§ 554. Transfer of officers and employees. 1. Officers and employees of any board or department in or of the city may be transferred to the authority, and shall be eligible for such transfer and appointment without examination to offices and positions under the authority. Notwithstanding the provisions of this title, the officers and employees of the city, who are members or beneficiaries of any existing pension or retirement system, shall continue to have the rights, privileges, obligations and status with respect to such system or systems, as are now prescribed by law; and all such employees, who have been appointed to positions in the service of the city under the rules and classifications of the municipal civil service commission shall have the same status with respect thereto after transfer to the authority as they had under their original appointments. Any person appointed by the authority under the rules and classifications of the municipal civil service commission of the city, originally or by transfer or otherwise, including persons employed or eligible for appointment under the board of education of the city or of any agency of any kind whatsoever subject to the rules and classifications of the municipal civil service commission of the city, shall have and shall continue to have all the rights, privileges, obligations and status with respect to such pension or retirement systems, including not only the right to admission therein, but continuance and reinstatement therein, to the same extent and in like manner as though he had been appointed, transferred or restored to the civil service of the city, the board of education or any other agency of any kind whatsoever subject to the rules and classifications of the municipal civil service commission of the city. The appointment and promotion of all employees of the authority shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the civil service law under the jurisdiction of the municipal civil service commission of the city.

2. Notwithstanding any inconsistent provision of this section, no person shall be eligible for original appointment to a position of bridge and tunnel officer with the authority, unless such person has earned a high school diploma recognized as valid by the department of education.