



BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Public Safety and Government Operations

Bill 21-0060

Study and Report - Fire Department Promotional Process

Sponsor: *Councilmember Kris Burnett*

Introduced: *April 5, 2021*

Purpose:

For the purpose of requiring that the Baltimore City Fire Department submit a report to the Mayor and City Council evaluating certain promotional practices of the Department; specifying the contents of the report; and providing for a special effective date.

Effective: Date of enactment

Agency Reports

Dept. of Human Resources	
Law Department	
Fire Department	
Baltimore City Administrator	
Labor Commissioner	
Office of Civil Rights and Wage Enforcement	
Dept. of Finance	

Analysis

Background

During the 72nd term of the Baltimore City Council, the Labor committee announced a series of Legislative Oversight hearings (LO 19-0053) to evaluate the Baltimore City Fire Departments staffing, promotional practices, and internal succession planning. During these hearings a plethora of information was shared with the committee that identified numerous internal system failures which lead to the current disparity gaps within the organization.

If enacted, Bill 21-0060 Study and Report – Fire Department Promotional Practices would require the agency to submit a report to the Mayor and City Council no later than 120 days from enactment evaluating the department’s supervisory promotional examination process as specified in subsection (b) of this legislation.

Promotional Tracks (See Promotional Track Diagrams on Page 6 & 7)

Emergency Medical Services and Fire Suppression incidents are the two most visible services that the fire department provides to the residents of Baltimore City. Those two divisions account for 1,400 of the agencies 1,700 personnel. The fire department also has two other supervisory promotional tracks in the Office of the Fire Marshal and the Office of Safety and Risk Management that are siloes outside of the standard testing processes.

Each one of these offices hold their own promotional test where the minimum requirements to participate in the process, and the actual test itself are both created “in house” by the unit commander. The test that is offered in the Office of the Fire Marshal is only open to the people who are assigned to that office. The test for Captain in the Office of Safety and Risk Management is only open to people who are assigned to that office.

The fire department has people who hold other supervisory positions in the Office of the Fire Chief, the Information Technology/Emergency Communications Division, and the Training Division who have never participated in any promotional process, and were appointed to civil service ranks and command staff positions without ever taking an examination. Currently, the fire department spends over **\$2 million dollars annually on these 21 supervisory/management positions in “specialized units”**. The problem is that these silo tracks limit the department’s ability to utilize these individuals in other capacities because they aren’t authorized to supervise personnel outside of their specialty area.

Promotional Preference Points

The fire department’s promotional examination process for the rank of Lieutenant, Captain, and Battalion consist of an oral and written test that is weighted at 90% of the overall score, and candidates receive a seniority rating that is worth up to 10% depending on their years of service. Candidates are required to make a combined converted score of not less than 70 on a scale of 100 on written or oral portion of the examination.

In 2015, the Baltimore City Fire Department entered into phase one of their new promotional requirements. These new standards require interested candidates to having certain Incident Command Training, Fire Officer courses, and a certain number of college credits to participate and sit for promotional examinations. Since implementing this process

the fire department has seen some decline in the total number of participants as a result of the educational requirement. A system that could be more inclusive would be a preference point system for education, residency, and seniority. All three preference components would be favored into a candidate's final score after the written and oral test were calculated. This system would re-open up the process to all employees, but it would add an incentive to those candidates who had college credits, lived in Baltimore City, and were veterans of the agency. In this testing process the written component would be weighed at 40%, and the oral board portion would be weighed at 40% for a combined overall weight of 80%. The preference points would account for the final 20% points on a 100% scale. An example of how preference points would be calculated can be seen below:

Educational Preference System:

15 – 30 Credits	2% Points
30 – 60 Credits	4% Points
60 – 90 Credits	6% Points
90 – 120 Credits	8% Points
Any Advanced Level Degree – Master’s and Above	10% Points

Residency Preference System:

Baltimore City Residents and Registered Voters	5% Points
---	-----------

Seniority Preference System:

0 – 5 Years of Service	1% Point
6 – 10 Years of Service	2% Points
11 – 15 Years of Service	3% Points
16 – 20 Years of Service	4% Points
21 Years and Over	5% Points

Battalion Chief Rank – Equity Assessment

Fire Suppression – Promotional Data

RANK	Total Number	Females	White or Caucasian	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino
Battalion Chief	31	1	27	4	0	0
Captain	63	2	53	10	0	0
Lieutenant	167	6	125	40	0	1 (1 OTHER)

