

Classification and Salary Standardization

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I

The City of Philadelphia is the most recent addition to the ranks of governmental bodies realizing that employment conditions and compensation must be standardized if efficient organization and satisfied personnel are to exist in the public service. In the new charter approved by the governor June 25, 1919 (Act No. 274 for the Better Government of Cities of the First Class of this Commonwealth approved June 25, 1919), a specific duty was placed upon the civil service commission to classify and grade all positions in the classified service and to make recommendations regarding rates of pay. The specific provisions which apply are contained in section 17 of Art. XIX which reads.

"The commission shall classify the grade of all positions in the classified service. The commission shall ascertain and record the duties of each position in the service, and, wherever it appears that two or more positions in a service which have duties which are substantially similar in respect to the authority, responsibility, and character or work required in the performance thereof, they shall be placed in the same grade which the commission shall designate by a title indicative of such duties. Grades having duties of the same general nature and in the same line of promotion shall be placed in the same class and the lines of promotion definitely specified. For each grade the commission shall determine a standard maximum and minimum salary or rate of pay, and shall report the same to the mayor and the council, together with other information pertaining to a proper rate of pay for personal services of incumbents of positions in the civil service."

Previous commissions had attempted some standardization of employments without the specific direction contained in the present charter. That work of classification was never fully completed, and no part of it was put into force. The city departments, as reorganized under the new charter, the employees of which included in the classified service, are as follows:

- Department of Public Works.
- Department of Public Safety.
- Department of Public Health.
- Department of Public Welfare.
- Department of the Mayor.
- Department of City Transit.
- Department of Wharves, Docks, and Ferries.
- Department of Law.
- Department of Purchasing Agent.
- Civil Service Commission.
- Art Jury.
- City Architect.

Other city departments were not included under previous civil service laws and the jurisdiction of the civil service commission was not extended by the new city charter to include them. Soon after its appointment, however, the present commission sent communications to the heads of all these other cities and county departments, calling their attention to the work of classification and salary standardization required by the charter to be done in all the departments whose employees are included in the classified service, pointing out the value and desirability of extending this classification and standardization over all employees of the city and county. As a result of this communication the prothonotary of the court of common pleas and the municipal court department of receiver of taxes, and the sheriff of the county of Philadelphia, requested the commission to extend the classification and salary standardization so as to include their respective departments. At the time of this writing the remaining departments have not expressed the desire to have their positions included in the work and the commission lacks authority to include them without the consent of the department concerned.

Early in January, and within a few weeks after the new commission had been appointed, it turned its attention to the problems involved in the classification and standardization work before it. Interviews and conferences were held with the civil service reform association of Pennsylvania; the bureau of municipal research of Philadelphia; and with numerous other authorities experi-

enced in undertakings of this character. The commission is practically indebted to the civil service reform association of Pennsylvania for the collection of statistics, of cost, and methods of procedure used on other classification projects. After an extended study of the situation in Philadelphia and through consideration of the costs involved the commission requested the city council to appropriate the sum of \$30,000 to defray the expenses of the work.

II

The commission was fully aware of the importance of the work before it. There was, however, a great deal of additional work placed upon the commission which had not been done by previous commissions. This work included, among other things, the necessity of applying a new set of civil service rules based on the provisions of the new charter and the setting up and administration of a system of bearings for members of the police and fire departments who were placed under charges for removal. With these added duties, each calling for much investigation and research, and with the added necessity of instituting improved methods in the examination divisions was convinced that it must take drastic steps to have the work of classification prosecuted rapidly and by an experienced staff. Added to these complications was the necessity, which still exists, of completing the classification and the setting up of recommendation salary rates at a time early enough to permit of their incorporation in the next annual appropriation bill. The new city charter requires that the mayor furnish to the council on or before October 15 of each year a budget of expenditure for the following fiscal year beginning on the following January 1. This makes it necessary that the present classification and standardization work be completed in time to permit the mayor and department heads to consider the results and incorporate them in the estimates which must be ready on the date mentioned.

By reason of the short time remaining for the work to be done, and by reason of the difficulties and the expense involved in organizing a special staff of its own to make the classification, the commission determined to engage temporary an expert staff experienced in work of this character. The communication to the council asking for the appropriation of \$30,000 for the work made this point clear and included estimates of the size of staff necessary and the cost of the various stages of the work. The council, in granting the request for the appropriation, included a provision in its ordinance requiring that the commission enter into a formal contract with the expert staff which it engaged to do the classification work and that bond be furnished by this staff for the proper fulfillment of the contract.

The laws and ordinances governing contracts required that the commission issue specifications for the work and receive competitive bids before awarding the contract. In complying with these requirements the commission was greatly aided by Albert Smith Faught, Esq., of the Pennsylvania civil service reform association who prepared a tentative draft of specifications answering both the legal and practical requirements.

III

As a result the commission finally prepared and issued the specifications on April 9, 1920 of which the following is a full summary:

I. Each bidder must take notice of the provisions in Article 19 of the new charter of Philadelphia, act approved June 25, 1919. The provisions in reference to classification of positions and standardization of salaries and incidental matters require the following:

1. **Ascertaining and recording duties of positions.** The commission shall ascertain and record the duties of each position in the classified service.
2. **Placing similar positions in the same grade.** Wherever it appears that two or more positions have duties which are substantially similar in respect to authority, responsibility, and character of work required in the performance thereof, they shall be placed in the same grade.