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Administrative Appeal Decision - McFarlane, Wayne (2019-05-10)

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STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL DECISION NOTICE

Name: McFarlane, Wayne

Facility: Bare Hill CF

NYSID: [REDACTED]

Appeal Control No.: 10-090-18 B

DIN: 96-A-2548

Appearances: Thomas G. Soucia, Esq.
Franklin County Public Defender
355 West Main Street, Suite 228
Malone, New York 12953

Decision appealed: October 2018 decision, denying discretionary release and imposing a hold of 12 months.

Board Member(s) who participated: Cruse, Drake, Shapiro


Papers considered: Appellant's Brief received March 8, 2019

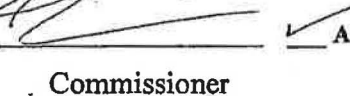
Appeals Unit Review: Statement of the Appeals Unit's Findings and Recommendation

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 5/10/19 GG.

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APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

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Appellant challenges the October 2018 determination of the Board, denying release and imposing a 12-month hold.

Appellant is serving a term of imprisonment of 25 years to Life after having been convicted by verdict of two counts of Murder 2nd, and Criminal Possession of a Weapon 2nd. Appellant is serving his third state incarceration. He has violated probation, and also violated the terms of his parole release on a number of occasions. He also has an extensive history of disciplinary infractions for drug possession, violent conduct, sex offense, and other infractions.

Appellant raises the following issues in his brief: (1) the Board's decision was arbitrary, capricious and irrational, made in violation of applicable legal authority, and relied too heavily upon the serious nature of Appellant's crimes of conviction; (2) Appellant's programming, positive accomplishments, rehabilitative efforts, certain COMPAS scores, and release plans were not given sufficient consideration by the Board; (3) the Board's decision lacked sufficient detail; (4) the Board's decision was predetermined; (5) the Board's decision was tantamount to a resentencing of Appellant; and (6) the Board failed to discuss certain issues with Appellant during the interview.

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,

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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 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).

As to the third issue, 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), 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,

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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).

As to the fourth issue, there is a presumption of honesty and integrity that attaches to judges and administrative fact-finders. See People ex. rel. Johnson v. New York State Bd. of Parole, 180 A.D.2d 914 (3d Dept. 1992). The Board is presumed to have followed applicable statutory requirements and internal policies when making decisions regarding the suitability of an inmate's possible release to parole supervision. See Garner v. Jones, 529 U.S. 244 (2000). There is no evidence that the Board's decision was predetermined. See Matter of Hakim-Zaki v. New York State Div. of Parole, 29 A.D.3d 1190 (3d Dept. 2006); Matter of Guerin v. New York State Div. of Parole, 276 A.D.2d 899 (3d Dept. 2000).

As to the fifth issue, 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), 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).

As to the sixth issue, Appellant was provided the opportunity to discuss with the Board during the interview any issues of interest, and cannot now be heard to complain that certain issues were not discussed, or the extent to which certain issues were discussed. See Matter of Serna v. New York State Division of Parole, 279 A.D.2d 684, 719 N.Y.S. 2d 166 (3d Dept. 2001); Matter of Garcia v. New York State Div. of Parole, 239 A.D.2d 235, 657 N.Y.S.2d 415 (1st Dept. 1997).

Recommendation: Affirm.