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Administrative Appeal Decision - Tenney, Andrew (2019-02-06)

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STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL DECISION NOTICE

Name: Tenney, Andrew

Facility: Great Meadow CF

NYSID: [REDACTED]

Appeal Control No.: 07-078-18 B

DIN: 81-B-2137

Appearances: Alyson S. Clark, Esq.
383 Broadway
Fort Edward, New York 12828

Decision appealed: June 2018 decision, denying discretionary release and imposing a hold of 21-months.

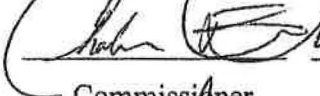
Board Member(s) who participated: Crangle, Coppola, Berliner

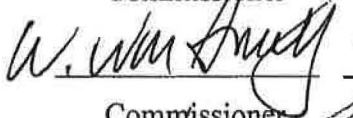
Papers considered: Appellant’s Brief received November 9, 2018

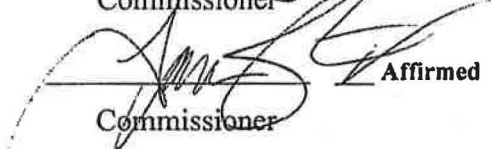
Appeals Unit Review: Statement of the Appeals Unit’s Findings and Recommendation

Records relied upon: Pre-Sentence Investigation Report, Parole Board Report, Interview Transcript, Parole Board Release Decision Notice (Form 9026), COMPAS instrument, Offender Case Plan.

Final Determination: The undersigned determine that the decision appealed is hereby:

 Affirmed Vacated, remanded for de novo interview Modified to _____
Commissioner

 Affirmed Vacated, remanded for de novo interview Modified to _____
Commissioner

 Affirmed Vacated, remanded for de novo interview Modified to _____
Commissioner

If the Final Determination is at variance with Findings and Recommendation of Appeals Unit, written reasons for the Parole Board’s determination must be annexed hereto.

This Final Determination, the related Statement of the Appeals Unit’s Findings and the separate findings of the Parole Board, if any, were mailed to the Inmate and the Inmate’s Counsel, if any, on 2/6/19 66.

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Tenney, Andrew

DIN: 81-B-2137

Facility: Great Meadow CF

AC No.: 07-078-18 B

Findings: (Page 1 of 4)

Appellant challenges the June 2018 determination of the Board, denying release and imposing a 21-month hold.

Appellant raises the following issues in his brief: (1) the Board’s decision was arbitrary and capricious and irrational because too much emphasis was placed on his multiple, serious crimes of conviction and his criminal history; (2) the Board should have provided greater weight to Appellant’s institutional accomplishments, “contributions to society”, release plans, and remorse; (3) the Board’s decision was predetermined; (4) Appellant “is an ideal candidate to be paroled...in light of his scoring low on the COMPAS Risk Assessment”; (5) the Board’s decision was tantamount to a resentencing of Appellant; (6) the Board is not permitted to consider Appellant’s disciplinary tickets; and (7) the 21-month hold was excessive.

As to the first and second issues, discretionary release to parole is not to be granted “merely as a reward for good conduct or efficient performance of duties while confined but after considering if there is a reasonable probability that, if such inmate is released, he will live and remain at liberty without violating the law, **and** that his release is not incompatible with the welfare of society **and** will not so deprecate the seriousness of his crime as to undermine respect for the law.” Executive Law § 259-i(2)(c)(A) (emphasis added); accord Matter of Hamilton v. New York State Div. of Parole, 119 A.D.3d 1268, 990 N.Y.S.2d 714 (3d Dept. 2014). “Although these standards are no longer repeated in the [Board’s] regulation, this in no way modifies the statutory mandate requiring their application.” Notice of Adoption, NY Reg, Sept. 27, 2017 at 2. A conclusion that an inmate fails to satisfy **any one** of the considerations set forth in Executive Law § 259-i(2)(c)(A) is an independent basis to deny parole. See, e.g., Matter of Silmon v. Travis, 95 N.Y.2d 470, 477, 718 N.Y.S.2d 704, 708 (2000); Matter of Robles v. Fischer, 117 A.D.3d 1558, 1559, 985 N.Y.S.2d 386 (4th Dept. 2014); Matter of Hamilton v. New York State Div. of Parole, 119 A.D.3d 1268; Matter of Phillips v. Dennison, 41 A.D.3d 17, 21, 834 N.Y.S.2d 121, 124 (1st Dept. 2007).

