

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING COMMISSION**

IN THE MATTER OF )  
MATTHEW MORRISSEY )

Case No. 2024-019

**FINAL DECISION**

In accordance with 555 CMR 1.10(1), a Hearing Officer was assigned to conduct an adjudicatory proceeding regarding this matter on behalf of the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (“Commission”).

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 11(7) and (8) and 555 CMR 1.10(4)(e)(2), the Hearing Officer issued an Initial Decision and Order, and Matthew Morrissey (“Respondent”) had thirty (30) days to provide written objections to the Commission. No objections were received.

After careful review and consideration, the Commission voted to affirm and adopt the Initial Decision of the Hearing Officer.

For the above reasons, the Motion for Default and Final Decision filed by the Division of Police Standards is hereby **granted**. See 555 CMR 1.10(4). The Respondent was afforded the opportunity for a full and fair hearing. See M.G.L. c. 30A, § 10 (providing that, “[i]n conducting adjudicatory proceedings,” “agencies shall afford all parties an opportunity for full and fair hearing,” and “[u]nless otherwise provided by any law, agencies may” “place on any party the responsibility of requesting a hearing if the agency notifies [the party] in writing of [the party’s] right to a hearing and of [the party’s] responsibility to request the hearing” and “make informal disposition of any adjudicatory proceeding by” “default”), § 13 (providing that, “[e]xcept as otherwise provided in this section, no agency shall revoke or refuse to renew any license unless it has first afforded the licensee an opportunity for hearing in conformity with [§§ 10, 11, and 12],” but “[t]his section shall not apply” “[w]here the agency is required by any law to revoke, suspend or refuse to renew a license, as the case may be, without exercising any discretion in the matter, on the basis of a court conviction or judgment” or “[w]here the revocation, suspension or refusal to renew is based solely upon failure of the licensee to file timely reports, schedules, or applications . . .”), incorporated by reference in M.G.L. c. 6E, § 10(f) and 555 CMR 1.10(4).

[REDACTED] Thus, the Respondent’s certification is hereby revoked.

The Executive Director shall take the necessary steps to publish the Respondent’s name in the National Decertification Index. M.G.L. c. 6E, §§ 10(g), 13(b). This is the final decision of the Commission. M.G.L. c. 30A, § 11(8); 555 CMR 1.10(4)(e).

By vote of the Commission on October 17, 2024.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 14 and M.G.L. c. 6E, § 10(f), the Respondent may commence an appeal to the Superior Court within thirty (30) days to the extent allowed by law. After initiating proceedings for judicial review in Superior Court, the Respondent, or the Respondent's attorney, is required to serve a copy of the summons and complaint upon the Boston office of the Attorney General of the Commonwealth, with a copy to the Commission, in the time and manner prescribed by Mass. R. Civ. P. 4(d).

*Margaret R. Hinkle*  
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Hon. Margaret R. Hinkle (Ret.), Chair

Notice: Matthew P. Morrissey, Respondent  
Amy C. Parker, Esq., Commission Enforcement Counsel  
Boston Police Department, Agency  
Suffolk County District Attorney's Office

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING COMMISSION**

In the Matter of

)

Case No. [REDACTED]

)

Matthew Morrissey

)

**INITIAL DECISION**

I. Introduction

At issue in this matter is whether this proceeding brought by the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (“Commission”) should now terminate with a default decision in the Commission’s favor, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, § 10(2), 801 CMR 1.01(7)(a), and 555 CMR 1.10(4). Matthew Morrissey (“Respondent”) did not answer, appear, and defend the allegations of misconduct against him in the Order to Show Cause (“OTSC”). The Respondent also did not respond to mailings delivered to him by the Division of Police Standards (“Division”). For the reasons stated below, the undersigned recommends that the Commission adopt this Initial Decision as its Final Decision, grant the Division’s Motion for Default and Final Decision (“Motion”), and proceed to determine what discipline should be imposed against the Respondent.

II. Procedural History

1. The Division originally attempted to serve the Respondent with an OTSC on March 19, 2024, addressed to two of the Respondent’s last known addresses. Exhibits A, B, and E.
2. The OTSC contained the allegations against the Respondent and notification of the obligation to file an answer or otherwise respond to the allegations within 21 days. Exhibit A. The OTSC stated that, if a responsive and timely answer was not filed, the Commission may act.

Exhibit A. In particular, the Respondent was notified that if an answer to the allegations in the OTSC was not filed, the Commission may enter a Final Decision and Order that assumes the truth of the allegations in the OTSC and that the Commission may take action against the Respondent's certification, including granting, in full, the action contemplated in the OTSC. Exhibit A.

