Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Civil Service Commission

100 Cambridge Street, Suite 200

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SONJI STROTHERS,

Appellant

V.

BOSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT,

Respondent

Docket Number: G1-25-025

Appearance for Appellant: James Gilden, Esq.

173 N Main St.

Sharon, MA, 02067-1230

Appearance for Respondent: Omar Bennani, Esq.

Boston Police Department Office of the Legal Advisor One Schroeder Plaza Boston, MA 02120

Commissioner: Angela C. McConney¹

Summary of Decision

The Commission affirmed the decision of the Boston Police Department to bypass a candidate for appointment as a police officer due to the candidate's poor judgment, which included facilitating three-way calls between inmates at a house of correction and outside callers not on approved call lists.

¹ The Commission acknowledges the assistance of law clerk Erasmus Ablernarh in the drafting of this decision.

Decision

On January 22, 2025, the Appellant, Sonji Strothers (Appellant or Ms. Strothers), pursuant to G.L. c. 31, § 2(b), appealed to the Civil Service Commission (Commission) the January 13, 2025 decision of the Boston Police Department (BPD or Department) to bypass her for original appointment to the position of permanent full-time police officer. The Department based its decision on Ms. Strothers' poor judgment and her alleged prior association with known criminals.

The Commission conducted a remote pre-hearing conference on February 25, 2025. On April 9, 2025, I conducted an in-person full evidentiary hearing at the offices of the Commission, located at 100 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA.² The witnesses were sequestered. The hearing was recorded via Webex.³ In May and June 2025 the parties filed proposed decisions, whereupon the administrative record closed.

Findings of Fact

I admitted eight exhibits from the Respondent (R. Exhibits 1-8). I admitted the Stipulated Facts as a joint exhibit. (J. Exhibit 1) Based upon the documents submitted and the testimony of the following witnesses:

² The Standard Adjudicatory Rules of Practice and Procedure, 801 C.M.R. § 1.01 (formal rules), apply to adjudications before the Commission with Chapter 31 or any Commission rules taking precedence.

³ The Commission provided a link to the parties. Should there be a judicial appeal of this decision, the plaintiff in the judicial appeal is obligated to supply the court with a transcript of this hearing to the extent that they wish to challenge the decision as unsupported by substantial evidence, arbitrary or capricious, or an abuse of discretion. In such cases, the plaintiff in the judicial appeal must transcribe the transcript from the Commission's official recording.

Called by the Department:

- Detective Joseph Gorman, Boston Police Department, previously assigned to the Recruit Investigation Unit
- Natasha Levarity, Esq., Director of Human Resources, Boston Police Department

Called by the Appellant:

- Ugochukwu C, Appellant's work supervisor
- Sonji Strothers, Appellant

and taking administrative notice of all pleadings filed in the case, pertinent rules, statutes, regulations, case law and policies, and drawing reasonable inferences from the credible evidence, I make the following findings of fact:

- Sonji Strothers was born and raised in Boston. She holds an associate and a master's degree in criminal justice. She has two children. (Testimony of Appellant)
- 2. Ms. Strothers has prior experience working with individuals with mental health challenges and assisting formerly incarcerated women with reintegration. She currently serves as an assistant supervisor at an organization that provides shelter and social services to homeless individuals. (Testimony of Appellant, Testimony of Mr. C)
- 3. Ms. Strothers is an active member of LLEGO (pronounced at *Jeh-GO*), a Latin advocacy organization that functions as a pre-academy program for the Boston Police Department, where she has contributed to educating young people interested in pursuing law enforcement careers. (Testimony of Appellant)
- 4. Ms. Strothers has always wanted to become a police officer, and comes from a law enforcement background. Her aunt and uncle are retired BPD police officers, and her father is a long-term correction officer. (Testimony of Appellant)