Executive Law § 259-i(2)(c)(A) requires the Board to consider criteria which is relevant to the specific inmate, including, but not limited to, the inmate’s institutional record and criminal behavior. People ex rel. Herbert v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 97 A.D.2d 128, 468 N.Y.S.2d 881 (1st Dept. 1983). While consideration of these factors is mandatory, “the ultimate decision to parole a prisoner is discretionary.” Matter of Silmon v. Travis, 95 N.Y.2d 470, 477. Thus, it is well settled that the weight to be accorded the requisite factors is solely within the Board’s discretion. See, e.g., Matter of Delacruz v. Annucci, 122 A.D.3d 1413, 997 N.Y.S.2d 872 (4th Dept. 2014); Matter of Hamilton, 119 A.D.3d at 1271; Matter of Garcia v. New York State Div. of Parole, 239 A.D.2d 235, 239, 657 N.Y.S.2d 415, 418 (1st Dept. 1997). The Board need not explicitly refer to each factor in its decision, nor give them equal weight. Matter of Betancourt v. Stanford, 148 A.D.3d 1497, 49 N.Y.S.3d 315 (3d Dept. 2017); Matter of LeGeros v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 139

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Tenney, Andrew

DIN: 81-B-2137

Facility: Great Meadow CF

AC No.: 07-078-18 B

Findings: (Page 2 of 4)

A.D.3d 1068, 30 N.Y.S.3d 834 (2d Dept. 2016); Matter of Phillips v. Dennison, 41 A.D.3d 17. In the absence of a convincing demonstration that the Board did not consider the statutory factors, it must be presumed that the Board fulfilled its duty. Matter of Fuchino v. Herbert, 255 A.D.2d 914, 914, 680 N.Y.S.2d 389, 390 (4th Dept. 1998); Matter of McLain v. New York State Div. of Parole, 204 A.D.2d 456, 611 N.Y.S.2d 629 (2d Dept. 1994); Matter of McKee v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 157 A.D.2d 944, 945, 550 N.Y.S.2d 204, 205 (3d Dept. 1990); People ex rel. Herbert, 97 A.D.2d 128.

As to the third issue, there is no evidence the Board’s decision was predetermined based upon the instant offense. Matter of Gonzalvo v. Stanford, 153 A.D.3d 1021, 56 N.Y.S.3d 896 (3d Dept. 2017); Matter of Hakim-Zaki v. New York State Div. of Parole, 29 A.D.3d 1190, 814 N.Y.S.2d 414 (3d Dept. 2006); Matter of Guerin v. New York State Div. of Parole, 276 A.D.2d 899, 695 N.Y.S.2d 622 (3d Dept. 2000).

As to the fourth issue, in 2011, the law was amended to require procedures incorporating risk and needs principles to “assist” the Board in making parole release decisions. Executive Law § 259–c(4); 9 N.Y.C.R.R. §8002.2(a). The Board satisfies this requirement in part by using the COMPAS instrument. Matter of Montane v. Evans, 116 A.D.3d 197, 202, 981 N.Y.S.2d 866, 870 (3d Dept. 2014); see also Matter of Hawthorne v. Stanford, 135 A.D.3d 1036, 1042, 22 N.Y.S.3d 640, 645 (3d Dept. 2016); Matter of LeGeros v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 139 A.D.3d 1068, 30 N.Y.S.3d 834 (2d Dept. 2016); Matter of Robles v. Fischer, 117 A.D.3d 1558, 1559, 985 N.Y.S.2d 386, 387 (4th Dept. 2014). Notably, the 2011 amendments did not eliminate the requirement that the Board conduct a case-by-case review of each inmate by considering the statutory factors including the instant offense. The amendments also did not change the three substantive standards that the Board is required to apply when deciding whether to grant parole. See Executive Law § 259-i(2)(c)(A). Thus, the COMPAS instrument cannot mandate a particular result. Matter of King v. Stanford, 137 A.D.3d 1396, 26 N.Y.S.3d 815 (3d Dept. 2016). Rather, the COMPAS is an additional consideration that the Board must weigh along with the statutory factors for the purposes of deciding whether the three standards are satisfied. See Matter of Rivera v. N.Y. State Div. of Parole, 119 A.D.3d 1107, 1108, 990 N.Y.S.2d 295 (3d Dept. 2014); accord Matter of Dawes v. Annucci, 122 A.D.3d 1059, 994 N.Y.S.2d 747 (3d Dept. 2014); see also Matter of Gonzalvo v. Stanford, 153 A.D.3d 1021, 56 N.Y.S.3d 896 (3d Dept. 2017). Furthermore, declining to afford the COMPAS controlling weight does not violate the 2011 amendments. Matter of King v. Stanford, 137 A.D.3d 1396, 26 N.Y.S.3d 815 (3d Dept. 2016).

