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Advisory Board of Pardons

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IN THE MATTER OF

CAMILLE JOSEPH CHAISSON

PETITION FOR PARDON

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

The Advisory Board of Pardons (hereinafter "the Board") respectfully submits this report and recommendation concerning the pardon petition of Camille Joseph Chaisson. Mr. Chaisson was convicted of Larceny and Attempted Larceny on February 3, 1966 in Gardner District Court and sentenced to ten days in the house of correction. Also in 1966, he was also convicted of two counts of Larceny and one count of Breaking and Entering at Night with Intent to Commit a Felony in Worcester Superior Court, and sentenced to three months in the house of correction.

On or about February 7, 2018, Mr. Chaisson submitted a petition for a pardon.¹ (*Attachment A*). On August 30, 2022, the Board conducted a public hearing regarding Mr. Chaisson's petition. In his petition and at the public hearing, Mr. Chaisson requested a pardon for his convictions so that he may obtain a License to Carry a Firearm ("LTC").

¹ Mr. Chaisson previously filed a petition for a pardon in 2005. He appeared before the Advisory Board of Pardons on December 22, 2005 for his scheduled hearing and asked for the petition to be withdrawn.

After due consideration, the Board voted by majority vote to recommend favorable consideration of Mr. Chaisson's request for a pardon.² The reasons for the Board's recommendations are set forth in the body of this opinion.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On December 20, 1965, Mr. Chaisson was arraigned in Gardner District Court, Docket 1690071ZZ-1690072ZZ. He was found guilty of Larceny and Attempted Larceny on February 3, 1966. He was sentenced to ten days in the house of correction. His record of these convictions has been sealed.

On October 19, 1966, Mr. Chaisson was arraigned in Worcester Superior Court on two counts of Larceny and one count of Breaking and Entering at Night with Intent to Commit a Felony, Docket 1692977ZZ-1692979ZZ. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to three months in the house of correction. His record of these convictions has not been sealed.³ (*Attachment B*). In 2004, Mr. Chaisson filed a motion in Worcester Superior Court seeking to vacate his guilty plea. The motion was denied. In 2018, Mr. Chaisson filed a second motion in Worcester Superior Court seeking to vacate his convictions. His motion was denied, and the denial was affirmed by the Appeals Court.⁴ (*Attachment C*).

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

According to Mr. Chaisson's petition, the Worcester Superior Court charges related to him breaking into the Mohawk Valley Auto Club in Templeton, Massachusetts and stealing tools, a battery, a battery charger, and candy. He was arrested by the Massachusetts State Police. He reported that the case in Gardner District Court involved an arrest by the Gardner Police Department, but he was unable to provide any further details. Due to the age of the offenses,

² Six Board Members voted in favor of recommending a pardon and one Board Member voted against recommending a pardon.

³ A letter to Mr. Chaisson from the Office of the Commissioner of Probation dated December 19, 2016 indicates that these convictions have also been sealed. (*Attachment A*, page 15). However, they still appear on Mr. Chaisson's Board of Probation record, and not his sealed record. (*Attachment B*, pages 1-2).

⁴ Commonwealth v. Camille J. Chaisson, Jr., 98 Mass.App.Ct. 1118 (2020).

neither the Gardner Police Department nor the Massachusetts State Police have any records relating to these incidents.

PRIOR CRIMINAL RECORD

According to the Massachusetts Board of Probation record, dated February 22, 2022, Mr. Chaisson has additional charges on his sealed record. Along with his 1966 convictions from Gardner District Court, he was also charged with a Compulsory Insurance Violation, for which he paid a \$100 fine. In 1977 he was convicted of No Support in Gardner District Court and received a three-month house of correction sentence, suspended for fifteen months of probation. He was arraigned in Worcester District Court in 1963 on charges of Trespass, Destruction of Property, and Breaking and Entering for a Misdemeanor. This case was dismissed in its entirety. According to the National Crime Information Center (“NCIC”) record, dated February 23, 2022, Mr. Chaisson has not been charged with or convicted of any offenses in any other state. (*Attachment B*).

PARDON PETITION OF CAMILLE CHAISSON

On or about February 7, 2018, Mr. Chaisson submitted a petition for clemency, in the form of a pardon, for two counts of Larceny and one count of Breaking and Entering from Worcester Superior Court, as well as one count each of Larceny and Attempted Larceny from Gardner District Court.

According to Mr. Chaisson’s petition, he completed the 10th grade at Gardner High School. He has been married to his current wife since 1988. He has been employed by Chas G. Allen, Inc. in Barre, Massachusetts as a small truck driver since 2012. Previously he was employed by Millbury Ford.

Mr. Chaisson stated in his petition that he is requesting permission to obtain a firearm because he has been an avid sportsman and hunter for many years. He stated that he was a member

of the Massachusetts Gun Owner Action League (“GOAL”) and a local sportsmen’s club. He reported that he has been a hardworking and lawful member of society for over fifty years.

