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ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL DECISION NOTICE

Name: Bellerose, Jessica

Facility: Albion CF

NYSID: [REDACTED]

Appeal Control No.: 05-152-19 B

DIN: 17-G-0431

Appearances: Kathy Manley Esq.
26 Dinmore Road
Selkirk, New York 12158

Decision appealed: May 2019 decision, denying discretionary release and imposing a hold of 24 months.


Board Member(s) who participated: Demosthenes, Agostini

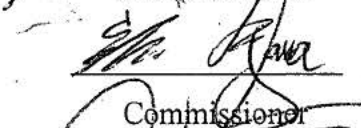
Papers considered: Appellant's Brief received September 17, 2019

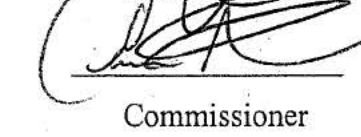
Appeals Unit Review: Statement of the Appeals Unit's Findings and Recommendation

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 2/10/2020.
LB

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Bellerose, Jessica

DIN: 17-G-0431

Facility: Albion CF

AC No.: 05-152-19 B

Findings: (Page 1 of 6)

Appellant challenges the May 2019 determination of the Board, denying release and imposing a 24-month hold. Appellant's instant offense involved her driving a car while drunk, and crashing into another car and killing the occupant of the other car. Appellant raises the following issues: 1) the decision is arbitrary and capricious, and irrational bordering on impropriety, in that the Board failed to consider and/or properly weigh the required statutory factors. 2) the decision lacks details. 3) the Board ignored her EEC and never rebutted the presumption of release created by it. 4) the decision lacks future guidance. 5) other inmate's with worse records have been released. 6) the decision illegally resentenced her. 7) the Board failed to comply with the 2011 amendments to the Executive Law in that her mostly positive COMPAS was ignored, the one negative on it was in error, and the statutes are forward looking.

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). Whereas here the inmate has received an EEC, 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 her 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 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).

That the Board found appellant's postconviction activities outweighed by the serious nature of her crime does not constitute convincing evidence that the Board did not consider them, see Matter of McLain v. New York State Div. of Parole, 204 A.D.2d 456, 611 N.Y.S.2d 629 (2d Dept. 1994), or render the decision irrational, see 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).

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 the inmate's blatant disregard for the law and the sanctity of human life. Campbell v Stanford, 173 A.D.3d 1012, 105 N.Y.S.3d 461 (2nd Dept. 2019).

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Bellerose, Jessica

DIN: 17-G-0431

Facility: Albion CF

AC No.: 05-152-19 B

Findings: (Page 2 of 6)

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).

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 Espinal v. New York Bd. of Parole, 2019 NY Slip Op 04080, 2019 N.Y. App. Div. LEXIS 4057 (3d Dept. May 23, 2019) (COMPAS instrument yielded mixed results); 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).

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).

As for appellant's complaint about lack of future guidance, the Board is not required to state what an inmate should do to improve his chances for parole in the future. Matter of Francis v. New York State Div. of Parole, 89 A.D.3d 1312, 934 N.Y.S.2d 514 (3d Dept. 2011); Matter of Freeman v. New York State Div. of Parole, 21 A.D.3d 1174, 800 N.Y.S.2d 797 (3d Dept. 2005); Matter of Partee v. Evans, 40 Misc.3d 896, 969 N.Y.S.2d 733 (Sup. Ct. Albany Co. 2013), aff'd, 117 A.D.3d 1258, 984 N.Y.S.2d 894 (3d Dept. 2014), lv. denied, 24 N.Y.3d 901, 995 N.Y.S.2d 710 (2014).

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

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Bellerose, Jessica

DIN: 17-G-0431

Facility: Albion CF

AC No.: 05-152-19 B

Findings: (Page 3 of 6)

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).

As for other inmates being released, there is no entitlement to parole based upon comparison with the particulars of other applicants. Rather, each case is sui generis, and the Board may give each case a unique weighted value. Phillips v. Dennison, 41 A.D.3d 17, 834 N.Y.S.2d 121 (1st Dept. 2007).

Receipt of an EEC does not preclude denial of parole. Matter of Milling v. Berbary, 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 Romer v. Dennison, 24 A.D.3d 866, 867, 804 N.Y.S.2d 872, 873 (3d Dept. 2005); 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). An EEC does not automatically entitle an inmate to discretionary release or eliminate consideration of the statutory factors including the instant offense. Matter of Corley v. New York State Div. of Parole, 33 A.D.3d 1142, 1143, 822 N.Y.S.2d 817, 818 (3d Dept. 2006); Matter of Pearl v. New York State Div. of Parole, 25 A.D.3d 1058, 808 N.Y.S.2d 816, 817 (3d Dept. 2006); Matter of White v. Dennison, 29 A.D.3d 1144, 814 N.Y.S.2d 393 (3d Dept. 2006). Moreover, the Board is not required to give each factor equal weight. Matter of Corley, 33 A.D.3d 1142, 1143, 822 N.Y.S.2d 817, 818; Matter of Pearl, 25 A.D.3d 1058, 808 N.Y.S.2d 816, 817. 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 (2d 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). The Board acted within its discretion in determining other considerations rebutted any presumption created by the EEC and rendered discretionary release inappropriate at this time. See generally Matter of Bello v. Bd. of Parole, 149 A.D.3d 1458, 53 N.Y.S.3d 715 (3d Dept. 2017); Matter of Wade v. Stanford, 148 A.D.3d 1487, 52 N.Y.S.3d 508 (3d Dept. 2017); 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 Singh v. Evans, 107

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Bellerose, Jessica

DIN: 17-G-0431

Facility: Albion CF

AC No.: 05-152-19 B

Findings: (Page 4 of 6)

A.D.3d 1274, 1275, 968 N.Y.S.2d 648, 649-50 (3d Dept. 2013). The Board acted within its discretion in determining other considerations and rebutted any presumption created by the EEC and rendered discretionary release inappropriate at this time. See generally Matter of Bello v. Bd. of Parole, 149 A.D.3d 1458, 53 N.Y.S.3d 715 (3d Dept. 2017); Matter of Wade v. Stanford, 148 A.D.3d 1487, 52 N.Y.S.3d 508 (3d Dept. 2017); 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 Singh v. Evans, 107 A.D.3d 1274, 1275, 968 N.Y.S.2d 648, 649-50 (3d Dept. 2013).