Application / Review Process

- In 2021, Ms. Strothers applied to become a BPD Officer. She received a conditional offer of employment but did not pass the Physical Abilities Test (PAT).
 (Testimony of Appellant)
- 6. On March 16, 2024, Ms. Strothers took and passed the civil service examination for a second time. (Stipulated Facts)
- 7. On July 1, 2024, the state's Human Resources Division (HRD) established an eligible list for Boston Police Officer. On June 28, 2024, HRD issued Certification No. 09999 to the Department, from which it could fill 260 vacancies. (Stipulated Facts)
- 8. Ms. Stothers' name appeared in a tie group ranked 91st on the certification. (Stipulated Facts)
- 9. The Department assigned Det. Joseph Gorman (Det. Gorman) who was detailed to the Recruit Investigation Unit (RIU) in 2021, 2023, and 2024 for the purpose of conducting background investigations of candidates. He was assigned to review the Appellant's application and conduct her background check. (Testimony of Young)
- 10. Det. Gorman met with Ms. Strothers, reviewed her application and POST Questionnaire, and verified her criminal and driving records, neighbors, personal and professional references, and employment history. (R. Exhibit 1; Testimony of Gorman)
- 11. Det. Gorman found that Ms. Strothers had no criminal or school disciplinary history, and that her personal and employment references were all positive. (R. Exhibit 1; Testimony of Gorman)

- 12. Det. Gorman's further review revealed that the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) listed Ms. Strothers as a "relative" of an individual by the name of "D.B." Further investigation revealed that D.B. was convicted and is currently incarcerated on firearm-related offenses and manslaughter. The search also revealed that D.B. was affiliated with a known Boston gang. (R. Exhibit 1)
- 13. Ms. Strothers self-disclosed her relationship with "D.W.," another incarcerated individual, whom she described as her "Godbrother." She explained that D.W. is the Godson of her mother, who raised D.W. since his infancy, and that they grew up together. (Testimony of Gorman, Testimony of Appellant)
- 14. Det. Gorman conducted a search and discovered that D.W. was a member of the same gang as D.B. (R. Exhibit 1; Testimony of Gorman)
- 15. Call logs provided by the County House of Correction (CHC) in question documented that Ms. Strothers facilitated three-way calls between D.B. and individuals not on his approved call list. She sometimes initiated the three-way calls or was added as a third person. Det. Gorman's review of the CHC prison call logs revealed that at least 12 inmates, some with gang affiliations, had contacted Ms. Strothers. (R. Exhibit 1; Testimony of Appellant, Testimony of Gorman)
- Det. Gorman asked Ms. Strothers to clarify her associations with D.B. and D.W. Ms. Strothers stated that D.B. was a high school friend, and that they reconnected only in May 2023, after he was already incarcerated. She admitted speaking to him daily, visiting him twice, and sending funds to his canteen account. She promised to end all contacts with D.B. (R. Exhibit 1; Testimony of Gorman)

- 17. Det. Gorman compiled his findings into a Privileged Confidential

 Memorandum (PCM) for presentation to a roundtable on August 27, 2024. The roundtable

 was comprised of representatives from Human Resources Department (Human

 Resources), the Legal Department and Internal Affairs. Human Resources was represented

 by Natasha Levarity, its Director. (Testimony of Gorman)
- 18. The Roundtable requested that Det. Gorman conduct a discretionary interview with Ms. Strothers to learn more about her associations with identified incarcerated gang members. (Testimony of Gorman, Testimony of Levarity)

 The Appellant's Associations: Discretionary Interview
- On October 31, 2024, Det. Gorman scheduled a video-recorded discretionary interview with Ms. Strothers at the RIU offices in Dorchester. (R. Exhibit 1; Testimony of Gorman)
- 20. During the interview, Ms. Strothers stated that D.W. was her "Godbrother," and was currently incarcerated for armed robbery. She acknowledged knowing about D.W.'s involvement in gang activity and his troubles with the law. (R. Exhibit 1; Testimony of Appellant, Testimony of Gorman)
- 21. Ms. Strothers told Det. Gorman that she had maintained regular contact with D.W. during his incarceration, including frequent phone calls and occasional communication through other inmates when he could not access the phone. She admitted that she attended some of his court hearings, supported him through his troubles with the law, and interacted with his lawyers. However, she denied any discussion of his illegal activity. (R. Exhibit 7; Testimony of Appellant)

