

April 24, 2009

To: Teresa Parsons
Director's Review Program Supervisor

FROM Meredith Huff, SPHR
Director's Review Investigator

SUBJECT: Carolyn Petersen v. Department of Transportation (DOT)
Allocation Review No. ALLO-08-044

Director's Review Conference

Ms. Petersen requested a Director's Review of her position's allocation by submitting a Request for Director's Review received July 22, 2008. On March 3, 2009, I conducted a Director's review conference by phone. Present by phone were Ms. Petersen, employee; Ms. Jennifer Mason, Senior Field Representative, WFSE representing Ms. Petersen; and Ms. Niki Pavlicek, Classification and Compensation Manager, representing DOT. During the review conference, it was confirmed by Ms. Pavlicek that the review period for Ms. Petersen's position is twelve months prior to December 27, 2007 in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement.

Director's Determination

The Director's review of DOT's allocation determination of Ms. Petersen's position is complete. The review was based on written documentation, classifications and information gathered during the review conference. As the Director's investigator, I have carefully reviewed all of the file documentation, classifications and the information provided during the review conference. I concluded that on a best fit of her overall duties and responsibilities, Ms. Petersen's position is properly allocated to the class of Fiscal Technician 2.

Background

Ms. Petersen works in the WSDOT Northwest Region Area 5 Maintenance office. On December 27, 2007, Ms. Petersen submitted to the DOT NW Region Human Resources office a Classification Questionnaire (CQ) for her position, #10370. The supervisor section of the CQ was signed by Ms. Cindy Jones, Secretary Supervisor, immediate supervisor, and Mr. Jim McBride, Maintenance Superintendent, second-level supervisor. Ms. Petersen believed her position should be reallocated from Fiscal Technician 2 to the Fiscal Analyst 2 or Fiscal Specialist 2 classifications.

By letter dated June 23, 2008, Ms. Pavlicek notified Ms. Petersen that her position was properly allocated as a Fiscal Technician 2 and denied her request for reallocation to the Fiscal Analyst 2 or Fiscal Specialist 2. (Exhibit B-a) On July 22, 2008, on behalf of Ms. Petersen, Ms. Mason submitted a Request for Director's Review form. (Exhibit A-1)

Summary of Ms. Petersen's comments

Ms. Petersen explained that she is the Fiscal Technician for the WSDOT Northwest Area 5 Maintenance which covers the area from the King/Snohomish county lines to South Center. She noted there are approximately 83 employees in this unit. The majority of the unit's work deals with road maintenance.

As an example of "*professional financial review and analysis*", Ms. Petersen indicated she is in charge of tracking and analyzing the utilities' bills. If there are surges in the water bills, it could be from a broken pipe, or if there are large drops in the electric bill, the tunnel lights may be out. She reports fluctuations to her supervisor, who informs the superintendent, who has the problem investigated. Ms. Petersen noted she also keeps an eye on the prices of goods purchased to ensure they are in line with contracts. For example, Ms. Petersen discussed a contract for gloves. She made sure that purchases were within the correct contract for specifications, materials, and price. Ms. Petersen confirmed she does not have responsibility for negotiating contracts. She stated her role is to assist with contract compliance.

Ms. Petersen verified that she independently reviews all purchase orders for Area 5 for the proper signatures, contract and prices. She audits invoices and determines correct vendor coding. The superintendent signs all purchase and payment paperwork. Ms. Petersen tries to resolve any problems prior to the papers going to the superintendent.

Ms. Petersen indicated that occasionally she is involved with the development of internal accounting procedures, such as the recently revised procedures for handling VISA [credit] cards. Ms. Petersen indicated she is authorized to initiate internet vendor payments with the purchasing credit card (limit \$45,000). She is the "keeper" of the cards. When bills come in, she will try to direct payment onto the VISA cards as much as possible as the State receives a rebate on the card use.

Ms. Petersen discussed her role in reviewing, analyzing and verifying accounting data input into the state-wide TRAINS program, an accounting system specific to DOT. It has information on all projects such as the dollars allocated, payments, vendor and payment voucher information. Ms. Petersen observed that she analyzes trends in spending, overall expenses, and the use of capital and reports those trends to her supervisor.

Ms. Petersen also spends time resolving discrepancies with vendors, for example, when a receipt does not match the same amount as on the account. Recently Ms. Petersen worked with a vendor for coveralls when the payments were not applied accurately to the accounts. She obtained copies of checks to prove the payment had been made; she kept track of who and when she talked to people about the account, and kept

involved in trying to get the payments applied correctly until the situation got to the point where it was too expensive to go further. At that point she recommended to her supervisor that they stop trying to correct the error.

