upon the length of time since the offense. Based on the seriousness of this case, the City appealed the overturn and the decision to by-pass was ultimately upheld by the Massachusetts Appeals Court.

In another case, the City lawfully by-passed a candidate in 1993 and, again, in 1995 for various reasons including negative information developed during the background

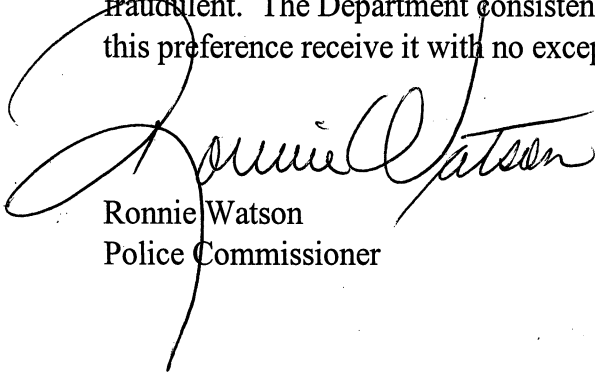
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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

investigation. On appeal by the candidate, the Civil Service Commission upheld the City's decision to by-pass in both instances. However, in its decision on the second appeal, the Commission stated that "... the reasons offered will not be accepted by this Commission in any further appointment process for the appellant ..." The candidate, being once again eligible on a subsequent police certification list, was hired in 1997.

During my tenure as Police Commissioner, the same high standards for appointment for police officer positions have been applied. The City is currently involved at the Civil Service Commission with the appeals of several candidates concerning by-pass based upon prior criminal conduct.

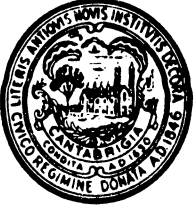
In my review and subsequent recommendations for hires, with respect to "minor" offenses, I have taken into account the recentness of the offense(s), as well as the candidate's overall background and qualities. Serious and/or repeat offenses (including traffic violations and operating under the influence) remain grounds for the rejection of any candidate.

A continuing source of dispute in police officer hiring in Cambridge are false claims of residency preference. Candidates, who lived in the City of Cambridge for the full year prior to the date of the statewide examination, are entitled by state law to be ranked ahead of all other candidates for consideration with limited exceptions. This holds true regardless of where the candidate lives at the time of the background screening or at the time of actual hire. The Police Department continually deals with candidates whose claims of residency preference are questionable or fraudulent. The Department consistently attempts to ensure that only persons actually entitled to this preference receive it with no exceptions.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Ronnie Watson". The signature is written over the printed name and title.

Ronnie Watson
Police Commissioner

cc., Superintendent Harold Murphy, Operations Division
Superintendent David Degou, Support Services Division
Mr. Michael Gardner, Personnel Department



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12.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

January 11, 1999

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 10, regarding a report on the City's current policies with respect to eligibility for police service, received from Police Commissioner Ronnie Watson.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment

Consent Agenda #12

54

Relative to AW 10, regarding
a report on the City's current policies
with respect to eligibility for
police service.

In City Council January 11, 1999

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