

STATE OF WISCONSIN

PERSONNEL COMMISSION

* * * * *

MICHAEL J. FORD

Appellant,

v.

Secretary, DEPARTMENT OF
EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS,

Respondent.

Case No. 84-0032-PC

* * * * *

DECISION
AND
ORDER

NATURE OF THE CASE

This is an appeal pursuant to §230.44(1)(a) of the denial of a request for reclassification from Management Information Supervisor 6 (MI Sup 6) to Management Information Supervisor 7 (MI Sup 7). A hearing was held on June 28, 1984, and the parties were permitted to file post-hearing briefs.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times relevant to this appeal, appellant has been employed in the classified service by the Office of Information Systems, Department of Health and Social Services, as a Management Information Supervisor 6.

2. In February of 1982, appellant filed a request with the Department of Health and Social Services that his position be reclassified to the MI Sup 7 level. In a memorandum to William Shelton, Director of the Office of Information Systems, dated December 17, 1982, William Kuntz of the Bureau of Personnel and Employment Relations of DHSS indicated that the determination had been made that appellant's position was more appropriately classified at the MI Sup 6 level and that appellant could request a review of such determination by submitting a written request which DHSS

would forward to the Department of Employment Relations. Appellant requested a review of DHSS's determination and, in a letter to appellant dated January 19, 1984, DER upheld DHSS's determination and denied appellant's request for reclassification. On February 20, 1984, appellant filed a timely appeal of such denial with the Commission.

3. Appellant is responsible for managing the Technical Support Section of the Office of Information Systems. The duties and responsibilities of appellant's position are as set forth in Appellant's Exhibit 5, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference as if fully set forth as a part of this finding. The Technical Support Section is primarily responsible for the 8100 minicomputer system, a system of 30 minicomputers with 350 terminals located throughout the state. The 8100 minicomputer system is used only by the Department of Health and Social Services, utilizes one software language, does not perform computations on the data fed into it, and processes ten applications.

4. There are four regional computing centers within the state system. The one utilized by the Department of Health and Social Services is the Wilson Street Regional Computing Center (WSRCC). The main frame computer in the WSRCC is used by 30 agencies, utilizes 12 major software languages and two data base control systems, processes hundreds of applications, and performs computations on the data fed through the 8100 system into the main frame computer and on data from other sources. At the time of appellant's reclassification request, the main frame computer of the WSRCC was an IBM 3033 computer. In February of 1983, this was replaced by an IBM 3081 computer.

5. The main frame computer at the WSRCC is a more complex computer system than the 8100 minicomputer system and the technical support of the

main frame is a more complex support function than the technical support of the 8100 system. Although appellant has been assigned to work on the WSRCC main frame, these assignments have been either temporary in nature or have not constituted a significant portion of his duties. Appellant's expert witness testified that, generally, main frame technical support is not necessarily more complex because the vendor usually provides a great deal of assistance as a result of the enormous cost of such main frame computers, because it is more likely that software packages are available for a main frame than for a minicomputer, because the more primitive language that is used with the minicomputer may actually make designing applications for a minicomputer more difficult than for a main frame, and because the more rapid changes in minicomputer technology than in main frame technology may make it more difficult to keep up-to-date on mini-computer technology. However, the record indicates that the vendor of the 8100 minicomputer system actually provided more assistance than the vendor of the WSRCC main frame since the 8100 system was one of the first mini-computer networks in the country; that much of the software for the main frame is vendor-supplied but needs to be updated frequently by the main frame technical support staff; that appellant does not devote a significant portion of his time to designing applications; and that, although the minicomputer network has continued to use the model 8100 mini-computer, the model 3033 main frame was replaced by a model 3081 main frame in February of 1983.

6. The position standard for MI Sup 6 provides a pertinent part:

Technical Support

Positions allocated to this class will function as either:

1. The supervisor of a section of specialists who are performing a full range of technical support specialist functions in support of a large computer system as characterized at the Management Information Supervisor 2 level. Positions at

this level have considerable discretion in establishing objectives, priorities and deadlines under the general administrative review of the manager of the data processing operation.

2. The supervisor of a unit of specialists who are performing specialized technical support functions in support of a major computer system as characterized at the Management Information Supervisor 3 level. Objectives, priorities and deadlines are normally established by the technical supervisor, but the review of the technical soundness of decisions made by these positions is limited.

7. The position standard for MI Sup 7 provides in pertinent part:

Technical Support

Positions allocated to this class will function as the supervisor of a section of specialists who are performing a full range of technical support functions in support of a major computer system such as is currently found in a Regional Computing Center and characterized at the Management Information Supervisor 3 level. Positions at this level have considerable discretion in establishing objectives, priorities, and deadlines under the general administrative review of the manager of the data processing operation.

