



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

JAMIE RICHARDS
W58925

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: October 23, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: March 12, 2026

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander¹, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Sarah B. Coughlin, Angelo Gomez Jr., James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz

VOTE: Parole is denied with a review 2 years from the date of the hearing.²

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On July 5, 1995, in Worcester Superior court, Jamie Richards pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the death of Paxton Police Chief Robert Mortell and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he also received multiple concurrent sentences: a 9 to 10-year sentence for two counts of breaking and entering in the daytime, a 14 to 15-year sentence for theft of a motor vehicle, and 4 to 5 year sentences for three counts of assault with a dangerous weapon, unlawful possession of a firearm in a motor vehicle, removing/mutilating a firearm serial number, and two counts of larceny over \$250. Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 2017 and a review hearing in 2022.

In addition, on January 13, 1998, in Worcester Superior Court, Mr. Richards was convicted of three counts of armed robbery-masked and received three life sentences with the possibility of parole. He was also convicted of one count of confining or putting in fear and received a life sentence with the possibility of parole. He received a 10-12 year sentence after being convicted of receiving a stolen motor vehicle. He was convicted on five counts of assault with a dangerous weapon (handgun) and received 4-5 year sentences on each count. These charges stemmed from

¹Board member Alexander was not present for the hearing but reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

² Two Board members voted to deny parole with a review 1 year from the date of the hearing.

the January 6, 1994, armed robbery of the Mechanics' Bank in Auburn, Massachusetts. These sentences were ordered to be served concurrent with any sentence already being served.

On October 23, 2025, Mr. Richards appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was represented by student attorneys from Boston College Law School. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Richards' October 23, 2025, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On February 1, 1994, at age 23, Jamie Richards was involved in breaking into homes with Michael Souza and Kenneth Padgett. When their stolen minivan got stuck in a snowbank, Mr. Souza carjacked a Department of Public Works truck at gunpoint, and the trio drove off. The Department of Public Works truck also got stuck in a snowbank, and the three men fled into the woods. Paxton Police Chief Robert Mortell drove to the area, saw the three men, and chased them into the woods near Route 31 in Holden. At some point during the chase, Mr. Richards and Mr. Padgett split off from Mr. Souza. Mr. Souza and Chief Mortell exchanged gunfire, Mr. Souza shot at Chief Mortell 11 to 13 times, killing him. Police apprehended Mr. Souza shortly after the shooting and apprehended Mr. Padgett and Mr. Richards the following day.

On January 6, 1994, Jamie Richards and Michael Souza donned ski masks and held up Mechanics' Bank in Auburn at gunpoint. The duo fled the scene in a stolen car. As they fled, the red dye pack in the stolen money exploded. Mr. Richards and Mr. Souza ditched the stolen car and duffle bag full of red stained money in a nearby skating rink parking lot. From there, the two men fled in a second stolen car they parked at the rink. They went to Mr. Souza's house, where they showered and changed clothes. In February 1994, while investigating the murder of Chief Mortell, police learned of Mr. Richards' and Mr. Souza's involvement in the Mechanics' Bank robbery, as well as details of prior offenses, including home invasions and the armed robbery of a jewelry store.

APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole "[p]ermits shall be granted only if the Board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society." M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. In making this determination, the Board takes into consideration an inmate's institutional behavior, their participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of incarceration, and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize the inmate's risk of recidivism. M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. The Board also considers all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the inmate's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing and/or in written submissions to the Board.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: Mr. Richards has been disciplinary report free since 2022. He has engaged in Jericho Circle programming as well as programming to address victim empathy. Mr. Richards has been employed in the Plate Shops since 2023. Mr. Richards has made strides in his rehabilitation, but the Board believes that a longer period of rehabilitative adjustment is appropriate. The Board recognizes Mr. Richards testimony at the hearing which was of marked contrast to his testimony at the last hearing. The Board recommends Mr. Richards continues to invest in his rehabilitative efforts. The Board considered testimony in opposition to parole from

Officer Phillip Martin, Chief Mortell's daughter, a family friend, and Worcester County Assistant District Attorney Donna-Marie Haran. The Board concludes that Mr. Richards has not demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above-referenced hearing. Pursuant to G.L. c. 127, § 130, I further certify that all voting Board Members have reviewed the applicant's entire criminal record. This signature does not indicate authorship of the decision.



Angelo Gomez Jr., Chair

March 12, 2026
Date