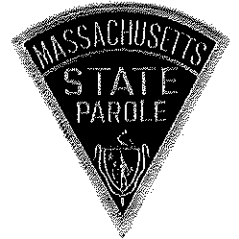




The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

12 Mercer Road  
Natick, Massachusetts 01760

Charles D. Baker  
Governor

Karyn Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Thomas A. Turco III  
Secretary

Telephone # (508) 650-4500

Facsimile # (508) 650-4599

Gloriann Moroney  
Chair

**DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**JEFFREY TASSE**

**W46453**

**TYPE OF HEARING:** Review Hearing

**DATE OF HEARING:** January 15, 2019

**DATE OF DECISION:** September 4, 2019

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Colette Santa<sup>1</sup>

**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. Parole is granted to Jeffrey Tasse's from and after 15 to 20 year sentence for manslaughter with special conditions.

**I.STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

On May 9, 1989, in Worcester Superior Court, Jeffrey Tasse pleaded guilty to the second degree murder of Lisa Cosenza and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he also pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the death of Mitchell Burke and received a 15 to 20 year consecutive sentence.

On September 4, 1988, Mr. Tasse, his girlfriend Ms. Cosenza, and Mr. Tasse's two roommates (one of whom was Mr. Burke) attended a party together in Worcester. At some point, Mr. Tasse left the party to go to a bar. When he did not return to the party, his companions went

<sup>1</sup> Chair Moroney abstained from the vote, as she was not a Board Member at the time of the hearing. Board Member Santa was absent from the hearing, but participated in the vote.

back to his apartment to wait for him. When Mr. Tasse returned home, he and Ms. Cosenza engaged in an argument that resulted in Mr. Tasse striking Ms. Cosenza. When Mr. Burke came to the aid of Ms. Cosenza, a physical confrontation between the men ensued, during which they fell down the stairs. Mr. Tasse then retrieved a semi-automatic assault rifle from his bedroom and pointed the rifle at Mr. Burke. When Mr. Burke moved toward Mr. Tasse (as if to take the gun away), Mr. Tasse fired the gun, striking Mr. Burke four times in the chest. Mr. Tasse then shot Ms. Cosenza, striking her once in the abdomen. Mr. Burke and Ms. Cosenza both succumbed to their injuries.

## **II. PAROLE HEARING ON JANUARY 15, 2019**

Jeffrey Tasse, now 51-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for his review hearing on January 15, 2019. He was not represented by counsel. Mr. Tasse had been denied parole after both his initial hearing in 2003 and his review hearing in 2009. Mr. Tasse postponed his 2014 review hearing. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Tasse acknowledged his responsibility for the pain and suffering he has caused the family and friends of both Ms. Cosenza and Mr. Burke. He stated that at the time of the crime, he was a "mentally, emotionally, and spiritually bankrupt person." In discussing the governing offense with Board Members, Mr. Tasse explained that he was a "miserable person," who did not treat others well. He stated that he was motivated by feelings of jealousy, anger, and shame when he committed the killings. He admitted that he had refused to address his issues, and instead, blamed Ms. Cosenza and Mr. Burke. He told the Board that retrieving the gun from his bedroom that evening was "the stupidest thing [he has] ever done." Mr. Tasse acknowledged that Mr. Burke was defending Ms. Cosenza from his abusive behavior on the night of the crime.

The Board discussed Mr. Tasse's institutional adjustment since his last hearing. Mr. Tasse is currently employed as a janitor and has engaged in significant programming. Mr. Tasse credits small groups, as well as Anger Management, Correctional Recovery Academy, Alternatives to Violence, and Jericho Circle with the "monumental" change in his thinking and outlook on life. Above all, Mr. Tasse places his 21 years of sobriety as "first and foremost" in his ongoing rehabilitation.

Mr. Tasse had several supporters in attendance at his hearing. The sister of Ms. Cosenza spoke in opposition to parole. Worcester County Assistant District Attorney Michelle King submitted a letter and testified in opposition to parole.

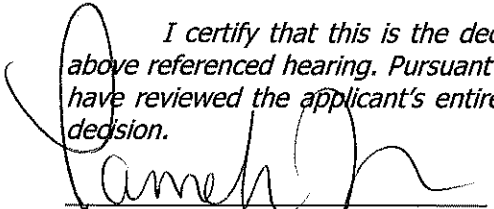
## **III. DECISION**

Mr. Tasse has served 30 years for the murder of his girlfriend. It is the opinion of the Board that Mr. Tasse's release on parole supervision is not incompatible with the welfare of society.

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. Tasse'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. Tasse's risk of recidivism. After applying this appropriately high standard to the circumstances of Mr. Tasse's case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Jeffrey Tasse is rehabilitated and, therefore, merits parole at this time. Parole is granted to Mr. Tasse's from and after 15 to 20 year sentence for manslaughter with special conditions.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** Supervise for drugs, testing in accordance with agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence, testing in accordance with agency policy; Mandatory - adhere to the rules and regulations of the Commonwealth and the Massachusetts Department of Correction.

*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.*



Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

9/14/2019  
Date