Emergency Medical Services – Promotional Data

RANK	Total Number	Females	White or Caucasian	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino
Battalion Chief	6	2	5	1	0	0
Captain	12	9	10	2	0	0
Lieutenant	21	6	16	5	0	0

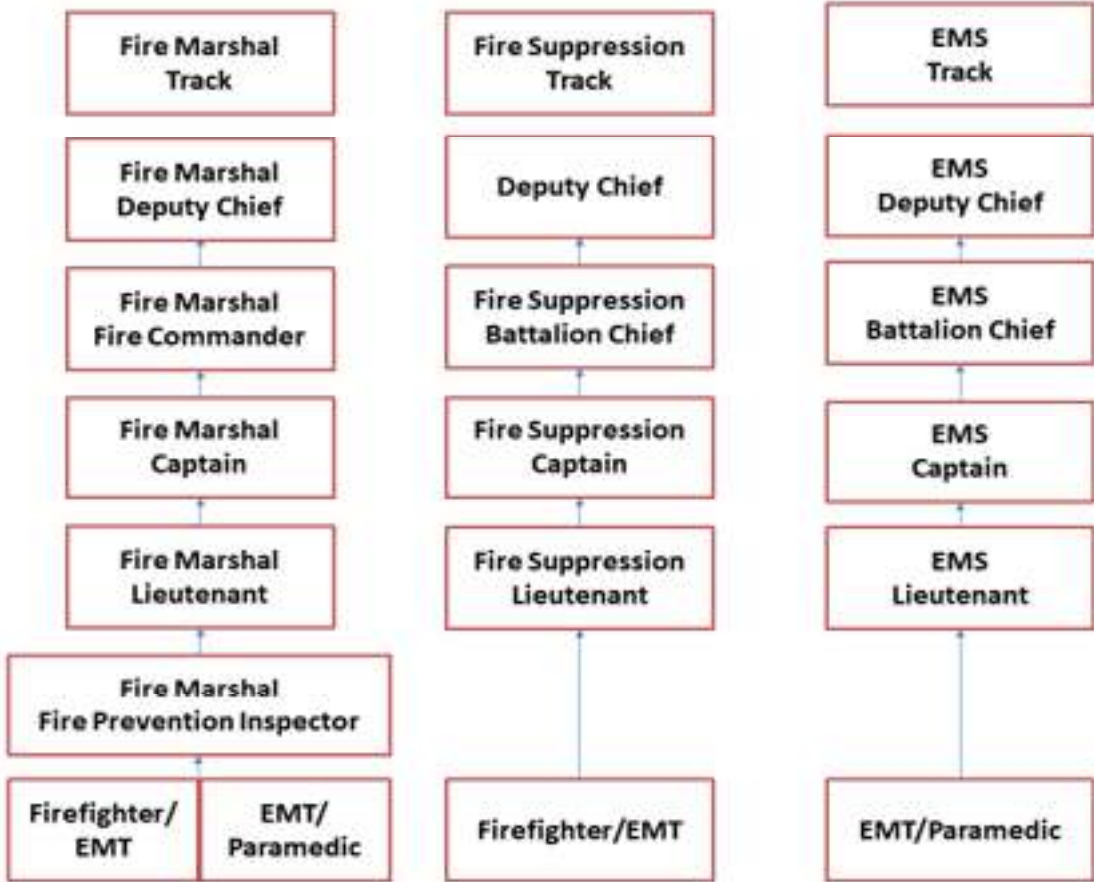
The rank of Battalion Chief is the third level of supervisory authority in the Baltimore City Fire Department. In comparison, Battalion Chief’s would be equivalent to Police Captain’s within the Baltimore Police Department. The distinct difference between the two is that Battalion Chief’s maintain civil service status, and Police Captains are at-will introductory members of the police departments command staff. But that wasn’t always the case, prior to 1993 the rank of Police Captain was majority white males, and it also was a civil service position where candidates competed on written and oral test to make the eligibility list. Many retired black police commanders who are members of the Vanguard Justice Society point to the conversion of Police Captain from a civil service rank to an at-will command staff position as the policy change that opened the door for more blacks and women to join the command staff of the department.