8. The MI Sup 2 position standard characterizes a "large computer system" as follows:

such a system will characteristically involve applications of a wide scope and complexity, a large number of users which may be both administrative and academic in nature; extensive interaction with a large teleprocessing network with numerous terminals and complex applications; and possible interaction with a complex data base system.

- The MI Sup 3 position standard characterizes a "major computer system" as one:

such as is currently found in a Regional Computing Center or comparable operation. Such a system will characteristically process a very large number of very complex applications of considerable scope; provide service to a very large number of multi-agency users; and involve extensive interaction with the largest teleprocessing networks and most complex data base systems found in state service.

9. The managers of the technical support sections of the regional computing centers are classified at the MI Sup 7 level.

10. Due to the fact that the 8100 minicomputer system which appellant manages clearly does not process a very large number of applications, does not provide service to a very large number of multi-agency users, and is not comparable to the regional computing center offered for comparison purposes in this appeal, it is not a major computer system as defined by the MI Sup position standard. The duties and responsibilities of the appellant's position do not, therefore, satisfy the requirements for classification at the MI Sup 7 level. The 8100 minicomputer system for which appellant manages the technical support function does involve applications of a wide scope and complexity (although not a large number of applications), does involve a large number of users (although all such users are within a single agency), does involve extensive interaction with a large teleprocessing network (the 8100 system includes a large teleprocessing network), and does interact with a complex data base system (WSRCC data base systems) and, as a result, is a large computer system within the meaning of the MI Sup position standard. Appellant's position, therefore, satisfies the requirements for classification at the MI Sup 6 level and is most appropriately classified at that level.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. This matter is appropriately before the Commission pursuant to §230.44(1)(a), Wis. Stats.
2. The appellant has the burden of proving that respondent's decision denying the reclassification of appellant's position from Management Information Supervisor 6 to Management Information Supervisor 7 was incorrect.
3. The appellant has failed to meet that burden of proof.

4. Respondent's decision denying appellant's reclassification was correct.

OPINION

The position standard for the MI Sup series clearly requires that a position supervise the technical support function of a major computer system such as is found in a regional computing center in order for the position to be classified at the MI Sup 7 level. The regional computing center offered for comparison purposes in this appeal is the Wilson Street Regional Computing Center. As the findings indicate, the 8100 minicomputer system for which appellant supervises the technical support function is not comparable to the main frame computer of the WSRCC and is not, therefore, a major computer system within the meaning of the MI Sup position standard.

Appellant attempted to show the comparability of the 8100 minicomputer system and the WSRCC main frame through expert witness testimony. However, the testimony of appellant's expert witness was that the technical support of the minicomputer system such as the 8100 minicomputer system could be as complex as or even more complex than the technical support of a main frame if assistance from the vendor is greater for the main frame, if software packages are available for the main frame but not the minicomputers, if technical support of the minicomputers involves the designing of applications, and if minicomputer technology changes more rapidly than main frame computer technology. However, when the expert witness's theories were applied to the facts of this appeal, it was shown that more vendor assistance was provided for the 8100 network than for the WSRCC main frame; that appellant did not devote a significant percentage of his time to designing applications; that, although much of the software for the main frame was vendor-supplied, it did need to be updated frequently by main frame support

staff; and that the type of computer used in the 8100 system has not changed but that a new type of main frame computer was installed in February of 1983. Appellant's expert witness did not successfully rebut the evidence that the 8100 minicomputer system is not comparable to the WSRCC main frame computer system.


Since the 8100 minicomputer system is not a major computer system as defined by the MI Sup series position standard, appellant's position does not satisfy the requirements for classification at the MI Sup 7 level. As the findings indicate, the 8100 minicomputer system does fit within the definition of a "large computer system" and, therefore, the appellant's position is most appropriately classified at the MI Sup 6 level.

ORDER

Respondent's decision denying appellant's request for reclassification is affirmed and this appeal is dismissed.

Dated: 10-1-, 1984 STATE PERSONNEL COMMISSION

LRM:jab
JEN2


LAURIE R. McCALLUM, Commissioner


DENNIS P. MCGILLIGAN, Commissioner

Parties:

Michael J. Ford
c/o George Callan-Woywod Attorney
44 East Mifflin Street, Suite 305
Madison, WI 53703

Howard Fuller
Secretary, DER
149 E. Wilson
Madison, WI 53702