



**TO:** Pennsylvania Parole Board Members

**FROM:** Scott Woolf  
Director – Office of Board Secretary

**DATE:** November 5, 2020

**RE:** Board Meeting Minutes  
**October 21, 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 October 21, 2020, of the Pennsylvania Parole Board.

The public meeting convened at 8:59 a.m. at Riverfront Office Center in Harrisburg, PA with Chairman Ted Johnson presiding. A quorum of Board Members was present.

### **Attendance**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairman Ted Johnson                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BD Member Leo Dunn                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BD Member Tony Moscato    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BD Member Maureen Barden                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BD Member Jim Fox                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BD Member Linda Rosenberg |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BD Member Khadija Diggs                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BD Member Mark Koch                               |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alan Robinson, Chief Counsel            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deb Carpenter, Board Secretary                    |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chad Allensworth, Chief Hearing Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scott Woolf, Director – Office of Board Secretary |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neil Malady, Policy/Legislative Affairs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laura Treaster, Special Assistant                 |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Storm, Victim Advocate         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meghan Dade, SOAB Executive Director              |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Morgan Davis, Assistant Chief Counsel   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farrah Conjar, Executive Secretary                |   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janaki Theivakumaran, SOAB              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacey Ginesin, SOAB                              |   |

The Chairman recognized public guests:  
Mark Bergstrom, Pennsylvania Sentencing Commission  
Diane Shoop, Pennsylvania Sentencing Commission  
Shaivya Singh, Legal Intern

## **APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2020 BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Board Member Barden moved to approve the Parole Board minutes. Board Member Fox seconded the motion. The Parole Board unanimously approved the Minutes.

## **OFFICE AND STAFF REPORTS**

### **Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) Report**

Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm

- Jennifer Storm will be out for a few weeks due to a medical procedure.
- Pennie Hockenberry and Renee Bressler will be available if needed. Jennifer will be checking her email periodically.

### **Sexual Offenders Assessment Board (SOAB)**

Sexual Offenders Assessment Board Executive Director Meghan Dade

- New Investigator hired for Norristown Office: Mary Kate O'Neil.
  - Recently completed a four-hour training for all specialized sex offender parole agents. Training consisted of an intensive look at assessments and how to use them in treatment and supervision of sex offenders. Similar upcoming training for the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. Philadelphia has not sent court orders for the past three years to conduct SVP assessments. The office notified SOAB they will be sending orders again.
- Upcoming virtual training on Friday, November 13, 2020 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. with Professor Gomez from Florida on human trafficking.
- Board Member Diggs asked if the SOAB knows why Philadelphia has not sent the orders for SVP. Ms. Dade believes this occurred because of a change in the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office.
- Board Member Moscato stated when he is reviewing an SOAB investigation report, it is not always clear if an SVP assessment has been done and if the person did or did not meet the criteria. If one was or is done, Board Member Moscato asked if it could be in one location in the report every time, which would be very helpful during the review process. Ms. Dade advised investigators are supposed to include this information, and she will work with them on using the template that has been provided to them.

### **Communications/Media Report**

Special Assistant Laura Treaster

- Wanted to be able to demonstrate the first four, live categories on the new Parole Board dashboard. Because of time limitations, this was not feasible at the meeting today. Ms. Treaster indicated she would send out screen shots and instructions after the meeting on how to access the dashboard.

- Updating Parole Board's website to reflect our decision making process. A lot of the parole supervision and agent-based information is migrating over to the Department of Corrections' website. Additionally, new content that has never been included on the Parole Board's website is being added. An example of which is how the Parole Board recalculates time for CPVs.

### **Policy and Legislative Affairs Report**

Policy and Legislative Affairs Director Neil Malady

- October 21, 2020 is the last voting session day for the General Assembly before the General Election on November 3, 2020.
- The state budget expires on November 30, 2020. Mr. Malady said he suspects more days in session to work on budget.
- The merger bill, or Senate Bill 968, is in the House Judiciary Committee has not moved out of committee yet.
- Mr. Malady noted there is not enough time for the Senate to vote on a new Parole Board member into office before the end of year.

### **Office of Chief Counsel Report**

Chief Counsel Alan Robinson

- Mr. Robinson stated the routine of the office has returned to normal with litigations, etc.
- Dave Butts was recognized for his promotion to the Office of Board Secretary (OBS). Mr. Robinson explained Dave came in to the Legal Office and was asked to put his hands around a number of chaotic processes and assisted on the development of stream-lined business processes. He noted Dave will be a great addition to OBS.

