PAROLE COMMISSION

Staff Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 5th, 2022

3099 East Washington Avenue

Madison, WI 53704

Presiding: John Tate II, Chair

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

Guests: Chris Donahoe, Amanda Readman, Lisa Reid

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

The meeting began at approximately 10:00 AM.

Chairman Tate opened by introducing himself and members of the commission.

The Chair noted the recent increase in COVID cases in Wisconsin and in the institutions, and began a discussion with the Commissioners as to how this would affect future parole reviews.

Commissioner Kramer discussed that her reviews are currently scheduled to be in-person, but that she communicates with the institutions regarding changing circumstances. Commissioner Drankiewicz noted he is conducting reviews through videoconferencing. Commissioner Pierce noted she is conducting reviews through a mix of in-person and video.

The Chair highlighted that Commissioners continue to have discretion as to how they conduct reviews, and but that victim attendance should temporarily be done by video, in anticipation of likely changes to institution visitation due to the increase in COVID cases. The Commission will make future decisions based on the guidance from institutions/department.

The Chair inquired with ORA Tome regarding transcription equipment to assist in completing writs.

The Chair then answered questions submitted by the public regarding parole policy, practice, or procedure.

**Questions**:

**Due to the increase of COVID cases here in Wisconsin, would people with approved Pre-Release Investigations (PRIs) have to wait until their next scheduled parole date?**

Commissioners continue to have discretion to amend decisions before future reviews, based on receiving completed and approved PRIs. This discretion does not change based on the COVID situation. Cases where Commissioners may modify decisions typically involve what are called informational deferrals of three months or less. The possibility of modification is typically stated in the parole action.

**How are you going about giving a second chance to first time offenders who are under Old Law and have served a substantial amount of time, and have maintained positive institution adjustment, positive work performance, and positive program participation, and application of these skills?**

The Commission takes all factors into consideration. This includes whether someone is incarcerated for a first-time offense, and the seriousness of the offense. However, for support advocates, the Commission advises against focusing on a single mitigating factor such as the lack of a prior criminal record, age, or medical condition, so as to avoid disappointing expectations. The Commission must still evaluate each case based on satisfaction of the parole criteria.

The next staff meeting was scheduled for Wednesday February 2nd, 2022, at 10am. Questions from the public about parole policy, practice, or procedure should be submitted by the Monday prior (1/31).

The open-session meeting concluded at approximately 10:17am.