



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

JOSEPH DEMERS, JR.

W48449

TYPE OF HEARING: Review Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: August 27, 2019

DATE OF DECISION: March 26, 2020

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Gloriann Moroney, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Karen McCarthy, Colette Santa

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On May 18, 1990, in Franklin Superior Court, a jury found Mr. Demers guilty of the second-degree murder of 16-year-old Catherine Gochinski and was sentenced to life with the possibility of parole.

Mr. Demers, now 49-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on August 27, 2019 and was represented by Attorneys Reyna Ramirez and Christine Sunnerberg. This was Mr. Demers' fifth appearance before the Board having been denied parole in 2004, 2007, 2011, and 2015. The entire video recording of Mr. Demers' August 27, 2019 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 decision that the inmate is a suitable candidate for parole. Reserve to Long Term Residential Program after 12 months in lower security. He has been incarcerated for over 30 years for the murder of Ms. Gochinski. After a gradual transition his release would not be incompatible with the welfare of society. He has maintained his sobriety throughout his incarceration. In addition, he expressed an interest in Medication-Assisted Treatment (Vivitrol).

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. Demers' 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. Demers' risk of recidivism. After applying this appropriately high standard to the circumstances of Mr. Demers' case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Mr. Demers is rehabilitated and merits parole at this time.

Special Conditions: Reserve to Long Term Residential Program for a minimum of six months after 12 months in lower security; Waive work for Long Term Residential Program; Must be at home between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. at PO discretion; ELMO-electronic monitoring at PO discretion; 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 counseling for adjustment/transition; Must attend AA/NA at least 3 times per week; Adhere to Vivitrol protocol if he opts to utilize Medication-Assisted Treatment after screening; Obtain sponsor.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The above decision is an abbreviated administrative decision issued in an effort to render an expedited resolution in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Demers, through counsel, has waived his right to a full administrative decision.

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



Pamela Murphy, General Counsel

3/26/2020
Date