- 22. Ms. Strothers reconnected with D.B. after a mutual friend, an inmate in the same facility identified only as R., introduced them. R. would call Ms. Strothers when D.W. could not access the phone. (R. Exhibit 1; Testimony of Appellant)
- 23. After R. was released from incarceration, he facilitated phone contact between Ms. Strothers and D.B. around May 2023. R. described D.B. as generous, supportive of his peers and family, a positive individual and someone who would get along with Ms. Strothers. Ms. Strothers gave R. permission to share her contact information with D.B. (Testimony of Appellant)
- 24. Ms. Strothers stated that she was unaware of D.B.'s criminal history or gang affiliation when she permitted R. to share her phone number with him. However, she later discovered that D.B. was gang affiliated and incarcerated on manslaughter and firearm-related offenses after an online search. She stated she was not aware of R.'s gang affiliation. (Testimony of Appellant, Testimony of Gorman)
- 25. Ms. Strothers told Det. Gorman that while she continued to speak with D.B. daily, and their relationship progressed beyond friendship, she had no intention of becoming romantically involved with him. She said that their conversations focused on family and spirituality, rarely discussing D.B.'s incarceration, except for his admission to the offense of manslaughter although he had allegedly not been present at the crime scene. (Testimony of Appellant)
- 26. Ms. Strothers stated that D.B. suggested the calls mainly to speak with his mother and son. Ms. Strothers understood that three-way calls were a means to reach out to individuals whose phone numbers were not on inmates' list of eligible contacts. Ms.

Strothers also connected D.B. to "one other individual" whom she does not know. (R. Exhibit 4; Testimony of Appellant, Testimony of Gorman)

- 27. Ms. Strothers denied gang-related conversations with D.B. or any of the inmates for whom she facilitated calls. She made those calls often while at work. After adding the other party, she often "muted" herself and set the phone down. She only participated in discussions involving food or jokes. (R. Exhibit 4; Testimony of Appellant, Testimony of Gorman)
- 28. Ms. Strothers acknowledged that she knew that three-way calls violated the CHC policy, but that she did not think that her actions were illegal. She believed there was nothing improper or criminal about speaking with D.B. and believed that he was innocent of the crimes for which he had been sentenced. (Testimony of Appellant, Testimony of Gorman)
- 29. Ms. Strothers found D.B. to be supportive and encouraging of her goals of pursuing a career in law enforcement. She indicated that she did not believe this relationship would negatively impact her application to become a BPD officer. (Testimony of Appellant)
- 30. In August 2024, Ms. Strothers ceased all contact with D.B. after Det. Gorman advised her of the adverse impact of such an association for application. However, she continued speaking with D.W. a few times a week. (R. Exhibit 1; Testimony of Appellant, Testimony of Gorman)

- 31. Although Ms. Strothers was aware that police officers are prohibited from associating with known criminals, she thought that the policy did not apply to her because she was not a police officer. (R. Exhibit 1; Testimony of Appellant)
- 32. Rule 102, Section 39 of the Boston Police Department Rules & Procedures provides, in relevant part:

Department employees shall not associate with persons whom they know, or should know, are persons under criminal investigation, or who have a reputation in the community or in the Department for recent or present involvement in felonious or criminal activities. This rule shall not apply where said associations are necessary in the performance of official duties, or where said associations are unavoidable due to familial relationships of employees.

Bypass Decision

- 33. After the discretionary interview, Det. Gorman updated the PCM and presented it to the roundtable again. (Testimony of Gorman, Testimony of Levarity)
- 34. The roundtable was concerned about Ms. Strothers' judgment and her association with criminals. (J. Exhibit 1; Testimony of Gorman, Testimony of Levarity)
- 35. After deliberation, the roundtable decided to bypass Ms. Strothers. The Department extended offers to approximately 117 applicants, including about 34 candidates ranked below Ms. Strothers. (J. Exhibit 1, R. Exhibits 1 and 8; Testimony of Levarity)
- 36. In a January 13, 2024 letter, Director Levarity informed Ms. Strothers of her bypass. As reasons for the bypass, Director Levarity recited that the Department had concerns with Ms. Strothers' judgment and association with known criminals. (R. Exhibit 8; Testimony of Levarity)
 - 37. In support of the reasons for bypass, Director Levarity cited Ms. Strothers'

direct relationship with D.B., indicted for murder and currently incarcerated. She cited Ms. Strothers' recent contact with him, the fact that she had visited him twice, spoke with him daily, had added funds to his canteen account, and that their relationship had progressed past the "friends" stage. (R. Exhibit 8; Testimony of Levarity)

- 38. Director Levarity also pointed out that D.B. and D.W., Ms. Strothers' godbrother, were gang affiliated. (R. Exhibit 8; Testimony of Levarity)
- 39. Finally, Director Levarity noted that Ms. Strothers' had facilitated "3-way conversations," allowing inmates to speak to individuals who were not on their approved call list. SCHC documented that at least 12 inmates, several with gang ties and serious criminal records, were able to communicate with unauthorized contacts through Ms. Strothers' intervention. (R. Exhibit 8; Testimony of Levarity)
 - 40. Director Levarity concluded:

... Police Officers must behave in a manner consistent with the law that they are sworn to enforce in order to gain and preserve public trust, maintain public confidence, and avoid an abuse of power by law enforcement officials. As a result, your prior conduct and poor judgment deem you unsuitable for employment as a Boston Police Officer.

