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STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL DECISION NOTICE

Name: Rhines, Shawn

Facility: Green Haven CF

NYSID: [REDACTED]

**Appeal
Control No.:** 11-078-18 B

DIN: 12-A-0554

Appearances: Mary Raleigh Esq.
27 Crystal Farm Road
Warwick, New York 10990

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

Board Member(s)
who participated: Demosthenes, Agostini, Davis

Papers considered: Appellant's Brief received March 22, 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 6/6/19 66.

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Rhines, Shawn

DIN: 12-A-0554

Facility: Green Haven CF

AC No.: 11-078-18 B

Findings: (Page 1 of 5)

Appellant challenges the October 2018 determination of the Board, denying release and imposing a 24-month hold. Appellant's instant offense consisted of him shooting the victim to death, a complete stranger, for no reason at all. Appellant raises the following issues: 1) the Board failed to consider and/or properly weigh the required statutory factors. 2) as appellant was only 15 years old when he committed this crime, the Board failed to consider his youthful age and lack of maturity at the time of the crime. 3) the decision illegally resentenced him. 4) the decision lacks detail. 5) the decision failed to have findings in support of the statutory reasons cited in the denial.

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). 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, 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 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, 21, 834 N.Y.S.2d 121, 124 (1st Dept. 2007).

The Board is permitted to consider, and place greater emphasis on the heinous nature of the offense. Executive Law § 259-i(2)(c)(a); 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 Olmosperez v. Evans, 114 A.D.3d 1077, 1078, 980 N.Y.S.2d 845, 846 (3d Dept. 2014), aff'd 26 N.Y.3d 1014, 21 N.Y.S.3d 686 (2015); Matter of Almeyda v. New York State Div. of Parole, 290 A.D.2d 505, 736 N.Y.S.2d 275 (2d Dept. 2002); Matter of Garcia v. New York State Div. of Parole, 239 A.D.2d 235, 239-40, 657 N.Y.S.2d 415, 418 (1st Dept. 1997); Matter of Marcus v. Alexander, 54 A.D.3d 476, 476, 862 N.Y.S.2d 414, 415 (3d Dept. 2008).

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Rhines, Shawn

DIN: 12-A-0554

Facility: Green Haven CF

AC No.: 11-078-18 B

Findings: (Page 2 of 5)

The Board was not required to give each factor equal weight or explicitly discuss each factor and was entitled to, and properly did, place greater emphasis upon the egregious nature of petitioners crime. Matter of Crawford v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 144 A.D.3d 1308, 46 N.Y.S.3d 228 (3d Dept. 2016), lv. denied, 29 N.Y.3d 901, 57 N.Y.S.3d 704 (2017).

The Board may place particular emphasis on the violent nature of the crime. Matter of Hamilton v. New York State Div. of Parole, 119 A.D.3d 1268, 1272, 1273-74, 990 N.Y.S.2d 714, 718, 719 (3d Dept. 2014).

Board permissibly emphasized the serious nature of the instant offense. Matter of Hunter v. New York State Div. of Parole, 21 A.D.3d 1178, 800 N.Y.S.2d 799 (3d Dept. 2005).

The Board may cite the failure of the inmate to acknowledge the impact of the criminal conduct on the victim. Gaito v New York State Board of Parole, 238 A.D.2d 634, 655 N.Y.S.2d 692 (3d Dept 1997); Romer v Dennison, 24 A.D.3d 866, 804 N.Y.S.2d 872 (3d Dept. 2005).

The Board may consider the probable repercussions of the criminal's actions upon the victims' families. Bottom v New York State Board of Parole, 30 A.D.3d 657, 815 N.Y.S.2d 789 (3d Dept. 2006).

There is a strong rehabilitative component in the statute that may be given effect by considering lack of remorse. Matter of Silmon v. Travis, 95 N.Y.2d 470, 478, 718 N.Y.S.2d 704 (2000). Remorse is relevant not only to rehabilitative progress but also to whether release would deprecate the severity of the offense. Matter of Phillips v. Dennison, 41 A.D.3d 17, 23, 834 N.Y.S.2d 121, 125 (1st Dept. 2007).

The fact that the Board afforded greater weight to the inmate's criminal history, as opposed to other positive factors, does not render the denial of parole for that reason irrational or improper. Matter of Davis v. Evans, 105 A.D.3d 1305, 963 N.Y.S.2d 485 (3d Dept. 2013); Matter of Lashway v. Evans, 110 A.D.3d 1417, 1418, 974 N.Y.S.2d 164, 165 (3d Dept. 2013); Matter of McKee v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 157 A.D.2d 944, 550 N.Y.S.2d 204 (3d Dept. 1990).

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).

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Rhines, Shawn

DIN: 12-A-0554

Facility: Green Haven CF

AC No.: 11-078-18 B

Findings: (Page 3 of 5)

The Board stressing the nature of the underlying offense, troubling criminal history and prison disciplinary record, does not constitute irrationality bordering on impropriety. Perez v Evans, 76 A.D.3d 1130, 907 N.Y.S.2d 701 (3d Dept. 2010); Mentor v New York State Division of Parole, 87 A.D.3d 1245, 930 N.Y.S.2d 302 (3d Dept. 2011) lv.app.den. 18 N.Y.3d 803, 938 N.Y.S.2d 860 (2012); Stanley v New York State Division of Parole, 92 A.D.3d 948, 939 N.Y.S.2d 132 (2d Dept. 2012); Moore v New York State Board of Parole, 137 A.D.3d 1375, 26 N.Y.S.3d 412 (3d Dept. 2016).

