



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security



PAROLE BOARD

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DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

STEVEN WILLIAMS

W36780

TYPE OF HEARING: **Review Hearing**

DATE OF HEARING: **June 27, 2017**

DATE OF DECISION: **May 15, 2018**

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Paul M. Treseler, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Tonomey Coleman, Sheila Dupre, Tina Hurley, Lucy Soto-Abbe

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 a long term residential treatment program with special conditions, after successful adjustment of six months in lower security, and after District Attorney clearance.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On October 5, 1978, in Hampden Superior Court, Steven Williams pleaded guilty to second degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole. On that same date, Mr. Williams received two 3 to 5 year concurrent sentences for two counts of armed robbery.

On April 3, 1978, 18-year-old Steven Williams robbed and murdered Mabel Anderson in her first floor apartment in Springfield. Mr. Williams chose the victim based on his knowledge that she lived alone. Posing as a telephone repairman, Mr. Williams entered Ms. Anderson's apartment with the intent to hit and rob her. At that point, Mr. Williams decided not to follow through with his plan. Mr. Williams then left the apartment building, but returned in two hours. During this two hour period, Mr. Williams ingested "a few drinks," Valium, and "two hits of speed." When he returned to the apartment building, Mr. Williams knocked on Ms. Anderson's

door and forced his way into the apartment. He knocked Ms. Anderson to the floor, dragged her into her bedroom, and stabbed her multiple times. Ms. Anderson's body was found by a neighbor, who lived on the second floor. Mr. Williams stole \$23 from Ms. Anderson and, after killing and robbing her, walked to a nearby bus stop and went home.

On December 4, 1979, Mr. Williams filed a motion for a new trial, in part claiming that another woman committed the murder. The motion was denied. On July 24, 1997, he filed a second motion to withdraw his guilty plea and request a new trial. On July 29, 1997, this motion was also denied.

II. PAROLE HEARING ON JUNE 27, 2017

Steven Williams, now 57-years-old, appeared before the Parole Board for a review hearing on June 27, 2017, and was represented by Attorney Brian Kelly. Mr. Williams was denied parole after his initial hearing in 1993. He had review hearings in 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2007¹, and 2013, all of which resulted in the denial of parole. In his opening statement to the Board, Mr. Williams apologized for the death of Mabel Anderson. He now acknowledges the causative factors that led to his incarceration. Mr. Williams provided the Board with a comprehensive overview of the governing offense, to include his culpability. He explained that after a long day of consuming drugs and alcohol, he decided to rob an elderly woman who resided in the same apartment complex as his brother and sister-in-law, in order to support his habit. He entered the home under false pretenses, shoving the victim to the ground. During the commission of the robbery, he stabbed the victim twice. He disputes the fact that he used his belt for any other reason, other than in an attempt to stop the bleeding from a self-inflicted wound, which occurred as the knife slipped during the stabbing.

The Board acknowledged the multitude of programming and rehabilitative efforts that Mr. Williams has engaged in. Mr. Williams is currently incarcerated at North Central Correctional Institution, where he works as a runner. He has successfully participated in programs covering a variety of topics, including those recommended by the Department of Correction in his risk reduction plans. Since his hearing in 2013, Mr. Williams has participated in several programs, including: Cognitive Skills, Path to Freedom, and Alternatives to Violence (two phases). He attends Big Book, 12 Step, and AA meetings on a weekly basis. Mr. Williams believes that these programs have been instrumental in both helping him understand his addiction and providing him with the necessary tools to prevent relapse. Mr. Williams also discussed how he has addressed his causative factors, including addiction, inappropriate behaviors, and a propensity for violence. He has learned to be mindful in speech and action through his participation in Path to Freedom.

Mr. Williams had several supporters in attendance at his hearing, and multiple letters of support were submitted on his behalf. The Board considered testimony from his three brothers, who expressed strong support for parole. The Hampden County District Attorney's Office submitted a letter, and Assistant District Attorney Howard Safford spoke in opposition to parole.

¹ Williams was given a five year review, following his denial in 2007. In March 2012, Williams requested that the Board postpone this hearing.

III. DECISION

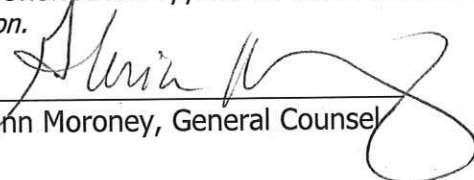
The Board is of the opinion that Steven Williams has demonstrated rehabilitative progress and, consequently, has acquired the tools and skills that will assist him a successful transition from incarceration. Mr. Williams appears to have taken advantage of the treatment/programming opportunities since his last hearing. He appears ready to gradually transition into the community after 40 years of incarceration. Thus, incarceration has served its purpose.

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. Williams' institutional behavior, as well as his participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of his incarceration. The Board also considered a risk and needs assessment and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize Mr. Williams' risk of recidivism. After applying this appropriately high standard to the circumstances of Mr. Williams' case, the Board is of the unanimous opinion that Steven Williams is a suitable candidate for parole.

Parole is granted to a long term residential treatment program with special conditions, after successful adjustment to six months in lower security, and after District Attorney clearance.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Waive work for Long Term Residential Program (LTRP); Must be home between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am; GPS monitoring; Must take prescribed medication; 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; Must have mental health evaluation at BHN/Mt. Tom for adjustment/transition; Must have substance abuse evaluation and adhere to plan; Long term residential treatment program.

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.


Gloriann Moroney, General Counsel

5/15/18
Date