



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

NEAL PARHAM
W35247

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: May 22, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: October 29, 2025

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner¹, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz

VOTE: Parole is granted to CRJ two weeks from the date of Decision.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On November 21, 1975, following a jury trial in Suffolk Superior Court, Neal Parham was convicted of murder in the first-degree and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. On that same date, he was found guilty of armed robbery and assault to rob and received a 7–10 year sentence to run concurrently with his life sentence.

On September 6, 2024, Mr. Parham filed a motion to reduce the verdict for relief in Superior Court pursuant to Mass. R. Crim. P. Rule 30(b). On December 4, 2024, the Commonwealth assented to reduce Mr. Parham's conviction to second degree murder. On January 2, 2025, the verdict imposed on the charge of murder in the first degree on docket 7584CR89371 was vacated, and a verdict of murder in the second degree was imposed, making him eligible for parole.

On May 22, 2025, Neal Parham appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by Attorney Elizabeth Doherty. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Parham's May 22, 2025, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On October 14, 1974, 21-year-old Neal Parham and two companions stole a car. They proceeded to follow a taxicab from downtown Boston until its arrival on Sunnyside Street in Jamaica Plain, where the passengers were discharged. Mr. Parham and

¹ Board Member Bonner was not present for the hearing, but she reviewed the video recording of the hearing and the entirety of the file prior to vote.

his companions attacked the taxicab driver and one passenger in order to rob them. In the ensuing melee, passenger Michael Richardson was fatally stabbed.

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. Parham is 71-years-old. His conviction was recently reduced by the Court from first degree to second degree murder, making him eligible for parole after over 50 years incarcerated. He has been disciplinary report free since 2007. He had multiple furloughs during his incarceration. He has completed 14 programs. He earned his GED and Bachelor of Science from Boston University. The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Mr. Parham has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society. The Board considered public testimony from family and community members, who spoke in support of parole. The Board considered testimony from family members of the victim in opposition to parole.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Waive work for retirement; Electronic monitoring for 6 months, then at PO's request for extension; 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; Residential Program - CRJ

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.


Judith M. Lyons, General Counsel

10/29/25
Date