

STATE OF NEW YORK

1039--A

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 9, 2023

Introduced by Sens. JACKSON, MANNION -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Civil Service and Pensions -- reported favorably from said committee and committed to the Committee on Finance -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the civil service law, in relation to hearing procedures for certain public employees

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subdivision 2 and paragraph (a) of subdivision 2-a of section 75 of the civil service law, subdivision 2 as amended by chapter 226 of the laws of 1994 and paragraph (a) of subdivision 2-a as added by chapter 674 of the laws of 2022, are amended and a new subdivision 2-b is added to read as follows:

2. Procedure; New York city employees. [An] For any employee in the service of the city of New York described in paragraph (a), (b), (c), (d), or (e) of subdivision one of this section, if such employee [who] at the time of questioning appears to be a potential subject of disciplinary action, he or she shall have a right to representation by his or her certified or recognized employee organization under article fourteen of this chapter and shall be notified in advance, in writing, of such right. [~~A state employee who is designated managerial or confidential under article fourteen of this chapter, shall, at the time of questioning, where it appears that such employee is a potential subject of disciplinary action, have a right to representation and shall be notified in advance, in writing, of such right.~~] If representation is requested a reasonable period of time shall be afforded to obtain such representation. If the employee is unable to obtain representation within a reasonable period of time the employer has the right to then question the employee. A hearing officer under this section shall have the power to find that a reasonable period of time was or was not afforded.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 In the event the hearing officer finds that a reasonable period of time
2 was not afforded then any and all statements obtained from said ques-
3 tioning as well as any evidence or information obtained as a result of
4 said questioning shall be excluded, provided, however, that this subdi-
5 vision shall not modify or replace any written collective agreement
6 between a public employer and employee organization negotiated pursuant
7 to article fourteen of this chapter. A person against whom removal or
8 other disciplinary action is proposed shall have written notice thereof
9 and of the reasons therefor, shall be furnished a copy of the charges
10 preferred against him or her and shall be allowed at least eight days
11 for answering the same in writing. The hearing upon such charges shall
12 be held by the officer or body having the power to remove the person
13 against whom such charges are preferred, or by a deputy or other person
14 designated by such officer or body in writing for that purpose. In case
15 a deputy or other person is so designated, he or she shall, for the
16 purpose of such hearing, be vested with all the powers of such officer
17 or body and shall make a record of such hearing which shall, with his or
18 her recommendations, be referred to such officer or body for review and
19 decision. The person or persons holding such hearing shall, upon the
20 request of the person against whom charges are preferred, permit him or
21 her to be represented by counsel, or by a representative of a recognized
22 or certified employee organization, and shall allow him or her to summon
23 witnesses in his or her behalf. The burden of proving incompetency or
24 misconduct shall be upon the person alleging the same. Compliance with
25 technical rules of evidence shall not be required.

26 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary,
27 including but not limited to subdivision four of section seventy-six of
28 this title, any paid officer or member of an organized fire company or
29 fire department of a city of less than one million population, or town,
30 village or fire district who is represented by a certified or recognized
31 employee organization pursuant to article fourteen of this chapter shall
32 not be subjected to the penalty of dismissal from service or any other
33 discipline if the hearing, upon such charge, has been conducted by some-
34 one other than an independent hearing officer to be agreed to by the
35 employer and the person against whom disciplinary action is proposed. If
36 the parties are unable to agree upon a hearing officer, the hearing
37 officer shall be selected from a list of seven names to be provided by
38 the public employment relations board. The public employment relations
39 board shall maintain a list of independent hearing officers for this
40 purpose and for the purpose described in subdivision two-b of this
41 section. The parties shall select the hearing officer by alternately
42 striking names from the list of seven. The hearing officer shall be
43 vested with all powers of the appointing authority, shall conduct and
44 make a record of the hearing, and shall render a final decision. The
45 cost incurred in obtaining such independent hearing officer shall be
46 divided equally between the parties; provided that as may be determined
47 upon the circumstances of the case, the hearing officer shall be author-
48 ized to allocate such cost on the basis of the frivolous nature of any
49 claim made or any defense interposed. In order to find a claim or
50 defense to be frivolous, the hearing officer must find at least one of
51 the following:

52 (i) the claim or defense was commenced, used or continued in bad
53 faith, solely to delay or prolong the resolution of the action or to
54 harass or maliciously injure another; or

55 (ii) the claim or defense was commenced or continued in bad faith
56 without any reasonable basis in law or fact. If the claim or defense was

1 promptly discontinued when the party learned or should have learned that
2 the claim or defense lacked such reasonable basis, the hearing officer
3 may find that the party did not act in bad faith. A person served with
4 charges may then, however, elect in writing to proceed with a hearing
5 pursuant to the procedures established in subdivision two of this
6 section in lieu of the procedures set forth in this subdivision.