Ms. Petersen indicated that she has created spreadsheets to simplify the work and increase efficiency for her position and for others. A few examples include mileage for cars; sand and gravel orders with conversion table and expanded process for inventory, payroll tracking and break down for specific programs; payroll final tally which helps in finding error and compliance; and overhead cost changes. As other areas ask for help, she provides assistance with spreadsheets.

Ms. Petersen noted that she feels her duties and responsibilities are a higher level than the Fiscal Technician 2.

Ms. Mason, on behalf of Ms. Petersen, confirmed her belief that Ms. Petersen's responsibilities were at a higher level than Fiscal Technician 2.

Summary of DOT's comments

Ms. Pavlicek noted Ms. Petersen is an accomplished employee. She indicated that the decision explained in the determination letter stands based on work assigned to Ms. Petersen's position. Ms. Pavlicek stated that Ms. Petersen's position clearly falls within the Fiscal Technician series and the Fiscal Technician 2 is the best fit for Ms. Petersen's position.

Rationale for Director's Determination

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

In Salsberry v. Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-06-013 (2007), the Personnel Resources Board addressed the concept of *best fit*. The Board referenced Allegri v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. ALLO-96-0026 (1998), in which the Personnel Appeals Board noted that while the appellant's duties and responsibilities did not encompass the full breadth of the duties and responsibilities described by the classification to which his position was allocated, on a best fit basis, the classification best described the level, scope and diversity of the overall duties and responsibilities of his position.

Glossary of Classification and Compensation Terms

In reviewing this position, I have considered the following terms. The Department of Personnel's (DOP) Glossary of Classification and Compensation Terms defines these

terms. The link to the website is:

<http://www.dop.wa.gov/CompClass/CompAndClassServices/Pages/HRProfessionalTools.aspx>

Nature of Work. Basic types of work assignments performed by a class:

Professional – Performs work that requires consistent application of advanced knowledge usually acquired through a college degree in a recognized field, work experience, or other specialized training. Exercises discretion and independent judgment when performing assignments. Examples include, but are not limited to, social workers, psychologists, registered nurses, economists, teachers or instructors, human resource consultants, accountants, and information system analysts.

Technical – Specialized knowledge or skills gained through academic or vocational courses offered in technical and community colleges, or equivalent on-the-job training.

Classification Questionnaire (CQ)

On the classification questionnaire, Ms. Petersen lists her duties as follows, in part.

77% Performs professional level financial review and analysis of accounting data under the general direction of Northwest Region Area 5 Maintenance Secretary Supervisor in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and State statutes and regulations. The duties include but are not limited to the following: [Underline indicates most responsible duty.]

- Independently analyze, interpret and ensure compliance to WSDOT Purchasing Manual, WSDOT Chart of Accounts, Consumable Inventory Manual, and other . . . directives, policies, procedures, contracts and agreements . . . ascertain the appropriate level of authority for payment approval. Assist the Secretary Supervisor in developing and implementing accounting procedures.
- Audit invoices for accuracy and determine appropriate vendor coding . . . Resolve discrepancies with vendors, ...Initiate vendor payments ...utilizing Area 5 purchasing card with a \$45,000 credit limit. Review, analyze and verify the accounting data input into TRAINS. .. or the State purchasing card program (Paymentnet).Coordinate receipt of goods/service ... Build and maintain various complex excel spreadsheets, charts, and graphs. Office expert with MS Excel application.
- Responsible for tracking all purchasing cards. . .
- Review, analyze and audit bank confirmations, receipts and disbursement of revenue. . .Transfer funds from private funds to State agency fund. Reconcile. . petty cash records. Track and request KI work orders for third party damages...in excess of \$650,000 annually. Audit inventory...Perform queries...in response to inventory status questions.
- Review payroll documents ensuring compliance...Process payroll data for Area 5 Maintenance employees ensuring accuracy...Advise supervisor of document adjustments and retrieve... verification. Process data in...HRMS payroll systems... Resolve discrepancies, review payroll register and warrants for accuracy, identify and assist the distribution of pay . . .

10% Maintain office flow in absence of management personnel. In supervisor's absence, may assume duties...[of] Secretary Supervisor, assist field employees with Human Resource and payroll info, process emergency field orders (can be upwards of \$40,000 per order) ... investigate and research the internet to assist customers, disseminate information. . . Respond, route or take messages as needed, Utilize... (ATMS) to access employee training matrix, class verification, or register employees for classes.