2022 INTERVIEW OF CAMILLE CHAISSON

At the request of the Advisory Board of Pardons, Mr. Chaisson consented to an interview concerning his petition. (*Attachment D*). The interview took place on August 17, 2022.

During the interview, Mr. Chaisson reported that he has lives in New Braintree, Massachusetts with his wife, and that he is still employed at Chas G. Allen as a part time delivery driver. He stated that he is a member of a sportsmen’s club and volunteers for many events held at the club. He enjoys attending car shows and hunting, which he currently does with a crossbow. He recently restored an antique truck. Mr. Chaisson reported that he is in good health, with no major medical conditions.

Following the interview, Board staff were able to confirm with the firearms officer for the Hardwick/New Braintree Police Department that Mr. Chaisson would be eligible for an LTC if he were to receive a pardon.

PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE ADVISORY BOARD

On August 30, 2022, the Advisory Board of Pardons held a public hearing on Mr. Chaisson’s pardon petition. The hearing was chaired by Gloriann Moroney.⁵ Advisory Board of Pardon Members Charlene Bonner, Maryanne Galvin, Tina Hurley, James Kelcourse, and Colette Santa were also present at the hearing. Board Member Tonomey Coleman was not present for the hearing, but reviewed the record and participated in deliberations. Mr. Chaisson was not represented by counsel.

⁵ Chair Moroney was present at Mr. Chaisson’s hearing and participated in deliberations, however, her signature is not included on this memorandum as she is no longer a Board Member.

THE BOARD'S INQUIRY

SOCIAL HISTORY

Upon inquiry by the Board, Mr. Chaisson provided information concerning his social history. Mr. Chaisson stated that he grew up in Gardner, Massachusetts, and completed the 10th grade. He married his first wife around 1963 or 1964 at the age of 21. They had four children together, and got divorced in 1985. Mr. Chaisson stated that his children have moved away, and he has not seen them for approximately ten years. He was remarried to his current wife in 1988. They have lived in New Braintree since 1980 and own their current home there.

Mr. Chaisson told the Board that after he left high school, he pursued work in both wood shops and auto body shops. He worked for several auto body shops over the years, including most recently for Millbury Ford. In 2012, he started working for Chas G. Allen doing deliveries, and worked there full time until a few months before his hearing, when he reduced his hours to part-time.

When asked about his interests, Mr. Chaisson explained that he has been an avid hunter and fisher throughout his life, and that he is currently a member of a sportsmen's club. He also enjoys taxidermy, which is a hobby he does for himself and also his friends. When he was younger, Mr. Chaisson volunteered teaching gymnastics to kids at his local high school.

GOVERNING OFFENSE

The Board inquired about the offenses for which Mr. Chaisson's seeks a pardon. He agreed with the Board that he was around 22 or 23 years old at the time of the offenses. Mr. Chaisson reported that he recalls the breaking and entering incident as breaking into the Mohawk Valley Auto Club with two other people and stealing a number of items including tools, a battery, a battery charger, and candy. He stated that he does not remember the incident that led to the charges out of Gardner District Court.

VICTIM IMPACT

No victim impact statements were provided to the Board.

PRIOR CRIMINAL HISTORY

The Board noted that, aside from the governing offenses, Mr. Chaisson's criminal history includes a charge for No Support from the 1970's, for which he received a suspended sentence. Mr. Chaisson told the Board that he remembers getting behind on his child support obligations when he broke his wrist. He stated that he has had no interactions with law enforcement since that time.

COMPELLING NEED FOR A PARDON

The Board made inquiries concerning Mr. Chaisson's compelling need for a pardon. Mr. Chaisson stated that he enjoys hunting, and has participated in hunting since he was fifteen years old. He likes to hunt with his neighbors and friends. He considers his participation in the sportsmen's club to be a significant part of his social life, and he often volunteers for events held at the club. He also serves as a mentor to others who are learning gun safety. Mr. Chaisson told the Board that he has not been able to obtain an LTC or a Firearms Identification Card ("FID") since 2017 due to his convictions. Because of this, he is limited to hunting with a crossbow or a black powder gun. Mr. Chaisson reported that he had an LTC in the 1990's and had a valid FID from approximately 2011-2017. He has made other efforts to obtain a firearms license, including sealing his record and filing a motion to vacate his convictions. However, he still remains ineligible.

SUPPORT TESTIMONY

The Board did not hear any testimony in support of Mr. Chaisson's petition.

