

**BEFORE THE PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD
STATE OF WASHINGTON**

CHRISTINA LINCH,

Appellant,

vs.

WASHINGTON PARKS AND
RECREATION COMMISSION,

Respondent.

CASE NO. R-ALLO-16-001

ORDER OF THE BOARD
FOLLOWING HEARING ON
EXCEPTIONS TO THE
DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR

Hearing on Exceptions. This appeal came before the Personnel Resources Board, NANCY HOLLAND YOUNG, Chair; SUSAN MILLER, Vice Chair; and VICKY BOWDISH, Member, for a hearing on Appellant's exceptions to the director's determination dated January 5, 2016. The hearing was held on May 4, 2016.

Appearances. Appellant Christina Linch was present by telephone and was represented by Teresa Parsons of the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE). Respondent Parks and Recreation Commission was represented by Kayci Brand, Human Resource Consultant.

Background. Appellant requested reallocation of her Parks Interpretive (PI) Specialist position on February 2, 2015, by submitting a Position Review Request (PRR) to Parks' Human Resources (HR). In her PRR, Appellant requested reallocation to a Parks Interpretive (PI) Consultant position.

By letter dated July 1, 2015, Parks notified Appellant that her position was not reallocated to PI Consultant and remained as a PI Specialist. On July 27, 2015, Appellant submitted a request to Office of Financial Management, State HR for a director's review of Parks' determination.

By letter January 5, 2016, the director's designee determined that Appellant's position should remain at the Parks Interpretive Specialist job class.

On February 1, 2016, Appellant filed timely exceptions to the director's determination. In her exceptions, Appellant indicated the scope of her work best fits the duties of the Parks Interpretive Consultant job class.

1 Appellant's exceptions are the subject of this proceeding. Appellant was the Area Interpretive
2 Specialist responsible for operation and assistance in planning for the Upper Cowlitz River
3 Recreation Area (UCRRA) and Mount St. Helens Visitor Center (MSHVC). As summarized in the
4 director's determination, Appellant's position plans, designs, promotes and facilitates interpretive
5 services and special events within UCRRA/MSHVC. Appellant coordinates programs with Parks,
6 other state, federal and county agencies and local groups regarding interpretation of historical,
7 archeological and natural areas. Appellant also coordinates with park management and regional
8 agency staff regarding educational and interpretive programs, events and projects.

9 **Summary of Appellant's Arguments.** Appellant argues her work reached the level of the PI
10 Consultant job class, as she provided expert consultative services to other state, county, and
11 municipal agencies, including the Kelso School District and the US Forest Service. She made
12 recommendations for future plans in such areas as brochures, social media, signage and trails.
13 She also plans, develops and implements special events. Appellant asserts she supervised
14 another PI Specialist and several seasonal Park Aides, which included training and setting work
15 priorities for site interpretations and events. She further asserts that responsibilities around
16 supervision of another PI Specialist placed her position outside the scope of the PI Specialist
17 class. Appellant contends that responsibilities around supervision, scope and impact of her work
18 and the majority of her duties best fit the PI Consultant classification.

19 **Summary of Respondent's Arguments.** Respondent argues that Appellant's overall scope of
20 assigned duties, primary focus, majority of work and delegated authority for performing interpretive
21 work was in UCRRA/MSHVC. Respondent contends the PI Consultant's duties support the
22 agency as a whole, while Appellant's scope of work and assigned duties supported only the
23 UCRRA/MSHVC sites.

24 Respondent further argues that Parks does not have any PI Consultants in any of the State Park
25 areas and that there are only PI Specialists in the individual park areas and interruptive sites state-
26 wide. Respondent stated that Ryan Karlson, Interpretive Program Manager, serves as the
27 statewide interpretive consultant for Parks and provides oversight to PI Specialists and other staff
28 state-wide.

