

State of New Hampshire



PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

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APPEAL JOHN MONROE

Docket #95 -C-4

New Hampshire Hospital

IN RE: Denial of Reclassification

From Automotive Shop Manager II (s.g. 16) to Equipment Mechanic Foreman (s.g. 18)

January 19, 1996

The New Hampshire Personnel Appeals Board (Bennett, Johnson and Rule) met Wednesday, November 15, 1995, under the authority of RSA 21-I:57, to hear the classification appeal of John Monroe, an employee of New Hampshire Hospital. Mr. Monroe, who was appealing his denial of reclassification from Automotive Shop Manager II, salary grade 16, to Equipment Mechanic Foreman, salary grade 18, was represented at the hearing by Margo Steeves, SEA Field Representative. Virginia Lamberton, Director of Personnel, appeared on behalf of the Division of Personnel.

Ms. Steeves argued that the rating of the "Independent Action" factor is the only difference between Mr. Monroe's current classification and that of Equipment Mechanic Foreman. She argued that Mr. Monroe is responsible for maintaining the heavy and light equipment used by the grounds, laundry and transportation departments at New Hampshire Hospital. She argued that his position requires him to be able to use and maintain equipment ranging from snowplows, loaders, sanders, mowers and aerial buckets to high capacity laundry machines, including washers, dryers and folders. She asserted that Mr. Monroe also specializes in hydraulic lifts for wheelchair transport. She said that because of the breadth of his responsibilities, his work is more complex than similarly classified positions in the Department of Resources and Economic Development and the Department of Transportation.

Ms. Steeves argued that Mr. Monroe has demonstrated considerable judgement and initiative in recommending changes at New Hampshire Hospital to improve services, including new mowing and leaf removal systems, and improvements to food delivery vehicles to ensure that hot food was received on the units at a better temperature. She asserted that Mr. Monroe is actually listed as the owner of the vehicle inspection station at New Hampshire Hospital, and that in addition to performing vehicle inspections, Mr. Monroe also is responsible for training the mechanics who perform the inspections. She said that his job assignments support assignment at the fourth level for the "Independent Action" factor, asserting that he must make "objective assessment in analyzing and developing new work methods and procedures subject to periodic review and in making decisions according to established technical, professional or administrative standards."

Ms. Lamberton said that she was the Human Resources Director at New Hampshire Hospital when Mr. Monroe's position was last reviewed in 1979 or 1980, and that she had been

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responsible for preparing the request for reclassification. She said that when the Department of Personnel had denied the request for upgrading to Automotive Shop Manager, she had assisted in appealing that decision to the New Hampshire Personnel Commission, which granted the appeal, upgrading his position to its current classification.

Ms. Lamberton stated that when the most recent request for reallocation of this position was received, she did not find changes in the position since the last review which would warrant its reclassification or upgrading. Ms. Lamberton said that when the Personnel Commission had ordered the upgrading of Mr. Monroe's position, the incumbent had been responsible for supervising a staff of approximately 135 employees in the Automotive and Grounds departments at New Hampshire Hospital. She said that by comparison, Mr. Monroe now directly supervises only 4 employees, all of whom are assigned to the automotive shop. Ms. Lamberton said that over time, the automotive shop had been consolidated with the laundry department under the supervision of David Bixby, Laundry Manager, and that while Mr. Monroe may have retained responsibility for training employees from a variety of work units, or for supervising certain repair functions, his supervisor is actually responsible for managing employees in the laundry.

Ms. Lamberton argued that Mr. Monroe's credentials, including experience and education, may exceed those required by his class specification, but that they may not be considered in assessing the characteristic duties and responsibilities of the position to which he is assigned. She argued that inspecting a variety of vehicles, which Ms. Steeves had cited as a factor supporting the appellant's reclassification, is a function performed in other agencies at a lower salary grade. She also argued that Mr. Monroe is not responsible for maintaining or inspecting the variety of vehicles which are used at the Department of Transportation or the Department of Resources and Economic Development, and that employees who maintain more diverse equipment in those departments are allocated at a lower salary grade than the appellant's position. She also argued that change in the organizational structure at New Hampshire Hospital had altered Mr. Monroe's reporting relationship, but had not increased his own supervisory responsibilities.

Ms. Lamberton argued that examples of "Independent Action" which the appellant cited in support of his request for upgrading, such as improving delivery of hot food, had already been considered when the appellant's position was upgraded after the 1987 position review, and that record keeping was not a new responsibility. She also argued that activities cited by the appellant concerning identification of funding to remove underground storage tanks were not examples of "Independent Action," since funding for tank removal was a capital budget item, not a problem which Mr. Monroe initiated, researched or resolved.

The Technical Assistance Manual describes the "Independent Action" factor as measuring the growth of job responsibilities by reflecting a position's increased requirements for decision making and choice among alternative courses of action. It also states that the factor considers the amount of initiative required by a position in making decisions and judgements, in

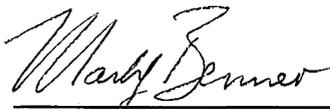
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understanding and modifying work procedures, and in making original contributions to achieve agency work objectives. The "Independent Action" factor also involves responsibility for formulating plans, designs, policies, regulations and operations strategies. Level four for the "Independent Action" factor requires an incumbent to utilize, "...objective assessment in analyzing and developing new work methods and procedures subject to periodic review and in making decisions according to established technical, professional or administrative standards."

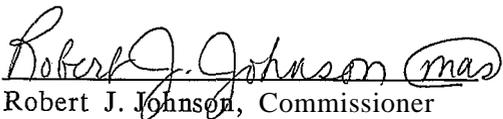
In the Board's opinion, an assessment of Mr. Monroe's assignments must be made within the overall context of the agency's work objectives. Mr. Monroe obviously has responsibility for assuring that vehicles and machinery assigned to his work unit are functioning properly, and that employees under his supervision perform tasks which support the ongoing operations of New Hampshire Hospital. However, the Board is not persuaded that Mr. Monroe's assignments rise to the fourth level for that factor. The Board did not find that Mr. Monroe's assignments rise to the level of decision making according to established technical, professional or administrative standards. Instead, the Board found that Mr. Monroe's assignments support the third level, requiring "...a range of choice in applying a number of technical or administrative policies under general direction and in making routine decisions or in recommending modification in work procedures for approval by a supervisor."

The Board found that Mr. Monroe's duties and responsibilities were accurately described by the classification of Automotive Shop Manager, and that there had not been substantial or material change in the scope of his responsibilities to warrant upgrading his position from salary grade 16 to salary grade 18. Accordingly, the Board voted unanimously to deny his appeal.

THE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD



Mark J. Bennett, Chairman



Robert J. Johnson, Commissioner



Lisa A. Rule, Commissioner

cc: Virginia A. Lamberton, Director of Personnel
Margo Steeves, SEA Field Representative
Marie Lang, Human Resources Administrator, New Hampshire Hospital