8% Interpret legal and permissible specification for multiple types of commercial transport vehicles. Issue...special motor vehicle permits. Verify routes ... and customer information utilizing E-SNOOPI ...online permitting system. Disseminate reliable permitting specifics as requested.

5% Other duties as assigned.

Ms. Jones, immediate supervisor, indicated on the CQ that she provides supervision at the level of "spot check basis only" for Ms. Petersen's position. (Exhibit B-b)

Classifications Reviewed

Fiscal Specialist 1 (FS1) (Class code 151E)

The **Class Series Concept** for the Fiscal Specialist series states: *"Provide administrative support to administrator or manager in the area of fiscal and/or business management. Apply principles of financial management to perform such functions as record keeping, auditing, analysis, budgeting, payroll, travel, purchasing and other types of fiscal operations."*

Ms. Petersen's position does not provide administrative support to an administrator or manager in the area of fiscal and/or business management. Ms. Petersen reports to Ms. Cindy Jones, Secretary Supervisor. Ms. Jones reports to Jim McBride, Maintenance Superintendent. Mr. McBride supervises the Northwest Region Area 5 Maintenance Shop. Ms. Petersen's position's duties and responsibilities for fiscal functions such as auditing, analysis, and budgeting do not reach the level of scope and impact anticipated in a position that supports an administrator or manager in the area of fiscal or business management. The technical expertise required of Ms. Petersen's position does not reach the level of fiscal analysis, planning and interpreting that is expected in a position allocated to the Fiscal Specialist series. The Fiscal Specialist class series is not the best fit for Ms. Petersen's position.

Fiscal Analyst 1 (FA1) (class code 143I)

The **Class Series Concept for the Fiscal Analyst** series states, in part: *"Positions in this occupational group conduct a variety of financial reviews and analysis of fiscal, grants, contracts or other financial data in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principals [sic] (GAAP). These are professional positions which analyze and interpret what the fiscal information means to draw conclusions and trends based upon that data... The majority of work assigned to professional positions does not involve verifying the accuracy of the fiscal data or the routine collection, reviewing and*

posting of fiscal record keeping tasks according to established procedures as contained in the office, fiscal or budget support group. . . .”

The nature of work assigned to Ms. Petersen’s position is *technical* rather than *professional* as defined by the *DOP Glossary of Classification and Compensation Terms*. Ms. Petersen’s position is assigned significant duties and responsibilities for verifying the accuracy of fiscal records, as well as collecting, reviewing and posting of fiscal records for Area 5 Maintenance Shop. The level of responsibility and scope of the duties assigned to Ms. Petersen’s position do not meet the requirements of the Class Series Concept for the Fiscal Analyst series. The Fiscal Analyst series is not the best match for the duties and responsibilities assigned to Ms. Petersen’s position.

Fiscal Technician 1 (FT1) (class code 148L)

The **Class Concept for the Fiscal Technician** series states, in part: *“Positions perform ongoing, routine and repetitive fiscal tasks in a manual or automated system. ...Positions prepare, review, verify, and process fiscal, accounting, budget, book or record keeping documents. Performs computing, calculating financial, statistical and numerical data to maintain accounting, budgeting, purchasing, payroll records and reports. Records details of fiscal or business transactions in an increasing automated fiscal computer enhanced environment. This series is not responsible for in-depth analyzing or interpreting fiscal or budgetary data, rules or regulations, or designing automated fiscal systems. This series provides fiscal support to a variety of professional classes found in the fiscal analyst occupational category.”*

Ms. Petersen’s assigned duties and responsibilities involve purchasing, payroll, and other general accounting areas. She prepares, reviews, records and verifies fiscal record-keeping documents in manual and automated systems. Ms. Peterson’s position’s assigned responsibilities include computing and calculating financial and numerical data to maintain accounting, budgeting, purchasing, and payroll records and reports for the Area 5 Maintenance Shop. In comparing the Class Series Concept and the duties and responsibilities assigned to Ms. Petersen’s position, I find that her position fits within the Class Series Concept for the Fiscal Technician series.

The **Definition** of the Fiscal Technician 1 class states in part: *“This is the entry level of the series. Performs routine fiscally related work using established procedures under close to general supervision....”*

Ms. Petersen’s position’s responsibilities require broader knowledge than is expected for an entry level position. Ms. Petersen’s position is provided a level of supervision described as “spot checked basis only”. The Fiscal Technician 1 is not the best fit for Ms. Petersen’s position.

