



**MEMO**

**TO:** Board Members  
**FROM:** Scott Woolf  
Acting Board Secretary  
**DATE:** July 8, 2020  
**RE:** Minutes – Board Meeting  
March 11, 2020.

In compliance with *Act 175*, known as the *Sunshine Law*, effective September 17, 1976, the Office of Board Secretary provided notification to the public of the scheduled meeting on March 11, 2020, of the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole.

The public meeting convened at 9:05 a.m. at Riverfront Office Center in Harrisburg, PA with Chairman Ted Johnson presiding. A quorum of Board Members was established.

In attendance were Chairman Johnson, Board Members Maureen Barden, Linda Rosenberg, Anthony Moscato, Leo Dunn and Mark Koch (V/C)

Also in attendance were Chad Allensworth, Chief Hearing Examiner, Hearing Division; Alan Robinson, Chief Counsel; Tanner Widdowson, Office of Victim Advocate (OVA); Pennie Hockenberry, OVA; Tara Gross, OVA; Meghan Dade, Executive Director, PA Sexual Offenders Assessment Board (SOAB); Janaki Theivakumaran, SOAB; Deb Carpenter, Special Assistant to the Chairman; Laura Treaster, Special Assistant to the Chairman (Board Communications/Press); Scott Woolf, Acting Board Secretary, Office of Board Secretary (OBS); Neil Malady, Legislative and Policy Director; Farrah Conjar, Executive Secretary to the Chairman; Jim Fox.

The Chairman recognized public guests Diane Shoop, Executive and Policy Support Manager of the Pennsylvania Sentencing Commission; Mark Bergstrom, Pennsylvania Sentencing Commission; Alex Domingos, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

## **I. APPROVAL OF February 12, 2020 BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Board Member Barden moved to approve the Board minutes, and Board Member Moscato second the motion. The board unanimously approved the minutes.

## **II. STAFF REPORTS**

### **A. Office of Victim Advocate (OVA)**

- Tanner reported no victim testimony on Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>.

**B. Sexual Offenders Assessment Board (SOAB)**

- Meghan Dade stated a training will be held in Philadelphia the week of March 15<sup>th</sup> with Parole Agents on overall supervision, treatment, management and how to work together on supervision of the sex offender population with treatment providers.
- They be conducting Sex Offender 101 at the next Parole Agent basic training academy.
- Investigator position will be opening up in Norristown in June.

**C. Communication Update (Laura Treaster)**

- Laura Treaster reported out we have a new logo for the Pennsylvania Parole Board. Working with updating all the forms and application.
- Advised there is a call in the afternoon regarding Safe Return in Pittsburgh, still on target for August.

**D. Special Assistant to the Chairman (Deb Carpenter)**

- Short Sentence Parole (SSP) Policy – Board Member Dunn motioned to approve the draft policy as proposed. The board unanimously approved the policy.

**E. Hearing Division**

- Chief Hearing Examiner advised the Hearing Examiner postings are live. Office of Administration will screen the applications and schedule a test for all candidates who met the METs. All complaints from applicants are being directed to OA/HR.
- *Chairman advised these are important positions and was very pleased with OA and the revision to the process.*
- Dress Code – Board's preference is to have Chad make the decision on the dress code. Whatever the decision is the Board will follow up.
- SCI Phoenix workload is very high with a low waiver rate. PD is only available 3 days a week, PD is not willing to come the 4<sup>th</sup> day.
  - BM Rosenberg asked if we can reach out to Montgomery office to see if they are willing to send another person. Chad will reach out, Jim suggested they may want to mirror Dauphin/Cumberland county.
- PD refused to attend in some counties, Alan has advised the Fayette PD has been terminated and hopefully that issue will resolve itself.

**F. Policy and Legislative Affairs**

- House and Senate will return to session, hoping on movement on new Board Member vacancies.
- Merger bill is expected to pass the Senate the week of March 16<sup>th</sup>.

- Updating all policies and procedures to reflect the name change and merger bill.
- Working on procedures/plan for remote work moving forward and preparing for a pandemic.
- *Chairman noted if Board Member cannot come in due to pandemic please feel free to V/C in.*

**G. Office of Chief Counsel**

- Young case was decided, if the board awards credit to a criminal parole violator who gets reparaoled and recommitted again that period vests in the violator
- Financial Disclosure statements are due May 1, 2020. Morgan is your point of contact. These are public documents, recommend using work address.
- Pittsburgh to meet with Alleghany County; explaining what we do and why we do it.
  - One item is inmates with unresolved parole board detainer, no formal process. Will work with field services to formalize the process.

**H. Office of the Board Secretary**

- 361/Memo process – Went live and will continue training.
- Continue to make changes to case processing. From decision to Board Action is about 18 days for min/review cases and 90 days for recommit. Goal is to make enhancement to shorten the processing time.
- Several vacancies and working towards filling all vacancies.
- Organizational structure will take a more unit/team approach moving forward.
- *Chairman Johnson discussed that if an inmate is denied parole the review dated needs to be calculated from the parole interview date due to the time it takes to route a majority vote case. The responsibility should be on the decision maker not on the technician recording the case.*
  - Board Member Dunn advised decision makers need to initial so if there is a question staff knows who to talk with
  - Ashton reviewed all min cases since July, no cases were lost. We did find several that took a long time to process
  - Scott advised a lot of these issues will be addressed with the new E361 process
  - Laura advised she is updating the website to address any confusion the public may have on the time it take to process cases.
- *Chairman commended Scott and the team for a job well done.*

**I. Sentencing Commission – Proposals for Parole Guidelines and Recommitment Ranges**

- Based upon an earlier meeting, it was suggested parole guidelines to include misconducts. Also concerns were raised about which risk instrument would be used. Staff made some adjustments to the proposal based on these suggestions and did an analysis on violent vs nonviolent cases. After the analysis Mark believes the proposal better align the grant/recidivism rates and covers the two areas the Board had interest in which were the best decision and racial neutrality.
- Reccommitment ranges – Proposal looks at new offense and identifying the gravity score and then align to the recommitment range. The proposal brings structure and uniformity to that new offense.
- If the Board has any changes or recommendations, please let him know. He will present the proposals to the commission in June for approval and move onto the public hearings in the summer.

**J. Parole Denials - Board Member Dunn motioned when denying an inmate parole if a Hearing Examiner and Board Member disagree on the review date. They should go with the lesser date. Board Member Barden second the motion. The board approved 5:1**

At 10:47 a.m. Board Member Dunn made a motion to adjourn the public session. The motion was seconded by Board Member Barden. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn public session.

SAW