3. The Motion was mailed by the Division to the Respondent by USPS Priority Mail to the Respondent's last known address on May 7, 2024. Exhibits C, D. The undersigned takes administrative notice that the OTSC was attached as an exhibit to the Motion.

4. Around May 13, 2024, the Division received credible information indicating that the Respondent no longer resided at either of the addresses which they had provided service to. The Division filed a Motion to Withdraw their previously filed Motion for Default and Final Decision and filed an amended OTSC to two new addresses. Exhibit E. The OTSC served on May 13, 2024, is identical in content to the original OTSC served on March 19, 2024, containing the allegations against the Respondent, notification of the obligation to file an answer or otherwise respond to the allegations within 21 days, and warning of the possibility of entry of a Final Decision and Order assuming the truth of the allegations. Exhibit E.

5. On July 29, 2024, the Division filed a new Motion for Default and Final Decision ("renewed Motion"). Exhibit F.

6. By operation of law, the Commission may presume that the Respondent received both the OTSC and the renewed Motion, as discussed below. The Respondent failed to respond to either the OTSC or the renewed Motion.

### III. Allegations Contained in the OTSC

1. On July 1, 2021, the Respondent was automatically certified as a law enforcement officer

pursuant to St. 2020, c. 253, § 102, an Act Relative to Justice, Equity and Accountability in Law Enforcement in the Commonwealth.

2. [REDACTED]

3. [REDACTED]

4. The Respondent resigned from his position at Boston Police Department on June 22, 2023.

IV. Exhibits

In ruling on this matter, the undersigned has considered the renewed Motion filed by the Division and the following exhibits:

Exhibit A: Original OTSC with a certificate of service, dated March 19, 2024.

Exhibit B: Original OTSC USPS Priority Mail tracking, dated July 29, 2024.

Exhibit C: Original Motion for Default and Final Decision, dated May 7, 2024.

Exhibit D: Original Motion for Default USPS Priority Mail tracking, dated August 15, 2024.

Exhibit E: Division's Amended OTSC and Motion to Withdraw Motion for Default and Final Decision, dated May 13, 2024.

Exhibit F: Amended OTSC USPS Priority Mail tracking, dated July 29, 2024.

Exhibit G: Renewed Motion for Default and Final Decision, dated July 29, 2024.

Exhibit H: Motion for Default USPS Priority Mail tracking, dated August 1, 2024.

The undersigned takes administrative notice of all papers filed in this case, as well as Chapter 6E and Commission regulations. See M.G.L. c. 30A, § 11(5).

V. Legal Basis for Commission Disciplinary Action

1. Pursuant to M.G.L c. 6E § 3(a):

The [C]ommission shall have all powers necessary or convenient to carry out and effectuate its purposes including, but not limited to, the power to:

(1) act as the primary civil enforcement for violations of [chapter 6E]; . . .

(4) deny an application or limit, condition, restrict, revoke or suspend a certification, or fine a person certified for any cause that the commission deems reasonable; . . .

(23) restrict, suspend or revoke certifications issued under [chapter 6E];

(24) conduct adjudicatory proceedings in accordance with chapter 30A; . . .

2. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

4. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

VI. Notice

The undersigned takes notice of the erroneously filed original OTSC and Motion for Default and Final Decision. The below analyses of notice pertain only to the most recently filed

OTSC, dated May 13, 2024, and renewed Motion for Default and Final Decision, dated July 29, 2024. See Exhibits E, G.

The Respondent was notified at his last known possible addresses by the OTSC that if he did not file an answer or otherwise respond to the allegations in the OTSC in a responsive and timely manner, the Commission could enter a Final Decision and Order that assumes the truth of the allegations in the OTSC. The Division obtained the Respondent's possible addresses using a forwarding address provided by the new occupant of a former address of the Respondent, supplemented by a CLEAR search and related city assessor records for confirmation. CLEAR, provided by Thomson Reuters, is a database that collects information from various sources, including cell phone records, credit reporting agencies, motor vehicle registration information, and criminal history records, among other sources. In addition, the notice informed him that the Commission may take particular action against his certification, including granting in full the relief contemplated in the OTSC. These advisories were sufficient to place him on notice of the consequences of any default. See Lawless v. Bd. of Registration in Pharmacy, 466 Mass. 1010, 1010 n.1, 1011 (2013) (concluding that pharmacist had "ample notice," where he was informed that "failure to appear at any hearing would result in entry of default and that, in the event of default, the board could enter a final decision accepting as true the allegations contained in the show cause order"); Univ. Hosp., Inc. v. Massachusetts Comm'n Against Discrimination, 396 Mass. 533, 539 (1986) (holding that default provision did not violate due process, as it "afford[ed] the respondent reasonable procedural safeguards for notice and opportunity to be heard"). Despite being afforded the opportunity to do so, the Respondent has failed to file an answer, request an adjudicatory hearing, or otherwise respond.

