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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

TYRONE DIXON
W54175

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: March 13, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: August 6, 2025

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner,¹ Tonomey Coleman, Sarah B. Coughlin, Tina M. Hurley,² James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz.

VOTE: Parole is granted on/after 90 days in lower security to CRJ for at least 90 days.³

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On March 19, 1993, following a jury trial in Bristol Superior Court, Tyrone Dixon was convicted of murder in the first-degree for the death of Jeffrey Poissant. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.⁴

Mr. Dixon became parole eligible following the Supreme Judicial Court's decision in Commonwealth v. Mattis, 493 Mass. 216 (2024), where the court held that sentencing individuals who were ages 18 through 20 at the time of the offense (emerging adults) to life without the possibility of parole is unconstitutional. As a result of the SJC's decision, with regard to Mr. Dixon's first-degree murder conviction, his mittimus was corrected to reflect that his life sentence carried the possibility of parole after 15 years. On March 13, 2025, Tyrone Dixon appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by Attorney Claudia Leis Bolgen. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Dixon's March 13, 2025, hearing.

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.

² Chair Hurley participated in the vote in this matter prior to her departure from the Board.

³ One Board Member voted to parole Mr. Dixon, but not before serving six months in lower custody.

⁴ Following his murder conviction, Mr. Dixon pleaded guilty to two counts of assault by means of a dangerous weapon and received two concurrent 5-year sentences. These offenses pre-dated the murder.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On September 29, 1992, in Taunton, 18-year-old Tyrone Dixon shot and killed 36-year-old Jeffrey Poissant. On the night of the murder, Mr. Dixon and an associate were buying marijuana. As part of the drug transaction, Mr. Dixon entered Mr. Poissant's car, while Mr. Dixon's associate left the area to prevent additional witnesses from observing the drug transaction. Five minutes after entering the car, Mr. Dixon returned to his associate and they fled the area. Mr. Dixon told his associate that he had shot the man after the man attempted to grab his firearm, which Mr. Dixon had displayed to him during the drug transaction.

Mr. Poissant was found by an off-duty officer who had responded to a car accident. The officer observed the victim, slumped over the steering wheel, with two gunshot wounds to his chest. The victim died shortly after arriving at the hospital. The murder weapon was recovered in a location where Mr. Dixon was known to frequent. Two witnesses testified that Mr. Dixon showed them the firearm two weeks before the killing.

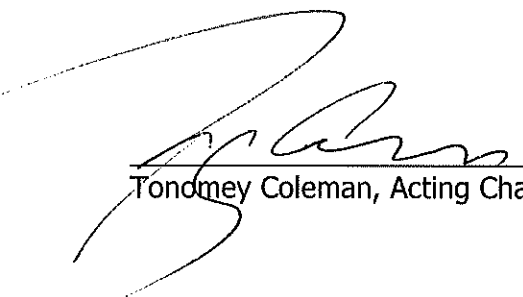
APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole "[p]ermits shall be granted only if the Board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain 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.

Where a parole candidate was convicted of first-degree murder for a crime committed when he was ages 18 through 20 years old, the Board considers the "unique aspects" of emerging adulthood that distinguish emerging adult offenders from older offenders. Commonwealth v. Mattis, 493 Mass. 216, 238 (2024). Individuals who were emerging adults at the time of the offense must be afforded a "meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation" and the Board evaluates "the circumstances surrounding the commission of the crime, including the age of the offender, together with all relevant information pertaining to the offender's character and actions during the intervening years since conviction." *Id.* (citing Diatchenko v. District Attorney for the Suffolk Dist., 466 Mass. 655, 674 (2013) (Diatchenko I); Miller v. Alabama, 567 U.S. 460, 471 (2012); Graham v. Florida, 560 U.S. 48, 75 (2010)). Since brain development in emerging adulthood is ongoing, the Board also considers the following factors when evaluating parole candidates who committed the underlying offenses as an emerging adult: 1) a lack of impulse control in emotionally arousing situations; 2) an increased likelihood to engage in risk taking behaviors in pursuit of reward; 3) increased susceptibility to peer influence which makes emerging adults more likely to engage in risky behavior; and 4) an emerging adult's greater capacity for change. *See Mattis*, 493 Mass. at 225-229.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: This was Mr. Dixon's initial hearing before the Board. He was 18-years-old at the time of the offense. He is currently 51years-old and has served 32 years. Mr. Dixon engaged in self-development before learning of the Mattis decision. Mr. Dixon was insightful about the factors that led to this offense. Mr. Dixon has invested in programs to address his need areas and, more recently, engaged in Restorative Justice. Mr. Dixon has been employed and has engaged in Vocational Skills training, including gaining his OSHA certification. Mr. Dixon has a significant support system and re-entry plan that will assist with his re-entry needs. The Board considered his age at the time of the offense and the expert forensic evaluation and testimony by Dr. Brown in rendering its decision. The Board also considered public testimony from several of Mr. Dixon's family members, who spoke in support of parole. The Board also considered opposition testimony from Bristol County Assistant District Attorney Russ Eonas and a member of the victim's family. The Board notes that he has been recommended for lower security. The Board also notes his LSCMI score is low.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: CRJ - 90 days minimum; Waive work for program/school; Electronic monitoring for 6 months only; 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.

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.



Tondmey Coleman, Acting Chair

8/6/25

Date