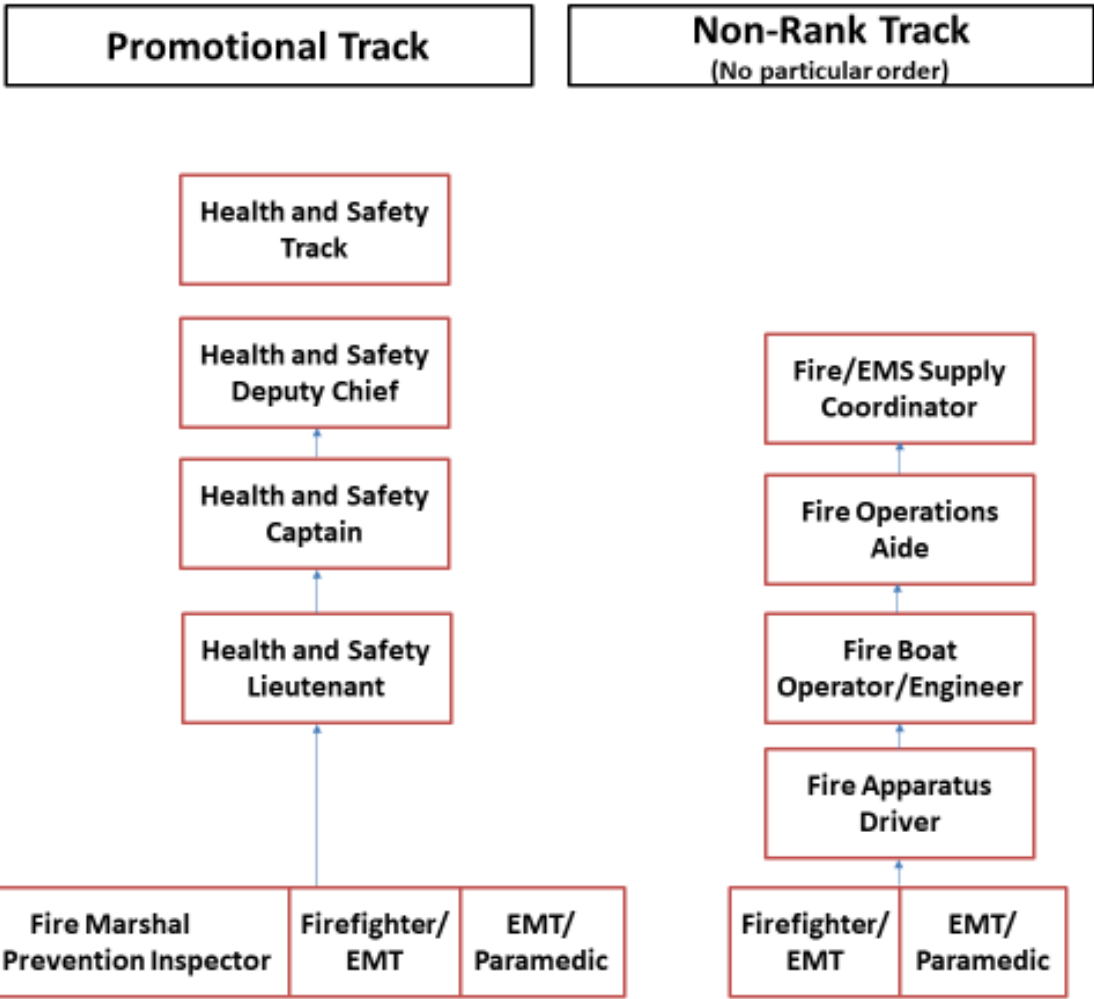
In the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Battalion Chief rank is the gateway to the command staff in many instances. Given the years of service requirements to participate in the promotional testing process, candidates could make Battalion Chief as early as 7-years into their career. Now, while that has never happened, there are currently six Battalion Chiefs who were promoted with between 10 – 13 years of service on at their time of appointment. That means with the new retirement eligibility moving to 25 years of service, those individuals could hold those positions from 12 – 15 years creating a bottleneck in the system. To understand the reality of this situation, there is currently a Battalion Chief who was promoted to that rank with 16 years of service on, and has remained a Battalion Chief for the last 30-years. So as we discuss equity in terms of access to opportunity, making the rank of Battalion Chief an appointed at-will command staff position would provide the Fire Chief with the discretion to promote a broader demographic of candidates, and not just in terms of race and gender, but also in age. The fire department has a plethora of young talent that could move the department forward, but when the average Battalion Chief has 26 years of service on with the department, stays in the position for at least 6-years, and is a white male it makes it very hard to get a diversity of opinion in the decision-making process.

