



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

12 Mercer Road
Natick, Massachusetts 01760

Maura T. Healey
Governor

Kimberley Driscoll
Lieutenant Governor

Terrence M. Reidy
Secretary

Telephone # (508) 650-4500

Facsimile # (508) 650-4599



Tina M. Hurley
Chair

Daniel Nakamoto
Acting Executive Director

RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

BRETT CHRISTIANSON

W63314

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **January 31, 2023**

DATE OF DECISION: **April 10, 2023**

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Tina Hurley, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Dr. Maryanne Galvin, James Kelcourse, Colette Santa

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On September 24, 1997, in Suffolk Superior Court, Brett Christianson pleaded guilty to second degree murder in the death of Nordella Newson and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he pleaded guilty to arson and was sentenced to a consecutive term of twelve to fifteen years in prison.

Mr. Christianson appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on January 31, 2023. He was represented by student attorneys from Harvard University Law School. Mr. Christianson was denied parole after both his 2011 initial hearing and his 2016 and 2019 review hearings.

Pursuant to Dinkins & another v. Massachusetts Parole Board, 486 Mass. 605 (2021), the Parole Board must aggregate parole eligible life terms that are first in a series with from and after terms for purposes of determining the parole eligibility date. Mr. Christianson was identified as a person directly impacted by the Court's decision. The parole ineligibility terms on his sentences were aggregated, creating a new parole eligibility date of March 28, 2023.

The entire video recording of Mr. Christianson's January 31, 2023, hearing is fully incorporated by reference to the Board's decision.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: After careful consideration of all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of offense, criminal record, institutional record, the inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as

expressed at the hearing or in written submissions to the Board, we conclude by unanimous vote that the inmate is a suitable candidate for parole.

The Board is of the opinion that Brett Christianson has demonstrated a level of rehabilitative progress that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. Reserve to Interstate Compact – Maine after nine months in lower security. On March 23, 1996, Mr. Christianson murdered Nordella Newson in her apartment. He has been incarcerated for nearly twenty-seven years, during which time he incurred only five minor disciplinary reports. He has been sober for twenty-seven years and attends AA on a regular basis. He has a positive work history while incarcerated. The Board encourages Mr. Christianson to attend Restorative Justice while in lower custody. The Board also considered his medical issues as they relate to his risk to reoffend.

The applicable standard used by the Board to assess a candidate for parole is: "Parole Board Members shall only grant a parole permit if they are of the opinion that there is a reasonable probability that, if such offender is released, the offender will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." 120 C.M.R. 300.04. In forming this opinion, the Board has taken into consideration Mr. Christianson's institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board has also considered a risk and needs assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Christianson's risk of recidivism. After applying this standard to the circumstances of Mr. Christianson's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Brett Christianson is rehabilitated and, therefore, merits parole at this time.

Special Conditions: Reserve to Interstate Compact - Maine; Waive work for two weeks; Curfew – Must be at home between 10pm and 6am; ELMO-electronic monitoring; Supervise for drugs, testing in accordance with agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence, testing in accordance with agency policy; Report to assigned MA Parole Office on day of release; No contact with victim's family; Must have mental health evaluation and must comply with recommended treatment plan; Must have substance abuse evaluation and must comply with recommended treatment plan.

I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above referenced hearing.


Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

April 10, 2023
Date