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Administrative Appeal Decision - Gagliano, Jude (2019-02-06)

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STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL DECISION NOTICE

Name: Gagliano, Jude

Facility: Gowanda CF

NYSID: [REDACTED]

**Appeal
Control No.:** 08-026-18 B

DIN: 17-B-3295

Appearances: Thomas Eoannou, Esq.
Cornell Mansion
484 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14202

Decision appealed: July 2018 decision denying discretionary release and imposing a hold of 24-months.

**Board Member(s)
who participated:** Drake, Demosthenes, Coppola


Papers considered: Appellant's Brief received November 15, 2018

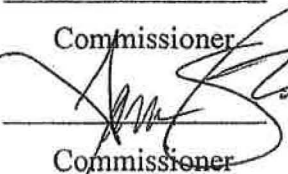
Appeals Unit Review: Statement of the Appeals Unit's Findings and Recommendation

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 _____

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.

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION**Name:** Gagliano, Jude**DIN:** 17-B-3295**Facility:** Gowanda CF**AC No.:** 08-026-18 B**Findings:** (Page 1 of 3)

Appellant was sentenced to one to three years upon his conviction by plea of Vehicular Manslaughter in the second degree. Appellant challenges the July 2018 determination of the Board denying release and imposing a 24-month hold on the following grounds: (1) the decision is arbitrary and capricious because the Board relied on the instant offense and admitted prior instances of drinking and driving, without any aggravating factors or consideration of positive factors such as his institutional record and release plans; (2) the decision is arbitrary and capricious, and the 24-month hold is excessive, because the Board relied on Appellant's need to complete the [REDACTED] despite the fact that his anticipated completion date was before his PE date; and (3) the decision fails to provide adequate details. These arguments are without merit.

As an initial matter, 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). 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). An EEC does not automatically guarantee release or eliminate consideration of the statutory factors including the instant offense. Matter of Milling v. Barbary, 31 A.D.3d 1202, 1203, 819 N.Y.S.2d 373, 374 (4th Dept.), lv. denied, 7 N.Y.3d 808, 809, 822 N.Y.S.2d 481 (2006); Matter of White v. Dennison, 29 A.D.3d 1144, 814 N.Y.S.2d 393 (3d Dept. 2006); Matter of Barad v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 275 A.D.2d 856, 713 N.Y.S.2d 775, 776 (3d Dept. 2000), lv. denied, 96 N.Y.2d 702, 722 N.Y.S.2d 793 (2001). The Board may deny release to parole on a finding that there is a reasonable probability that, if such inmate is released, the inmate will not live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that his release is not compatible with the welfare of society. Correction Law § 805; Matter of Heitman v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 214 A.D.2d 673, 625 N.Y.S.2d 264 (2d Dept. 1995); Matter of Salcedo v. Ross, 183 A.D.2d 771, 771, 583 N.Y.S.2d 502, 503 (1st Dept. 1992); Matter of Walker v. Russi, 176 A.D.2d 1185, 576 N.Y.S.2d 51 (3d Dept. 1991), appeal dismissed, 79 N.Y.2d 89 7, 581 N.Y.S.2d 660 (1992).

While consideration of the statutory factors is mandatory, “the ultimate decision to parole a prisoner is discretionary.” Matter of Silmon v. Travis, 95 N.Y.2d 470, 477, 718 N.Y.S.2d 704, 708 (2000). 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, 990 N.Y.S.2d at 717; Matter of Garcia

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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 King v. Stanford, 137 A.D.3d 1396, 26 N.Y.S.3d 815 (3d Dept. 2016). 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 McKee v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 157 A.D.2d 944, 945, 550 N.Y.S.2d 204, 205 (3d Dept. 1990).

Here, the record as a whole, including the interview transcript, reflects that the Board considered the appropriate factors, including: the instant offense wherein Appellant operated a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, struck another vehicle and caused a man's death; that it is Appellant's only crime of conviction but, by his own admission, he had engaged in drinking and driving on prior occasions; his history of alcohol use; his institutional record including [REDACTED] vocational programs, receipt of an EEC and a single disciplinary infraction; and release plans to live with family, work for a contractor and a car dealership, [REDACTED]. The Board also had before it and considered, among other things, the sentencing minutes, Appellant's case plan, the COMPAS instrument, and Appellant's submission and letters of support.