(R. Exhibit 8)

Applicable Legal Standard

The core mission of Massachusetts civil service law is to enforce "basic merit principles" for "recruiting, selecting and advancing of employees on the basis of their relative ability, knowledge and skills" and "assuring that all employees are protected against coercion for political purposes, and are protected from arbitrary and capricious actions." G.L. c. 31, § 1; see, e.g., Massachusetts Ass'n of Minority Law Enforcement

Officers v. Abban, 434 Mass. 256, 259 (2001); MacHenry v. Civil Serv. Comm'n, 40 Mass.

App. Ct. 632, 635 (1995), rev. den., 423 Mass. 1106 (1996); see also Brookline v. Alston, 487

Mass. 278 (2021) (analyzing broad scope of the Commission's jurisdiction to enforce basic merit principles under civil service law). The civil service system is designed to guard against political considerations, favoritism, and bias in governmental hiring and promotion.

Original appointments of civil service employees are made from a list of candidates, called a "certification", whose names are drawn in the order in which they appear on the applicable civil service "eligible list", using what is called the 2n+1 formula. G. L. c. 31, §§ 6 through 11, 16 through 27; Personnel Administration Rules, PAR.09. To deviate from the rank order of preferred hiring and appoint a person "other than the qualified person whose name appears highest," an appointing authority must provide written reasons – positive, negative, or both – consistent with basic merit principles. See G.L. c. 31, § 27; PAR.08(4). This is commonly referred to as a bypass. "In addition to bypassing a candidate for appropriate negative reasons, an appointing authority may bypass a candidate for positive reasons, as when one police candidate obtains specialty training and assumes specialty responsibilities that another candidate has not." *Carnes v. Norwell*, 34 MCSR 91 (2021).

The Commission's role is to determine whether the appointing authority has shown, by a preponderance of the evidence, that it has "reasonable justification" for the bypass after an "impartial and reasonably thorough review" of the relevant background and qualifications bearing on the candidate's present fitness to perform the duties of the position. Boston Police Dep't v. Civil Serv. Comm'n, 483 Mass. 461, 474-78 (2019); Police Dep't of Boston v. Kavaleski, 463 Mass. 680, 688-89 (2012); Beverly v. Civil Serv. Comm'n,

78 Mass. App. Ct. 182, 187 (2010); *Leominster v. Stratton*, 58 Mass. App. Ct. 726, 727-28 (2003). Reasonable justification means that the appointing authority's actions were based on adequate reasons supported by credible evidence, when weighed by an unprejudiced mind, guided by common sense and by correct rules of law. *Selectmen of Wakefield v. Judge of First Dist. Ct. of E. Middlesex*, 262 Mass. 477, 482 (1928). See also *Commissioners of Civil Serv. v. Mun. Ct. of the City of Boston*, 359 Mass. 214 (1971). "The Commission's role, while important, is relatively narrow in scope: reviewing the legitimacy and reasonableness of the appointing authority's actions." *Beverly*, 78 Mass. App. Ct. at 187 (*citing Falmouth v. Civil Serv. Comm'n.*, 447 Mass. 814, 824-26 (2006)). The Commission owes "substantial deference" to the appointing authority's exercise of judgment in determining whether there was reasonable justification shown. *Beverly*, 78 Mass. App. Ct. at 188.

Analysis

The Department bypassed Ms. Strothers on two grounds: 1) association with criminals, and 2) lack of sound judgment. I find that each reason on its own is sufficient for a bypass. Each ground on its own, if substantiated, is a sufficient basis for bypassing the Appellant.