Fiscal Technician 3 (FT3) (class code 148N)

The **Definition** for the Fiscal Technician 3 states: *“Provide fiscal support using independent judgment in the interpretation and application of a variety of rules and procedures in specialized fiscal functions, such as internal control, revolving fund maintenance control, and providing resource data for reports.”*

The Classification Questionnaire describes a variety of financial review and analysis of accounting data that is assigned to and accomplished by Ms. Petersen. The descriptions are for a wide variety of financial review and analysis involving vendors, purchasing (credit) cards, payroll, inventory, and preparation of accounting reports. The responsibilities and duties assigned to Ms. Petersen’s position are not in a specialized fiscal function such as internal control, revolving fund maintenance control or providing resource data for reports as anticipated by the Definition of the Fiscal Technician 3 class. The Fiscal Technician 3 class is not the best fit for the overall duties and responsibilities assigned to Ms. Petersen’s position.

Fiscal Technician 2 (FT2) (class code 148M)

The **Definition for the FT2 states:** *“This is the journey, occupational or working level of the series. Incumbents work independently or under general supervision and often perform one or more fiscal support functions. Positions provide support in the area of fiscal, budget, or financial business areas. Apply principles of established procedures in recording, summarizing, and reporting fiscal activities in a variety of work areas such as; recordkeeping, auditing, analysis, budgeting, payroll, travel, purchasing, and other types of fiscal operations. Prepare and maintain fiscal records while compiling and ensuring the accuracy of reports...”*

While not allocating criteria, the Typical Work provides further description of the work typically performed by incumbents allocated to the Fiscal Technician 2 classification. In summary, a Fiscal Technician 2 performs the breadth of work necessary to complete activities such as maintain purchasing records and resolve problems; review, approve and allocate purchases to proper budget and category; ensure compliance with departmental, institutional, and/or granting agency policies, rules, and regulations; maintain personnel and payroll records; ensure the accuracy of personnel and payroll action documents; ensure compliance with state and institution regulations and procedures; maintain accounts and records; and authorize and enter fiscal transactions.

The majority of Ms. Petersen’s work time is spent in completing activities such as financial record preparation, review, verification, maintenance, audit, recording, and processing. She verifies information and processes payroll for approximately 83 employees using the HRMS payroll system. She issues and tracks the funds from vehicle road use permits. She analyzes and verifies the accounting data input into the TRAINS system. Ms. Petersen creates Excel spreadsheets to facilitate tracking of some accounting functions such as the superintendent’s mileage accumulation, sand and gravel conversion and

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inventory; road damage and overhead cost charges. She purchases supplies, reviews billings for accuracy and appropriate discounts and makes payments.

This position's scope of responsibility and assigned duties are encompassed in the Definition and supported by the Typical Work statements of the Fiscal Technician 2 class. Ms. Petersen's position is correctly allocated as Fiscal Technician 2.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following, in part:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board . . . Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

cc: Jennifer Mason, WFSE
Niki Pavlicek, DOT
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: Exhibits List

Exhibits List

A. Filed by WFSE July 22, 2008:

1. Director's Review Form received July 22, 2008.
2. Classification Questionnaire signed December 2007.
3. Essential Job Functions form, December 2007
4. Essential Job Knowledge and Skills form, December 2007
5. DOT allocation determination dated June 23, 2008

B. Letter filed by DOT September 18, 2008 with exhibits:

- a. DOT Allocation Determination Letter dated June 23, 2008
- b. Classification Questionnaire submitted and signed Dec. 27, 2007
- c -1. Fiscal Technician 1 (148L) Classification Specs
2. Fiscal Technician 2 (148M) Classification Specs
- d. 1. Fiscal Analyst 1 (143I) Classification Specs
2. Fiscal Analyst 2 (143J) Classification Specs
- e. 1. Fiscal Specialist 1 (151E) Classification Specs
2. Fiscal Specialist 2 (151F) Classification Specs
- f. Employee's exhibits used in DOT determination:
 - F-1 May 27, 2008 email from Carolyn Peterson
 - F-2 Cell phone charting
 - F-3 Cell phone charting page 2
 - F-4 Cell phone charting page 3
 - F-5 Cell phone charting page 4
 - F-6 Mileage charting
 - F-7 Mileage charting page 2
 - F-8 May 24, 2008 email from Carolyn Peterson
 - F-9 Accounts payable description
 - F-10 Accounts payable description page 2
 - F-11 Job functions performed
 - F-12 Job functions performed page 2
 - F-13 May 16, 2008 email from Carolyn Peterson
 - F-14 List of duties and responsibilities
 - F-15 Visa expense charting
 - F-16 List of spreadsheets developed
 - F-17 Classification Questionnaire position #10370, undated
 - F-18 College certificate
 - F-19 Field order spreadsheets

C. Fiscal Technician 3 (class code 148N)