The Board may consider an inmate's need to complete rehabilitative programming in denying parole. See Matter of Allen v. Stanford, 161 A.D.3d 1503, 1506, 78 N.Y.S.3d 445 (3d Dept.), lv. denied, 32 N.Y.3d 903 (2018); Matter of Barrett v. New York State Div. of Parole, 242 A.D.2d 763, 661 N.Y.S.2d 857 (3d Dept. 1997); see also 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).

The Board may take note of the inmate's disregard for the life of another human being. Hakim v Travis, 302 A.D.2d 821, 754 N.Y.S.2d 600 (3d Dept 2003); Angel v Travis, 1 A.D.3d 589, 767 N.Y.S.2d 290 (3d Dept 2003).

The Board may consider a district attorney's recommendation to deny 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 Porter v. Alexander, 63 A.D.3d 945, 881 N.Y.S.2d 157 (2d Dept. 2009); Matter of Walker v. Travis, 252 A.D.2d 360, 676 N.Y.S.2d 52 (1st Dept. 1998); Matter of Walker v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 218 A.D.2d 891, 630 N.Y.S.2d 417 (3d Dept. 1995); Matter of Williams v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 220 A.D.2d 753, 633 N.Y.S.2d 182 (2d Dept. 1995); Matter of Confoy v. New York State Div. of Parole, 173 A.D.2d 1014, 569 N.Y.S.2d 846, 847 (3d Dept. 1991); Matter of Lynch v. New York State Div. of Parole, 82 A.D.2d 1012, 442 N.Y.S.2d 179 (3d Dept. 1981).

The Board may consider negative aspects of the COMPAS instrument. Matter of Bush v. Annucci, 148 A.D.3d 1392, 50 N.Y.S.3d 180 (3d Dept. 2017) (COMPAS instrument with mixed results including substance abuse relevant given use before crime); Matter of Wade v. Stanford, 148 A.D.3d 1487, 52 N.Y.S.3d 508 (3d Dept. 2017) (low risk felony violence but probable risk for substance abuse alcohol related crimes); Matter of Crawford v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 144 A.D.3d 1308, 46 N.Y.S.3d 228 (3d Dept. 2016) (scores not uniformly low including family support), lv. denied, 29 N.Y.3d 901, 57 N.Y.S.3d 704 (2017).

That the Board "did not recite the precise statutory language of Executive Law § 259-i (2)(c)(A) in support of its conclusion to deny parole does not undermine its conclusion." 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) (citation omitted); accord Matter of Reed v. Evans, 94 A.D.3d 1323, 942 N.Y.S.2d 387 (3d Dept.

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Rhines, Shawn

DIN: 12-A-0554

Facility: Green Haven CF

AC No.: 11-078-18 B

Findings: (Page 4 of 5)

2012). The language used by the Board was “only semantically different” from the statute. Matter of Miller v. New York State Div. of Parole, 72 A.D.3d 690, 691–92, 897 N.Y.S.2d 726, 727 (2d Dept. 2010); Matter of James v. Chairman of New York State Div. of Parole, 19 A.D.3d 857, 858, 796 N.Y.S.2d 735, 736 (3d Dept. 2005); see also 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) (upholding decision that denied release as “contrary to the best interest of the community”).

The Board’s decision satisfied the criteria set out in Executive Law § 259-i(2)(a), as 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); 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).

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. 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). The Board was vested with discretion to determine whether release was appropriate notwithstanding the minimum period of incarceration set by the Court. Matter of Burress v. Dennison, 37 A.D.3d 930, 829 N.Y.S.2d 283 (3d Dept. 2007); Matter of Cody v. Dennison, 33 A.D.3d 1141, 1142, 822 N.Y.S.2d 677 (3d Dept. 2006), lv. denied, 8 N.Y.3d 802, 830 N.Y.S.2d 698 (2007). The 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).

The Board interview went into detail about appellant’s youth and his lack of transient maturity and its attendant circumstances, and how he has possibly changed as an adult. The Board considered the inmate’s youth at the time of the crimes, but ultimately “placed greater emphasis on other factors, including the seriousness of [his] crimes and his history of unlawful and violent conduct, as it was entitled to do.” Matter of Allen v. Stanford, 161 A.D.3d 1503, 78 N.Y.S.3d 445 (3d Dept.) (citing Matter of Hamilton v. New York State Div. of Parole, 119 A.D.3d 1268, 1274, 990 N.Y.S.2d 714 (3d Dept. 2014)), lv. denied, 32 N.Y.3d 903 (2018). The Board may place emphasis on a minor offender’s failure to comply with DOCCS rules particularly whereas here the disciplinary record is lengthy and includes recent infractions. See Matter of Allen v. Stanford, 161 A.D.3d 1503, 1506, 78 N.Y.S.3d 445 (3d Dept.) (lengthy prison disciplinary record with instances of violence), lv. denied, 32 N.Y.3d 903 (2018).

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Rhines, Shawn

DIN: 12-A-0554

Facility: Green Haven CF

AC No.: 11-078-18 B

Findings: (Page 5 of 5)

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, 468 N.Y.S.2d 881.

Recommendation: Affirm.