Bypass Reason 1: Association with Criminals

The record shows that Ms. Strothers maintained contact with D.W., a close relative, and D.B., a high school classmate who was incarcerated for serious criminal offenses,

Both D.W. and D.B. were gang affiliated. Rule 102, Section 39 of the Boston Police Department Rules & Procedures provides:

Department employees shall not associate with persons whom they know, or should know, are persons under criminal investigation, or who have a reputation in the community or in the Department for recent or present involvement in felonious or criminal activities. This rule shall not apply where said associations are necessary in the performance of official duties, or where said associations are unavoidable due to familial relationships of employees.

Ms. Strothers's relationship with D.W. appears rooted in longstanding social and familial ties. She grew up with D.W. in the same household and has maintained contact with him over the years, even though she was aware of his criminal gang activities. There is no evidence that she initiated or facilitated communications for D.W. after his incarceration, nor that she assisted him in circumventing correctional policies or engaging in criminal activity. While she was aware of D.W.'s criminal record and gang affiliation, the Commission has recognized that certain relationships, particularly those arising from family or deep community ties, may be unavoidable. And indeed, BPD Rule 102, § 39 includes a familial exception. Accordingly, Ms. Strothers's association with D.W., standing alone, does not warrant bypass.

In contrast, Ms. Strothers's relationship with D.B. was voluntary and avoidable. She had no contact with D.B. after high school until she allowed an acquaintance, R., to share her phone number with him while he was serving a sentence for serious crimes. Although she claimed she was initially unaware of his criminal history and gang affiliation, she later confirmed that she became aware of these facts through an online search. Despite this knowledge, she continued the relationship and engaged in conduct inconsistent with CHC policies.

Ms. Strothers argues that her neighborhood circumstances made contact with criminals unavoidable. While environmental factors may influence exposure, the inquiry focuses on the nature and voluntariness of the associations. Accepting her argument would imply that all candidates from similar neighborhoods are inherently unfit for police service, a conclusion inconsistent with the merit principles underlying civil service law.

Ms. Strothers engaged in repeated phone communications with D.B., facilitated, and at times initiated, unauthorized three-way calls, despite knowing that such calls violated correctional policy. CHC call logs show that at least twelve incarcerated individuals, some gang-affiliated, contacted Ms. Strothers's number. While she denies discussing criminal matters or knowing about gang-related conversations, her role in arranging unauthorized three-way calls between incarcerated individuals and unapproved contacts raises reasonable concern about the extent of her associations and the appearance of continued ties to criminal activity.

Ms. Strothers further argues that her contact with D.B. was not illegal, that applying Rule 102, § 39 to her is unreasonable because she was not yet a police officer, and that she ceased all contact with D.B. when she realized that her association with him could adversely affect her application. BPD's rule only applies to Department employees and not future employees. However, taking all the facts into consideration, the appropriate inquiry is whether it is reasonable for the Department to be concerned about the risks presented by such a candidate. The Department concluded that the frequency and nature of these contacts, combined with her facilitation of prohibited calls, presented a legitimate concern about her continued associations with individuals engaged in criminal activity.

While Ms. Strothers ceased contact with D.B. in August 2024 after being warned of the potential impact on her candidacy, the short interval between that decision and the Department's review does not demonstrate a sustained change in behavior. Based on the record, the Department reasonably determined that additional time would be necessary before concluding that she had fully severed ties with known criminals and presented no risks of associating with criminals in the future.

The Commission has consistently afforded appointing authorities deference in evaluating candidates against the expectations and requirements of the position. The Commission's role is to determine whether the appointing authority has demonstrated, by a preponderance of the evidence, "reasonable justification" for the bypass, following an impartial and reasonably thorough review of the candidate's background and qualifications as they relate to the candidate's present fitness to perform the duties of the position.

Here, the Department's decision falls within the bounds of reasonable justification and supports its determination to bypass Ms. Strothers for appointment. While BPD Rule 102, Section 39 should not be retroactively applied to her—because she was not a BPD officer at the time she associated with D.B.—her conduct nonetheless raises a legitimate concern that, if appointed, she might engage in associations prohibited by that rule. The Department's concern is supported by the evidence, and its conclusion rests on a reasonable, non-speculative assessment of the likelihood of such conduct recurring.

Notably, Ms. Strothers terminated contact with D.B. promptly after being advised that it could jeopardize her candidacy, indicating a willingness to correct her behavior.

While I find that her conduct raises legitimate concerns presently, this finding does not

foreclose the possibility of rehabilitation or future reconsideration. The Department would bear the burden of showing that these concerns remain valid in justifying any future bypass.

