

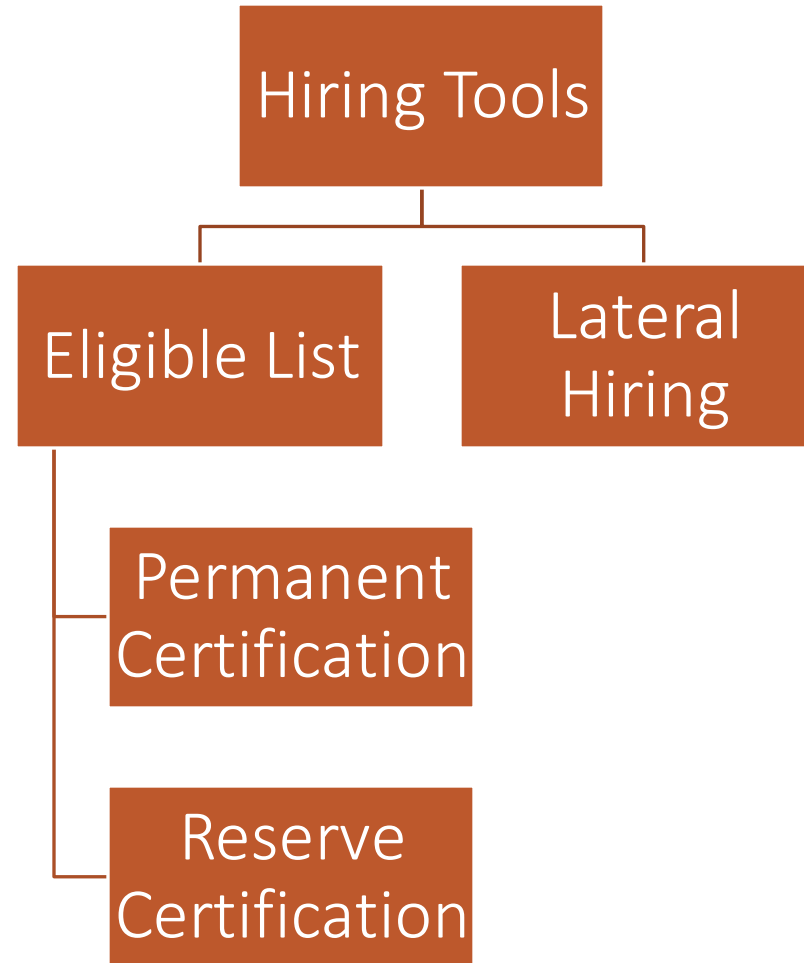
Somerville Assembly Square Fire Station Hiring Update

- Fire Chief Charles Breen
- Chief Administration Officer Lammis J. Vargas
- Human Resources Director Anne Gill

City of Somerville
Mayor Katjana Ballantyne
April 25, 2024



Hiring Tools WITHIN Civil Service





Hiring Tools Within Civil Service

Eligible List – A ranked list of candidates who have taken the civil service exam for either a police officer or firefighter position. Within this list, there are multiple categories of preference that are determined by the Human Resources Division of Massachusetts (HRD), including but not limited to residency and veteran status.

To establish residency preference, Civil Service only requires candidates to reside in the "municipality for the entire 12-month period immediately preceding the date of the examination."

- 1. Permanent Certification** – Candidates referred to Somerville from the Eligible list when requested for existing vacancies.
- 2. Reserve Certification** – Candidates referred to Somerville from the Eligible list when requested for anticipated vacancies. *The city revoked the enabling legislation to allow use of reserve lists currently.

Lateral Transfer – Candidates currently employed as full-time sworn officers or firefighters in other civil service municipalities responding to a published call for vacancies.

- Candidates will have paid for and taken exam, waited on the eligible list for an available position, completed an Academy, and accepted an available position in another civil service municipality.

Using Every Tool to Protect Public Safety



- The City's top priority is to protect both the safety of our community and the health and wellness of current firefighters.
- Assembly Square (ASQ) is home to over 3,000 residents and continues to grow.
- To meet the public safety needs of this new neighborhood, the City is adding a new fire station, which requires 12 full-time firefighters to staff and operate.
- **The station cannot reasonably open relying solely on overtime work**
 - It taxes the mental and physical health of firefighters
 - It hinders continuity and collaboration between shifts
 - It can be challenging to fill overtime shifts when the demand is so high
 - Constant staff rotation negatively impacts quality of service
 - Overtime is not a fiscally responsible way to fully staff a fire station



Permanent Certification Hiring Steps

Step 1: Request List from Civil Service

Step 2: Two week signing & application completion period

- One week signing period starting the day that Civil Service sends list to HR
- Each candidate has one week from signing to submit an application and requested documentation

Orange steps are dependent on entities outside of the city and their timelines.

Step 3: Orientation for candidates once application collection has completed

Step 4: Background checks process starts the day after orientation

Step 5: Interview process starts after background checks have been completed

Step 6: Interview Panel makes recommendation on which candidates to move forward/bypass to Mayor

Step 7: Mayoral approval of selected candidates

Step 8: Decision letters drafted and distributed

Step 9: Hair Sample Drug Screen conducted through external provider

Step 10: Physical and urine sample drug screen conducted through external provider

Step 11: Psychological evaluation conducted through external provider

Step 12: Candidates who have passed all medical screenings go to the Physical Abilities Test (PAT)

Step 13: Once Candidates have passed the PAT; they meet with the Mayor for final Mayoral approval

Step 14: City Council approval

Step 15: If approved, 2-week internal training and Academy (existing backlog is 3-4 months)

- Cannot hold academy seats until conditional offers have been made (Step 8)

Step 16: Begin work



ASQ Station Planning Timeline

March 28, 2023 – Administration conveyed to CAPM the intention to immediately start a hiring process to address vacancies.

April 4, 2023 – Requested a certification list for existing vacancies. The hiring process is near completion and thus far resulted in hiring of 6 candidates, 1 of whom is a disabled veteran. All are currently in academy. Note: Only one certification list can be activated at a time.

June 27, 2023 – Administration presented proposal for station fit-out appropriation to the Finance Committee; City Council approved.

March 28, 2024 – Administration communicated intent to use lateral hiring for police vacancies and ASQ station staffing.

April 1, 2024 – New certification list made available by the Civil Service unit of HRD.

May 2024 – Administration intends to request new certification list for current vacancies.

Summer 2024 – Administration intends to publish a call for lateral firefighters. In the scenario that lateral hiring does not result in a sufficient qualified applicant pool, the number of candidates being sought on the certification list can be expanded.

Estimated Timelines for ASQ Hiring



Estimated start dates for 12 firefighters:

- Lateral hiring only: Feb 2025
- Certification list only: Sept 2025

Factors contributing to timeline difference:

- High volume of candidates to meet this unique need for ASQ station
- Applicants move through the process in a cohort, larger cohorts extend the timeline of some steps
- Academy backlogs
 - Current Academy backlog is 3-4 months
 - Academy seats can only be claimed after a conditional offer is made
- Scheduling for City Staff and City Council



THANK
YOU