1 Furthermore, Respondent argues supervisory responsibilities are not allocating criteria and
2 therefore do not change the position's allocation. Appellant serves as a liaison between Parks
3 and local groups regarding interpretation of historical, archeological and natural areas and she
4 coordinates programs with other state, federal and county agencies as well as private and non-
5 profit groups. Therefore on a best fit basis, Appellant's position should remain allocated to the PI
6 Specialist class.

7 **Primary Issue.** Whether the director's determination should be affirmed in that the Appellant's
8 position should remain at the PI Specialist job class.

9 **Relevant Classifications.** Parks Interpretive Consultant, job class code 260T; Parks Interpretive
10 Specialist, job class code 260Q.

11 **Decision of the Board.** The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best
12 describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a
13 measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that
14 work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a
15 particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a
16 determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position.
17 See *Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University*, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

18
19 The definition for the Parks Interpretive Consultant classification states:

20 Develops methods of interpreting historical data, natural history and natural
21 settings for the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. Confers
22 with architects, display fabricators, contractors, and field staff to assure
23 compliance with the desired theme and specifications.

24 Provides consultative services to other State, county, and municipal agencies.
25 Plans, researches, develop, and implements site interpretive master plans and
26 programs.

27 The definition of a Parks Interpretive Specialist states:

28 Researches, develops and implements site interpretive master plans and programs.

29 The difference between these two classes is the scope and level of work performed. Most
positions within the civil service system occasionally perform duties that appear in more than one
classification.

1 However, when determining the appropriate classification for a specific position, the duties and
2 responsibilities of that position must be considered in their entirety and the position must be
3 allocated to the classification that provides the best fit overall **for the majority of the position's**
4 **duties and responsibilities.** (Emphasis added). *Dudley v. Dept. of Labor and Industries*, PRB
5 Case No. R-ALLO-07-007 (2007).

6 We have carefully reviewed the documentation submitted during the director's review and
7 considered the arguments presented by the parties at the hearing, before this Board. We find
8 the position is not responsible for consultative services to other State, County and Municipal
9 agencies over 50% of the time. Nor is the purpose of this position to confer with architects,
10 display fabricators, contractors and field staff to ensure compliance with themes and
11 specifications. When comparing the assignment of work and the level of responsibility to the
12 available class specifications, the class series concept (if one exists) followed by definition and
13 distinguishing characteristics are primary considerations. We agree with the director's
14 determination that, the primary focus and responsibility of Appellant's duties were to plan,
15 design, promote and facilitate interpretive services and special events for the Upper Cowlitz
16 River area and Mount St. Helens Visitor Center. As such, the Parks Interpretive Specialist
17 classification provides the best fit for the overall functions, scope of responsibility and purpose of
18 Appellant's position.

19 The best fit concept is used when, for lack of a better fit, the duties and responsibilities of a
20 position do not encompass the full breadth of the duties and responsibilities described by the
21 classification but the classification best describes the level, scope and diversity of the overall
22 duties and responsibilities of the position.

23 See for example, *Salsberry v. Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission*, PRB Case
24 No. R-ALLO-06-013 (2007) and *Allegrì v. Washington State University*, PAB Case No. ALLO-96-
25 0026 (1998).

26 The scope of duties and level of responsibilities assigned to Appellant's position best fit the
27 scope, intent and level of responsibility found in the Parks Interpretive Specialist classification.
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1 Since classification revisions are outside the Board's jurisdiction, we strongly encourage Parks
2 and Recreation Commission to work with the Classification and Compensation staff at State
3 Human Resources to update the Parks Interpretive class series to better reflect the work
4 performed.

5 In a hearing on exceptions, the Appellant has the burden of proof. WAC 357-52-110. Appellant
6 has failed to meet her burden of proof.

7
8 **ORDER**

9 NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Christina Linch is denied
10 and the director's determination dated January 5, 2016, is affirmed.

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13 DATED this _____ day of _____, 2016.

14
15 WASHINGTON PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

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18 _____
NANCY HOLLAND YOUNG, Chair

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20 _____
SUSAN MILLER, Vice Chair

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22 _____
VICKY BOWDISH, Member