Bypass Reason 2: Lack of Sound Judgment

The Commission has consistently recognized that police officers occupy a position of public trust and must adhere to the highest standards of integrity, character, and judgment. See *Boston Police Dep't v. Civil Serv. Comm'n*, 483 Mass. 461, 474–78 (2019); *Beverly v. Civil Serv. Comm'n*, 78 Mass. App. Ct. 182, 187 (2010). These standards apply during the selection process; background investigations exist to evaluate whether an applicant can meet them from the outset.

Ms. Strothers' facilitation of unauthorized three-way calls presents significant concerns. By knowingly enabling unauthorized communications, she exhibited a disregard for established policies and facilitated violations, which justifiably raises concern for the Department. Her actions were short-sighted. It is possible that her actions endangered safety within the correctional facility. It is possible that her actions resulted in the furtherance of crime outside the correctional facility. It is unlikely that all the three-way calls consisted solely of maintaining familial contact and stability. Considering her intentions for a law enforcement career and her prior understanding that officers are prohibited from associating with criminals, Ms. Strothers could have exercised greater discretion in her relationships.

Although Ms. Strothers testified that she believed her actions were harmless and often "put the phone down" after connecting the parties, she acknowledged knowing that

her conduct violated correctional rules. Her participation created an opportunity for communication between incarcerated individuals and unauthorized persons.

Separate from her facilitation of the unauthorized three-calls, Ms. Strothers stated that her relationship with D.B. was not for romantic purposes or for advancing D.B.'s gang activities, but for friendship and mutual support. While these motives may mitigate intent, they do not negate the underlying concern: a willingness to disregard known policies and minimize their importance. Police officers routinely encounter situations requiring strict adherence to law and procedure. Disregarding rules in personal contexts casts doubt on whether an applicant will uphold them in professional settings.

The timing of Ms. Strothers's decision to end contact with D.B., only after being warned that it could jeopardize her application, further underscores this concern. The short interval between termination of contact and the Department's review does not demonstrate a sustained change in behavior or proactive exercise of judgment.

Ms. Strothers's positive personal attributes, including her education, employment history, community service, and her candor, are commendable but do not eliminate the Department's legitimate concern that currently her past conduct reflects lack of sound judgment connected to the responsibilities of law enforcement.

Ms. Strothers has demonstrated a documented lack of concern for the rules of the SCHC, a paramilitary organization. She now comes for appointment to the Department, another paramilitary organization, after flouting its rules as well. Ms. Strothers' protestations that she did not intend to engage in flagrant rule-breaking are disingenuous.

Therefore, the Department's conclusion that Ms. Strothers lacked the sound judgment required for appointment is supported by credible evidence and provides an independent and reasonable basis for bypass.

Conclusion

Accordingly, the Boston Police Department has proven by a preponderance of the evidence that it had reasonable justification for bypassing Sonji Strothers for the position of permanent full-time police officer. The appeal filed under G1-25-025 is hereby *denied*.

Civil Service Commission

/s/ Angela C. McConney
Angela. C. McConney
Commissioner

By vote of the Civil Service Commission (Bowman, Chair; Dooley, Markey, McConney, and Stein, Commissioners) on August 14, 2025.

Either party may file a motion for reconsideration within ten days of receipt of this Commission order or decision. Under the pertinent provisions of the Code of Mass. Regulations, 801 C.M.R. § 1.01(7)(l), the motion must identify a clerical or mechanical error in this order or decision or a significant factor the Agency or the Presiding Officer may have overlooked in deciding the case. A motion for reconsideration **does not** toll the statutorily prescribed thirty-day time limit for seeking judicial review of this Commission order or decision.

Under the provisions of G.L c. 31, § 44, any party aggrieved by this Commission order or decision may initiate proceedings for judicial review under G.L. c. 30A, § 14 in the superior court within thirty (30) days after receipt of this order or decision. Commencement of such proceeding shall not, unless specifically ordered by the court, operate as a stay of this Commission order or decision. After initiating proceedings for judicial review in Superior Court, the plaintiff, or his / her attorney, is required to serve a copy of the summons and complaint upon the Boston office of the Attorney General of the Commonwealth, with a copy to the Civil Service Commission, in the time and in the manner prescribed by Mass. R. Civ. P. 4(d).

Notice to: James Gilden, Esq. (for Appellant) Omar Bennani, Esq. (for Respondent)