The 2011 amendments require the Board to incorporate risk and needs assessment principles to “assist” in measuring an inmate’s rehabilitation and likelihood of success upon release. See Executive Law § 259-c(4). The statute thus does not clearly create a presumption of

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Tenney, Andrew

DIN: 81-B-2137

Facility: Great Meadow CF

AC No.: 07-078-18 B

Findings: (Page 3 of 4)

rehabilitation based on a favorable risk and needs assessment, let alone a presumption of parole release requiring the Board to provide countervailing evidence. Indeed, while the Board might, for example, find an inmate sufficiently rehabilitated to satisfy the first prong of the standard—that the inmate will “live and remain at liberty without violating the law,” the Board could also find, in its discretion, that the inmate’s release would be incompatible with the welfare of society, or would unduly deprecate the seriousness of a crime. The text of the statute therefore flatly contradicts the inmate’s assertion that certain low COMPAS scores create a presumption of release. See Matter of King v. Stanford, 137 A.D.3d at 1397. Finally, we note that the Board in its decision specifically stated reasons for departure from certain scores contained in Appellant’s COMPAS instrument.

As to the fifth issue, Appellant’s assertion that the denial of parole release amounted to an improper resentencing is without merit inasmuch as the Board fulfilled its obligation to determine the propriety of release per Executive Law § 259-i(2)(c)(A) and after considering the factors set forth therein. See Executive Law § 259 et seq.; Penal Law § 70.40; Matter of Murray v. Evans, 83 A.D.3d 1320, 920 N.Y.S.2d 745 (3d Dept. 2011); Matter of Crews v. New York State Exec. Dept. Bd. of Parole Appeals Unit, 281 A.D.2d 672, 720 N.Y.S.2d 855 (3d Dept. 2001). Appellant has not in any manner been resentenced. Matter of Mullins v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 136 A.D.3d 1141, 1142, 25 N.Y.S.3d 698 (3d Dept. 2016).

As to the sixth issue, the Board may consider an inmate’s failure to comply with DOCCS rules in denying parole. See Matter of Almonte v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 145 A.D.3d 1307, 42 N.Y.S.3d 691 (3d Dept. 2016), *lv. denied*, 29 N.Y.3d 905 (2017); Matter of Karlin v. Cully, 104 A.D.3d 1285, 1286, 960 N.Y.S.2d 827, 828 (4th Dept. 2013); Matter of Stanley v. New York State Div. of Parole, 92 A.D.3d 948, 948-49, 939 N.Y.S.2d 132, 134 (2d Dept.), *lv. denied*, 19 N.Y.3d 806, 949 N.Y.S.2d 343 (2012). It is not improper for the Board to consider a DOCCS prison disciplinary finding against an inmate, even if the case is pending on appeal at the time of the Parole Board Release Interview. Matter of Arce v. Travis, 273 A.D.2d 564, 710 N.Y.S.2d 554 (3d Dept. 2000); see also Matter of Warmus v. New York State Dep’t of Corrs. & Cmty. Supervision, Index No. 7516-17, *Decision, Order & Judgment* dated Sept. 10, 2018 (Sup. Ct. Albany Co.) (O’Connor, A.S.C.J.). Appellant is not automatically entitled to a new parole release interview even if there is a subsequent reversal of a DOCCS disciplinary violation. Matter of Collins v. Hammock, 52 N.Y.2d 798, 436 N.Y.S.2d 704 (1980).

As to the seventh issue, the Board’s decision to hold an inmate for the maximum period of 24 months is within the Board’s discretion and within its authority pursuant to Executive Law § 259-i(2)(a) and 9 N.Y.C.R.R. § 8002.3(b). Matter of Tatta v. State of N.Y., Div. of Parole, 290 A.D.2d 907, 737 N.Y.S.2d 163 (3d Dept. 2002), *lv. denied*, 98 N.Y.2d 604, 746 N.Y.S.2d 278

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Tenney, Andrew

DIN: 81-B-2137

Facility: Great Meadow CF

AC No.: 07-078-18 B

Findings: (Page 4 of 4)

(2002); see also Matter of Campbell v. Evans, 106 A.D.3d 1363, 965 N.Y.S.2d 672 (3d Dept. 2013). Appellant has failed to demonstrate that his hold of 21 months for discretionary release was excessive or improper.

Recommendation: Affirm.