2020 – Battalion Chief Data

Name	Assignment	Hire Date – Year of Service	Race/Gender	Promotion Date Time in Grade
Kevin Hook	EMS	3/28/2001 – 20	White/Male	4/15/2020 – 11 mo.
Timothy Cullen	EMS	6/18/2003 – 17	White/Male	4/15/2020 – 11 mo.
Raymond Bartock	EMS	3/28/2001 – 20	White/Male	6/12/2019 – 21 mo.
Jalonda Johnson	EMS	7/12/1999 – 21	Black/Female	7/1/2017 – 3 yrs.
William McCarren	EMS	1/18/1988 – 33	White/Male	10/21/2015 – 5 yrs.
Theresa Harp	EMS	5/20/1991 – 29	White/Female	6/24/2009 – 11 yrs.
Richard Parker	Suppression	2/22/1994 – 27	White/Male	9/4/2019 – 18 mo.
William Britcher	Suppression	4/22/1985 – 35	White/Male	10/5/2016 – 4 yrs.
Harry Lancellotti	Suppression	10/29/1997 – 23	White/Male	12/11/2019 – 1yr.
John Ellis	Suppression	2/22/1994 – 27	White/Male	7/1/2015 – 5 yrs.
Kenneth Haag	Suppression	8/9/1982 – 38	White/Male	7/7/1999 – 21yrs.
Louis Lago	Suppression	12/9/1985 – 35	White/Male	3/7/2007 – 14yrs.
John Eid	Suppression	2/19/1998 – 23	White/Male	12/16/2015 – 5yrs.
Frank Farrell	Suppression	8/25/1986 – 34	White/Male	10/10/2012 – 8yrs.
David Goldman	Suppression	12/29/1986 – 34	White/Male	3/30/2011 – 10yrs.
Joshua Fannon	Suppression	12/13/2004 – 16	White/Male	12/17/2014 – 6yrs.
Sherman Braxton	Suppression	8/13/2003 – 17	Black/Male	3/4/2020 – 1yr.
Charles Browning	Suppression	7/20/1970 – 50	White/Male	6/30/2004 – 16yrs.
Michael Rudasill	Suppression	5/4/1998 – 22	White/Male	9/1/2010 – 10yrs.
Stephen Canter	Suppression	11/11/1974 – 46	White/Male	5/30/1990 – 30yrs.
Chris Hutson	Suppression	5/4/1998 – 22	White/Male	7/27/2016 – 4yrs.
William Hoffman	Suppression	5/5/1980 – 40	White/Male	10/9/2002 – 18yrs.
Jacob Van Gelder	Suppression	5/4/1998 – 22	White/Male	5/29/2019 – 22 mo.
Glenn Kukucka	Suppression	9/30/1985 – 35	White/Male	7/16/2014 – 6yrs
Charles Grantland	Suppression	11/13/2006 – 14	White/Male	5/29/2019 – 22mo.
Jason Goodwin	Suppression	1/15/2003 – 18	White/Male	8/23/2017 – 3yrs.
Ronald Hudgins	Suppression	2/22/1994 – 27	White/Male	3/14/2012 – 9yrs.
James Beebe	Suppression	7/20/1987 – 33	White/Male	4/13/2011 – 10yrs.
Jarrett Stafford	Suppression	2/22/1994 – 27	Black/Male	7/27/2016 – 4yrs.
Kensington White	Suppression	11/15/2004 – 16	Black/Male	7/1/2017 – 3yrs.
Aaron Wodka	Suppression	1/17/2001 – 20	White/Male	7/8/2020 – 20 mo.
Ronald Brown	Suppression	8/9/1982 – 38	White/Male	6/23/2010 – 10yrs.
John Macken	Suppression	1/7/2002 – 19	White/Male	2/5/2020 – 1yr.
John Gregory	Suppression	3/31/1997 – 24	White/Male	2/5/2020 – 1yr.
Earl Taft	Suppression	3/26/1990 – 31	Black/Male	11/6/2013 – 7yrs.
Kirk Thomas	Suppression	9/18/1995 – 25	White/Male	11/5/2014 – 6yrs.
Mya McConnell	Suppression	2/18/2005 – 16	White/Male	12/13/2017 – 3yrs.
Mark Ruff	Suppression	9/3/1993 – 27	White/Male	8/23/2006 – 14yrs.
Averages	Suppression	26 years	White/Male	6 years

Promotional Tracks





Additional Information

Fiscal Note: Not Available

Information Source(s): Baltimore City Fire Department

Analysis by: Samuel Johnson, Jr.
 Analysis Date: May 10, 2021

Direct Inquiries to: (410) 396-1091