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PAROLE COMMISSION
Staff Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 2, 2020
3099 East Washington Avenue
Madison, WI 53704

Presiding: John Tate II, Chair

Present: Doug Drankiewicz, Jennifer Kramer, Shannon Pierce, Sara Tome, Oliver Buchino

This meeting was conducted in-part through Zoom Videoconferencing due to the closure of state office buildings and social distancing guidelines because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The meeting began in open session at 10:00 AM.

Chairman Tate opened by introducing himself and members of the Commission, including Shannon Pierce, recently hired as a new Commissioner.

The Chair commended Commission members and staff on their efforts to maintain normal operations during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Chair initiated discussion encouraging Commissioners to consider community-based programming, as an alternative to completion of recommended programming at the institutions as a parole requirement for persons-in-custody.

Commissioner Drankiewicz noted that he would prefer to see such programming needs be addressed at the institutions. The Chair indicated that community-based programming be considered as an option in cases where all other factors may have been or may be satisfied, if program completion was not a barrier. The Chair noted that institution programming had been considerably disrupted due to the pandemic. The Chair also noted that program community-based programming is common occurrence with persons-in-custody sentenced under the Truth-in-Sentencing (TIS) law, where programming completion is not a barrier to release.

Commissioner Pierce described programming options in the community, including how some are done at DCC unit offices. The Chair described qualifying factors for community-based programming, including good conduct, low custody level, and the types of programming identified. The Chair emphasized Commissioners contacting the assigned DCC agents to assess programming availability in the community.

Commissioner Kramer described aspects of case plan interventions at the institutions, so as to best prepare persons-in-custody for release, and to ensure avoiding recidivism.

The Chair noted he had approved the grant recommendation for a high profile case, and described some of the process involved, including work with community officials.

Commissioner Pierce described some of her onboarding process with the Commission, and observing parole reviews as one aspect of that.

A discussion occurred regarding victim attendance of hearings, noting this was currently being done completely by videoconferencing due to the pandemic. The Chair noted the Commissioners have discretion in terms of how the victims attend reviews. Commissioners Drankiewicz and Kramer gave descriptions of their processes with different institutions.

The meeting then transitioned into closed session for a No Action review.

The meeting concluded at approximately 11:30am.