7 2-b. Procedure; non-New York city employees. For any employee
8 described in paragraph (a), (b), (c), or (e) of subdivision one of this
9 section not in the service of the city of New York, the following proce-
10 dure shall apply: An employee under this subdivision who at the time of
11 questioning appears to be a potential subject of disciplinary action
12 shall have a right to representation by his or her certified or recog-
13 nized employee organization under article fourteen of this chapter and
14 shall be notified in advance, in writing, of such right. A state employ-
15 ee who is designated managerial or confidential under article fourteen
16 of this chapter, shall, at the time of questioning, where it appears
17 that such employee is a potential subject of disciplinary action, have a
18 right to representation and shall be notified in advance, in writing, of
19 such right. If representation is requested a reasonable period of time
20 shall be afforded to obtain such representation. If the employee is
21 unable to obtain representation within a reasonable period of time the
22 employer has the right to then question the employee. A hearing officer
23 under this section shall have the power to find that a reasonable period
24 of time was or was not afforded. In the event the hearing officer finds
25 that a reasonable period of time was not afforded then any and all
26 statements obtained from said questioning as well as any evidence or
27 information obtained as a result of said questioning shall be excluded,
28 provided, however, that this subdivision shall not modify or replace any
29 written collective agreement between a public employer and employee
30 organization negotiated pursuant to article fourteen of this chapter. A
31 person against whom removal or other disciplinary action is proposed
32 shall have written notice thereof and of the reasons thereof, shall be
33 furnished a copy of the charges preferred against him or her and shall
34 be allowed at least eight days for answering the same in writing. The
35 hearing upon such charges shall be held by a hearing officer who shall
36 be selected by the mutual agreement of the person against whom discipli-
37 nary action is proposed and of the employing officer or body. If such
38 mutual agreement cannot be reached, then the hearing officer shall be
39 selected from a list of seven names to be provided by the public employ-
40 ment relations board pursuant to subdivision two-a of this section. The
41 parties shall select the hearing officer by alternately striking names
42 from the list of seven. Such hearing officer shall, for the purpose of
43 such hearing, be vested with all the powers of such officer or body and
44 shall make a record of such hearing which shall, with his or her recom-
45 mendations and decision, be referred to such officer or body for imple-
46 mentation. The hearing officer holding such hearing shall, upon the
47 request of the person against whom charges are preferred, permit him or
48 her to be represented by counsel, or by a representative of a recognized
49 or certified employee organization, and shall allow him or her to summon
50 witnesses on his or her behalf. The burden of proving incompetency or
51 misconduct shall be upon the person alleging the same. Compliance with
52 technical rules of evidence shall not be required. The cost incurred in
53 obtaining the independent hearing officer shall be divided equally
54 between the parties; provided that as may be determined upon the circum-
55 stances of the case, the hearing officer shall be authorized to allocate
56 such cost on the basis of the frivolous nature of any claim made or any

defense interposed in the manner provided for in paragraph (a) of subdivision two-a of this section. Provided, however, that the provisions of this subdivision shall not supersede or apply to an existing hearing officer policy and procedure that is the result of a collective bargaining agreement between an employer and a recognized or certified employee organization or any hearing officer policy and procedure currently existing for state employees designated managerial or confidential which was in effect on the effective date of this subdivision.

§ 2. Subdivision 3 of section 75 of the civil service law, as amended by chapter 710 of the laws of 1984, is amended to read as follows:

3. Suspension pending determination of charges; penalties; New York city employees. [Pending] For any employee in the service of the city of New York described in paragraph (a), (b), (c), (d), or (e) of subdivision one of this section, pending the hearing and determination of charges of incompetency or misconduct, the officer or employee against whom such charges have been preferred may be suspended without pay for a period not exceeding thirty days. If such officer or employee is found guilty of the charges, the penalty or punishment may consist of a reprimand, a fine not to exceed one hundred dollars to be deducted from the salary or wages of such officer or employee, suspension without pay for a period not exceeding two months, demotion in grade and title, or dismissal from the service; provided, however, that the time during which an officer or employee is suspended without pay may be considered as part of the penalty. If he or she is acquitted, he or she shall be restored to his or her position with full pay for the period of suspension less the amount of any unemployment insurance benefits he or she may have received during such period. If such officer or employee is found guilty, a copy of the charges, his or her written answer thereto, a transcript of the hearing, and the determination shall be filed in the office of the department or agency in which he or she has been employed, and a copy thereof shall be filed with the civil service commission having jurisdiction over such position. A copy of the transcript of the hearing shall, upon request of the officer or employee affected, be furnished to him or her without charge.

§ 3. Subdivision 3-a of section 75 of the civil service law, as added by chapter 753 of the laws of 1990, is amended and a new subdivision 3-b is added to read as follows:

3-a. Suspension pending determination of charges and penalties relating to police officers of the police department of the city of New York. [Pending] Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision three of this section, pending the hearing and determination of charges of incompetency or misconduct, a police officer employed by the police department of the city of New York may be suspended without pay for a period not exceeding thirty days. If such officer is found guilty of the charges, the police commissioner of such department may punish the police officer pursuant to the provisions of sections 14-115 and 14-123 of the administrative code of the city of New York.

3-b. Suspension pending determination of charges; penalties; non-New York city employees. For any employee described in paragraph (a), (b), (c), or (e) of subdivision one of this section not in the service of the city of New York, pending the hearing and determination of charges of incompetency or misconduct, the officer or employee against whom such charges have been preferred may be suspended for a period not exceeding thirty days. The suspension shall be with pay. If such officer or employee is found guilty of the charges, the penalty or punishment may consist of a reprimand, a fine not to exceed one hundred dollars to be

deducted from the salary or wages of such officer or employee, suspension without pay for a period not exceeding two months, demotion in grade and title, or dismissal from the service. If he or she is acquitted, he or she shall be restored to his or her position. If such officer or employee is found guilty, a copy of the charges, his or her written answer thereto, a transcript of the hearing, and the determination shall be filed in the office of the department or agency in which he or she has been employed, and a copy thereof shall be filed with the civil service commission having jurisdiction over such position. A copy of the transcript of the hearing shall, upon request of the officer or employee affected, be furnished to him or her without charge.

§ 4. This act shall take effect immediately.