After considering all required factors and principles, the Board acted within its discretion in determining release would not satisfy the applicable standards for release. In reaching its conclusion, the Board permissibly relied on the instant offense leading to the victim's tragic death, Appellant's admission that he engaged in drinking and driving on several other occasions and that he used alcohol to cope with his stressors. See Matter of Furman v. Annucci, 138 A.D.3d 1269, 28 N.Y.S.3d 352 (3d Dept. 2016); Matter of Neal v. Stanford, 131 A.D.3d 1320, 16 N.Y.S.3d 342 (3d Dept. 2015); Matter of Brant v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 236 A.D.2d 760, 761, 654 N.Y.S.2d 207, 208 (3d Dept. 1997); Matter of McLain v. New York State Div. of Parole, 204 A.D.2d 456, 611 N.Y.S.2d 629 (2d Dept. 1994). While acknowledging Appellant's dedication to leading a positive lifestyle, the Board urged him to [REDACTED] develop a solid relapse prevention plan, outline his triggers and coping tools, and undergo a deeper assessment as he had just began to acknowledge his problem with drinking and driving. See, e.g., Matter of Silmon, 95 N.Y.2d at 478, 718 N.Y.S.2d 704; Matter of Connelly v. New York State Div. of Parole, 286 A.D.2d 792, 729 N.Y.S.2d 808, 809 (3d Dept.), appeal dismissed 97 N.Y.2d 677, 738 N.Y.S.2d 291 (2001); Matter of Barrett v. New York State Div. of Parole, 242 A.D.2d 763, 661 N.Y.S.2d 857 (3d Dept. 1997). The Board encouraged him to continue to program positively, maintain contacts with community resources that will support a positive transition, and maintain a clean disciplinary record.

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While aggravating factors are not required when the Board emphasizes the instant offense, see Matter of Hamilton v. New York State Div. of Parole, 119 A.D.3d 1268, 990 N.Y.S.2d 714 (3d Dept. 2014), the Board's decision here was based on additional considerations. Moreover, that the Board found positive aspects of Appellant's file outweighed by other factors does not constitute convincing evidence that the Board did not consider them, Matter of Fuchino, 255 A.D.2d at 914, 680 N.Y.S.2d at 390, or render the decision irrational, Matter of Cardenales v. Dennison, 37 A.D.3d 371, 830 N.Y.S.2d 152 (1st Dept. 2007). The transcript does not support Appellant's suggestion that he was denied a fair interview. Matter of Rivers v. Evans, 119 A.D.3d 1188, 989 N.Y.S.2d 400 (3d Dept. 2014); Matter of Bonilla v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 32 A.D.3d 1070, 1071, 820 N.Y.S.2d 661, 662 (3d Dept. 2006). The Board also did not rely on penal philosophy.

Contrary to Appellant's claim, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Likewise, it does not render the hold improper. 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 (2002); see also Matter of Campbell v. Evans, 106 A.D.3d 1363, 965 N.Y.S.2d 672 (3d Dept. 2013).

Finally, the Board's decision satisfied the criteria set out in Executive Law § 259-i(2)(a) and 9 N.Y.C.R.R. § 8002.3(d). It was sufficiently detailed to inform the inmate of the reasons for the denial of parole. Matter of Applegate v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 164 A.D.3d 996, 997, 82 N.Y.S.3d 240 (3d Dept. 2018); Matter of Kozlowski v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 108 A.D.3d 435, 968 N.Y.S.2d 87 (1st Dept. 2013); Matter of Little v. Travis, 15 A.D.3d 698, 788 N.Y.S.2d 628 (3d Dept. 2005); Matter of Davis v. Travis, 292 A.D.2d 742, 739 N.Y.S.2d 300 (3d Dept. 2002). The Board addressed many of the factors and principles considered in individualized terms and explained those that ultimately weighed most heavily in its deliberations: the instant offense, Appellant's admission that he engaged in the underlying behavior on prior occasions and used alcohol as a coping mechanism, [REDACTED] and further prepare for release.

Recommendation: Affirm.