SUPPORT LETTERS

In advance of Mr. Chaisson's hearing, the Board received four letters of recommendation in support of Mr. Chaisson's pardon petition. (*Attachment A*, pages 10-13):

Ernie Langelier Ernie Langelier, a friend of Mr. Chaisson, submitted an undated letter in support of Mr. Chaisson’s petition for a pardon. Mr. Langelier stated that he has known Mr. Chaisson for over thirty years and that they have been on many hunting and fishing trips together. He described Mr. Chaisson as a “true sportsman” who attends local sportsmen’s clubs and “shares his wisdom to hunt wisely and safely” with others.

Charles Allen Charles Allen, a colleague of Mr. Chaisson, submitted a letter dated July 26, 2017 in support of Mr. Chaisson’s petition for a pardon. Mr. Allen stated that he has traveled to many hunting and fishing trips with Mr. Chaisson, who loves the outdoors. He reported that Mr. Chaisson has a number of interests including working on his home, guitar, taxidermy, and fishing and hunting.

Stephen Brewer Stephen Brewer, State Senator, submitted a letter dated January 20, 2005 in support of Mr. Chaisson’s petition for a pardon. Senator Brewer stated that Mr. Chaisson is “a person of high caliber and moral character.”

Thomas Salvatore Thomas Salvatore, a member of the Barre Sportsmen’s Club, submitted an undated letter in support of Mr. Chaisson’s petition for a pardon. Mr. Salvatore stated that Mr. Chaisson observes all rules and regulations relating to safe gun handling and hunting.

OPPOSITION TESTIMONY

No individuals testified in opposition to Mr. Chaisson’s petition.

OPPOSITION LETTERS

No letters were submitted in opposition to Mr. Chaisson’s petition.

OPINION OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION

After careful review and consideration, it is the opinion of 6 of the 7 voting members of the Advisory Board of Pardons that a favorable recommendation for a pardon be sent to the Governor on behalf of Camille Joseph Chaisson.

Governor Charles D. Baker's Executive Clemency Guidelines, issued on February 21, 2020 ("Guidelines"), establish the grounds upon which a pardon may be granted and provide assistance to the Advisory Board of Pardons in making recommendations to the Governor on clemency petitions. The Guidelines state that a pardon is "an extraordinary remedy which has the effect of treating the petitioner as if the offense had never been committed." The Guidelines further provide that "[pardons are] intended to remove the barriers that are sometimes associated with a criminal record, thereby facilitating the reintegration of the petitioner into his or her community." The Guidelines state that the nature and circumstances of the offense and the character and behavior of the petitioner are the two "paramount considerations in deciding whether to grant clemency."

Under the Governor's Guidelines, a person who petitions for a pardon bears the responsibility of demonstrating, by clear and convincing evidence, that:

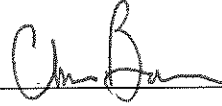
- (a) The petitioner has clearly demonstrated an acceptance of responsibility for the offense for which the petitioner is seeking clemency;
- (b) the petitioner does not have any pending appeals or challenges to a conviction or sentence;
- (c) the petitioner has made full restitution to his or her victims, in the event of economic injury;
- (d) the petitioner has made exceptional strides in self-development and self-improvement and would be a law-abiding citizen;

- (e) the petitioner has provided substantial assistance to law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of other more culpable offenders;
- (f) the petitioner has contributed to society through the military or public service, or through charitable work;
- (g) the petitioner has demonstrated a period of good citizenship by “leading a responsible and productive life and contributing to [his or her] community in a positive manner” for more than ten years following a felony conviction, “without the structure provided by government supervision,” such as probation or parole;
- (h) there is no alternative remedy available to the petitioner.

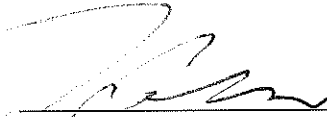
The Board recommends a pardon for Mr. Chaisson. The offenses for which he is requesting a pardon stem from 1965 and 1966. Mr. Chaisson is currently 78 years old and had a license to carry until 2017 without issue. Mr. Chaisson has been an avid hunter and sportsman since he was an adolescent, and his hobby fulfills an important social need. Additionally, he is a mentor to young sportsmen, where he continues to volunteer. He has had a long history of consistent employment and displayed strong emotions for his desire to regain his firearms license that he previously held for many years without incident.

Therefore, the Board recommends that a pardon be granted.

By majority vote, the Advisory Board of Pardons respectfully recommending favorable consideration, signed on this the 31st of October, 2022:



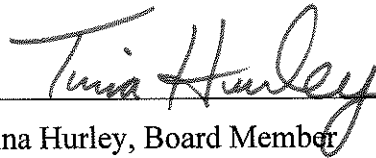
Charlene Bonner, Board Member



Tonomey Coleman, Board Member



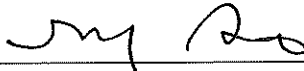
Maryanne Galvin, Board Member



Tina Hurley, Board Member



James Kelcourse, Board Member



Colette Santa, Board Member