Denial of parole is neither arbitrary nor capricious when the Parole Board relied on the factors defined by the New York statute. Hodge v Griffin, 2014 WL 2453333(S.D.N.Y. 2014) citing Romer v Travis, 2003 WL 21744079. An arbitrary action is one without sound basis in reason and without regard to the facts. Rationality is what is reviewed under an arbitrary and capricious standard. Hamilton v New York State Division of Parole, 119 A.D.3d 1268, 990 N.Y.S.2d 714 (3d Dept. 2014). An action is arbitrary and capricious when it is taken without sound basis in reason or regard to the facts. Ward v City of Long Beach, 20 N.Y.3d 1042 (2013). Denial is neither arbitrary nor capricious when the Board relies on factors defined by New York statute. Siao-Paul v. Connolly, 564 F. Supp. 2d 232, 242 (S.D.N.Y. 2008); Hanna v New York State Board of Parole, 169 A.D.3d 503, 92 N.Y.S.3d 621 (1st Dept. 2019).

The appellant has failed to demonstrate that the Parole Board's determination was affected by a showing of irrationality bordering on impropriety. Matter of Silmon v Travis, 95 N.Y.2d 470, 718 N.Y.S.2d 704 (2001); Matter of Russo v New York State Board of Parole, 50 N.Y.2d 69, 77, 427 N.Y.S.2d 982 (1980).

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.

Appellant's claim that the Board failed to comply with the 2011 amendments to the Executive Law is rejected. Dolan v New York State Board of Parole, 122 A.D.3d 1058, 995 N.Y.S.2d 850 (3d Dept. 2014); Tran v Evans, 126 A.D.3d 1196, 3 N.Y.S.3d 633 (3d Dept. 2015); Bocadisi v Stanford, 133 A.D.3d 1169, 20 N.Y.S.3d 477 (3d Dept. 2015).

Contrary to Appellant's claim, the 2011 amendments and 9 NYCRR § 8002.2(a) as amended do not represent a forward-looking shift requiring the COMPAS to be the fundamental basis for release decisions. This proposition is not supported by the language of the statute itself, considering the relatively modest change to Section 259-c(4) and the absence of any substantive

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Bellerose, Jessica

DIN: 17-G-0431

Facility: Albion CF

AC No.: 05-152-19 B

Findings: (Page 5 of 6)

change to Section 259-i(2), which governs the discretionary release consideration process. In 2011, the Executive 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). 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, 139 A.D.3d 1068, 30 N.Y.S.3d 834; Matter of Robles v. Fischer, 117 A.D.3d 1558, 1559, 985 N.Y.S.2d 386, 387 (4th Dept. 2014). However, the COMPAS is not predictive and was never intended to be the sole indicator of risk and needs as the Board gets risk and needs information from a variety of sources, including the statutory factors and the interview. 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. Executive Law § 259-i(2)(c)(A); Matter of Montane, 116 A.D.3d at 202, 981 N.Y.S.2d at 870. The amendments also did not change the three substantive standards that the Board is required to apply when deciding whether to grant parole. Executive Law § 259-i(2)(c)(A). Thus, the COMPAS instrument cannot mandate a particular result. Matter of King, 137 A.D.3d 1396, 26 N.Y.S.3d 815. Rather, the COMPAS is an additional consideration that the Board must weigh along with the statutory factors for the purposes of deciding whether all three statutory 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).

The Board is not required to give the COMPAS and case plan greater weight than the other statutory factors. Matter of Gonzalvo v. Stanford, 153 A.D.3d 1021, 56 N.Y.S.3d 896 (3d Dept. 2017); accord Matter of Lewis v. Stanford, 153 A.D.3d 1478, 59 N.Y.S.3d 726 (3d Dept. 2017). The Board still is entitled to place greater emphasis on the instant offense. See Matter of Montane v. Evans, 116 A.D.3d 197, 203, 981 N.Y.S.2d 866, 871 (3d Dept. 2014); see also Matter of Gonzalvo v. Stanford, 153 A.D.3d 1021, 56 N.Y.S.3d 896 (3d Dept. 2017); Matter of Lewis v. Stanford, 153 A.D.3d 1478, 59 N.Y.S.3d 726 (3d Dept. 2017).

Appellant did not raise an alleged COMPAS error during the interview, thereby waiving the issue. Matter of Shaffer v. Leonardo, 179 A.D.2d 980, 579 N.Y.S.2d 910 (3d Dept. 1992); Boddie v New York State Division of Parole, 288 F.Supp.2d 431 (S.D.N.Y. 2003). In any event, appellant during the interview [REDACTED], thus proving the negative score was not in error. The Board may consider the inmate’s admission during the interview concerning the crime. Rivera v New York State Division of Parole, 95 A.D.3d 1586, 944 N.Y.S.2d 807 (3d Dept. 2012).

STATE OF NEW YORK – BOARD OF PAROLE

APPEALS UNIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATION

Name: Bellerose, Jessica

DIN: 17-G-0431

Facility: Albion CF

AC No.: 05-152-19 B

Findings: (Page 6 of 6)

Recommendation: Affirm.