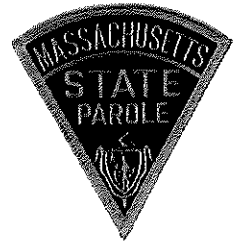


*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*

**PAROLE BOARD**

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*Natick, Massachusetts 01760*



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*Chair*

**Lian Hogan**  
*Executive Director*

**RECORD OF DECISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**RODNEY BALL**  
**W98224**

**TYPE OF HEARING:**           **Review Hearing**

**DATE OF HEARING:**       **January 9, 2024**

**DATE OF DECISION:**      **April 2, 2024**

**PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS:** Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley, James Kelcourse

**VOTE:** Parole is granted to CRJ after completion of Family Violence program and 6 months in lower custody.<sup>1</sup>

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY:** On March 8, 2011, in Berkshire County Superior Court, Rodney Ball pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in the death of his mother, 55-year-old Donna Agar, and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, he was convicted of unlawful possession of a firearm and sentenced to a concurrent term of two and a half to three years in state prison.

Parole was denied following an initial hearing in 2023. On January 9, 2024, Mr. Ball appeared before the Board for a review hearing. He was not represented by counsel. The Board's decision fully incorporates, by reference, the entire video recording of Mr. Ball's January 9, 2024 hearing.

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:** On March 16, 2008, Rodney Ball went to a friend's home to try to obtain a firearm to shoot his estranged wife and their son. The friend advised Mr. Ball's estranged wife of Mr. Ball's intentions, and she notified the police. The Massachusetts State Police began searching for a minivan that Mr. Ball may have been operating. The search

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<sup>1</sup> One Board Member voted to deny parole with a review in two years. One Board Members voted to deny parole with a review in one year.

brought them to the New Marlborough home of the vehicle's registered owner, Mr. Ball's mother, Donna Agar.

At some point, police entered the home and found Ms. Agar unresponsive and surrounded by blood that resulted from a stabbing. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Ball arrived at the residence in his mother's minivan and informed police that his mother had stabbed herself with a knife. He then gave conflicting accounts as to why he handled the knife after his mother purportedly stabbed herself. During a search of the van, police recovered a firearm and the knife used to stab Ms. Agar. Further investigation revealed that in the days leading up to the stabbing, Mr. Ball had visited the homes of acquaintances in an effort to obtain a firearm. At some point, Mr. Ball had advised his half-brother that he was going to stab his mother and make it appear as though she had stabbed herself. Ms. Agar ultimately died from her injuries.

**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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual'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 incarcerated individual at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the incarcerated individual's testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing and/or in written submissions to the Board (if applicable).

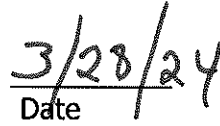
**DECISION OF THE BOARD:** Mr. Ball has a significant substance use history with alcohol as a particular concern. Since his last hearing, Mr. Ball has researched community supports. He reports being sober during his incarceration. He testified that he will continue to seek supports for his sobriety through AA and counseling. Berkshire county ADA Pieropan spoke in opposition.

The Board concludes that Rodney Ball has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** Waive work for 2 weeks; Must be at home between 10PM and 6AM or at Parole Officer's discretion; Electronic monitoring or at Parole Officer's discretion; Must take prescribed medication if prescribed; 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; Counseling for continued support for recovery, PTSD, depression, and transition; Residential program - CRJ Program; AA/NA at least three times per week.

*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.*

  
Tina M. Hurley, Chair

  
Date