### **Office of Hearing Examiners Report**

Chief Hearing Examiner Chad Allensworth

- Full complement for hearing coordinators. The Parole Board hired Jessica Brysen from Department of Human Services' Legal Office.
- The four, vacant Hearing Examiners positions were posted and will close on November 2, 2020. The Parole Board will be provided with a list for review.
- Working with field supervision staff on potentially issuing administrative orders/notices when parolees are getting close to the automatic reparole date and are unable to provide them with a hearing. The reason for this is because, often, there is not enough time to conduct a hearing or individuals are unavailable to participate.
  - Notice with inmate's name and number is sent to the field that the detainer needs to be lifted. This is the process of notifying the field the person cannot be held any longer. If anything changes, field supervision is to let us know. The Parole Board can accommodate a hearing in the community as well.
- Looking at PV Center cases and revising that decision as well with a not later than date.

- Deb Carpenter advised the Department of Corrections is providing PVC programming inside the jail if there is no bed available. This way, they will be receiving programming inside the jail so when bed is available the programming goes with them, instead of them sitting in the prison and not receiving any programming at all.
- Chairman Johnson asked what period of time individuals are being held.
  - Mr. Robinson answered if the Parole Board says continue on parole, the Parole Board decision is not honored. Field supervision must lift the detainer. By policy, the SCI has four business days to do so.

### **Board Secretary Report**

Board Secretary Deb Carpenter

- Staff from Vantage and the Strong R will be coming in to present on the new assessment tools and to address concerns the Parole Board has. Mark Bergstrom will participate on Zoom and Brett Bucklen will be calling in at the start of the training.
- Chairman Johnson signed the joined budget with Secretary Wetzel last week for Fiscal Year 2021-22. The budget remained flat. The Parole Board was permitted to fund critical positions such as the Hearing Examiners for half a year and a Board Member one year. Original instructions on vacancies were that they were not to be funded at all.
- The Department of Corrections' has seen an uptick in parole violators at SCI Greene and SCI Coal Township. Mr. Allensworth is working with the SCIs to get the hearings scheduled as soon as possible, but there is only so much the SCI staff can do to prep cases and get them to the Hearing Examiners.
- The Public Defender (PD) who represents inmates at SCI Coal Township is able to show up a couple times a week for part of the day so there is limited representation availability. Parolees that requested counsel are getting scheduled when the PD is available to make the best use of PD's time.
- Schedules are changing daily to COVID-19. SCI parole offices are handling the outbreaks the best they can. That still should not take away what the SCI is to have prepared. If there are any issues with the SCIs not having ICSAs completed, Board Members are to let her or Scott Woolf know.

### **Office of Board Secretary Report**

Office of Board Secretary Director Scott Woolf

- Che Deford was hired in the Office of Board Secretary as back up for Ms. Davis. She is currently participating in training.
- OnBase enhancements have been made so Staff Tech 2s will now be distributing memos through OnBase. Any concerns in this new process should be brought to his attention.
- Board Member Fox asked if everyone knew how to get the memo attachments (cross reference) form down to get additional information that comes with the memo. Ms.

Carpenter said she would send screen shot instructions to everyone covering the process of viewing cross references.

- Working on a possible process of disseminating Board Actions electronically. The Parole Board is currently in different phases of getting Board Actions to inmates more quickly, instead of sending them through the U.S. mail to Smart Communications in Florida. Parole Board staff will be able to move them electronically to the institution for SCIs mail room dissemination or for parole staff at each SCI, depending on the type of Board Action.
- After a meeting with Deputy Evans and her staff on max out memos, OBS staff worked out expectations so now decision makers will start seeing them coming through workflow in OnBase. They will come through with two choices to be approved: either to max out or to be scheduled on the docket.

### **ADDITIONAL REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS**

- Chairman Johnson stated the Parole Board has not been given a list yet of potential candidates for the Hearing Examiner positions yet who may be interviewed. He said he is concerned the test that was developed is heavily weighted to those people already employed by the Parole Board. He said perhaps what should have done with the test is to add a county and/or federal case(s) so the test doesn't have a total look and feel of a state parole case. Chairman Johnson said he is concerned the Parole Board will not get a diverse pool of candidates to interview.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:15 a.m. Board Member Barden made a motion to adjourn the public session. The motion was seconded by Board Member Fox. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the public session.

SAW/FC