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Administrative Appeal Decision - Jones, Nat (2019-04-15)

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STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL DECISION NOTICE

Name: Jones, Nat

Facility: Wyoming CF

NYSID: [REDACTED]

Appeal Control No.: 09-037-18 B

DIN: 87-A-9707

Appearances: Nat Jones (87A9707)
Wyoming Correctional Facility
3203 Dunbar Road, Box 501
Attica, New York 14011-0501

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

Board Member(s) who participated: Coppola, Cruse.

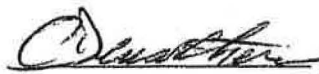
Papers considered: Appellant's Brief received January 25, 2019


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 4/15/19 EG.

Distribution: Appeals Unit – Appellant - Appellant's Counsel - Inst. Parole File - Central File P-2002(B) (11/2018)

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Jones, Nat

DIN: 87-A-9707

Facility: Wyoming CF

AC No.: 09-037-18 B

Findings: (Page 1 of 3)

Appellant challenges the August 2018 determination of the Board, denying release and imposing a 24-month hold.

Appellant appeared before the Board with no less than Twelve (12) counts of Rape 1st

Five (5) counts of Sexual Abuse 1st, Four (4) counts of Sodomy 1st, Five (5) counts of Sexual Abuse 1st, Four (4) counts of Attempted Rape 1st, Ten (10) counts of Burglary 1st, and 1 count of Robbery 1st, and Murder 2nd. While the Murder 2nd conviction was by plea, all of the other convictions were reached by verdict. The Board accurately described Appellant's astounding number of horrific, violent crimes of conviction as "unimaginable".

Appellant raises various issues in his brief relating to prior Board interviews. Issues relating to prior Board interviews are not properly before the Appeals Unit for consideration. Any argument with respect to his prior appearances is now moot because of his February 16, 2010 reappearance before the Board. Matter of Taus v. Stanford, 164 A.D.3d 1556 (3d Dept. 2018), appeal dismissed, -- N.Y. 2d -- (2019); Matter of Brisbane v. Annucci, 159 A.D. 3d 1579 (4th Dept. 2018); Matter of Soule v. Stanford, 155 A.D. 3d 1552 (4th Dept. 2017), leave to appeal denied by, 30 N.Y. 3d 912 (2018); Matter of Blanks v. Annucci, 2017 N.Y. App. Div. LEXIS 7953 (4th Dept. 2017); Matter of Watt v. Stanford, --A.D.3d-- (2d Dept. 2017); Matter of Marcelin v. Evans, 108 A.D.3d 979 (3d Dept. 2013), leave denied 22 N.Y. 3d 855 (2013); Dobranski v. Alexander, 69 A.D.3d 1091 (3d Dept. 2010); Graham v. New York State Div. of Parole, 68 A.D.3d 1621 (3d Dept. 2009); LaSalle v. New York State Div. of Parole, 67 A.D.3d 1233 (3d Dept. 2009).

The remaining issue raised by Appellant is that the Board placed too much emphasis on his numerous, horrific crimes of conviction, with too little emphasis on certain COMPAS scores and programming.

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

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APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Jones, Nat

DIN: 87-A-9707

Facility: Wyoming CF

AC No.: 09-037-18 B

Findings: (Page 2 of 3)

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 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.

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

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

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DIN: 87-A-9707

Facility: Wyoming CF

AC No.: 09-037-18 B

Findings: (Page 3 of 3)

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).

Recommendation: Affirm.