On July 29, 2024, the Division moved for a default judgment and final decision and

served the Motion, with Exhibits E and F attached, by USPS Priority Mail with tracking information to the same last known addresses, as indicated by the CLEAR search and communications with the current resident of the originally served address. Exhibit E.

The Commission provided sufficient notice by delivering the OTSC and the Motion using USPS Priority Mail. Massachusetts law presumes that the addressee receives properly deposited mail. See Espinal's Case, 98 Mass. App. Ct. 152, 152-53, 156 (2020) (citing Eveland v. Lawson, 240 Mass. 99, 103 (1921) (“The depositing of a letter in the post office, properly addressed, postage prepaid, to a person at his place of business or residence, is prima facie evidence that it was received in the ordinary course of mails.”)); Commonwealth v. Crosscup, 369 Mass. 228, 239 (1975) (“Proper mailing of a letter is ‘prima facie evidence’ in civil cases of its receipt by the addressee.” (citations omitted)). Further, nothing in Chapter 6E required the Division to take any additional steps or prohibits the Division from relying on the certification that it mailed the Motion via USPS Priority Mail delivery. See Espinal's Case, 98 Mass. App. Ct. at 157 (stating that “on other occasions when the Legislature intended to impose a requirement for notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, it has done so explicitly”). The undersigned may presume that the Respondent received the Motion that was sent through USPS Priority Mail at one of his last known addresses.

## VII. Discussion

Pursuant to 801 CMR 1.01(7)(a), a party may request through a motion that a Hearing Officer “issue any order or take any action not inconsistent with [the] law or 801 CMR 1.00.” One such action is recommending the entry of a final judgment of default where a respondent has failed to appear. Under M.G.L. c. 30A, § 10(2), an agency is specifically authorized to “make informal disposition of any adjudicatory proceeding . . . by default.” Lawless, 466 Mass. at



1011-12 (affirming that agency “ha[d] authority, in an appropriate circumstance, to dispose of an adjudicatory proceeding by default,” citing M.G.L. c. 30A, § 10; and concluding that agency’s decision to do so was not shown to be improper, where the party failed to appear after the first day of hearing). That step is warranted here. The Commission has afforded the Respondent an opportunity for a full and fair hearing as required by M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 10, 11(1) and 801 CMR 1.01(4)(c).

In University Hospital, the Supreme Judicial Court rejected the notion that due process standards were violated by an agency rule that provided sanctions for a party’s default upon receiving interrogatories. 396 Mass. at 538-39. The court found the provisions of the agency rule “afford . . . reasonable procedural safeguards for notice and an opportunity to be heard,” noting that a respondent is given clear notice of the consequences, and has opportunities to object, to obtain an extension of time, to petition for a default to be vacated, and to seek judicial review of the entire proceedings. In the case before the Commission, the OTSC and the Motion (both sent by USPS with tracking) provided the Respondent with notice of the consequences of a failure to appear or defend in this matter, as well as an opportunity to object. Exhibits E, G. The Respondent could have sought more time to respond under 801 CMR 1.01(4)(e), (7)(a). Therefore, the entry of a default judgment by the Commission is both legal and proper.

By reason of the Respondent’s default, and upon consideration of the Division’s Motion, the undersigned recommends that the Commission grant the Motion. See Lawless, 466 Mass. at 1010-12 & n.1; Univ. Hosp., 396 Mass. at 538-39; Productora e Importadora de Papel, S.A. de C.V. v. Fleming, 376 Mass. 826, 833-35 (1978) (recognizing that a default establishes the truth of factual allegations). In addition, the undersigned recommends that the Commission find that the allegations in the OTSC and the violations of the statutes and regulations stated therein are

deemed admitted and established. See Lawless, 466 Mass. at 1010-12 & n.1; Univ. Hosp., 396 Mass. at 534, 538-39; Productora e Importadora de Papel, 376 Mass. at 833-35.

VIII. Conclusion

The Division's renewed Motion should be granted for the reasons stated above. The undersigned recommends that the Commission find the allegations to be supported, make this Initial Decision final, and proceed to determine what discipline is appropriate. In accordance with the provisions of 555 CMR 1.10(4)(e)(2)(b), each of the parties has 30 days to file written objections to the Initial Decision with the Commission.

SO ORDERED.

**PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING COMMISSION**



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Hon. Kenneth J. Fishman (Ret.)  
Hearing Officer

Dated: September 5, 2024

Notice to: Matthew P. Morrissey, Respondent  
Amy C. Parker, Esq., Commission Enforcement Counsel  
Boston Police Department, Agency