



State of Oklahoma  
**PARDON AND PAROLE BOARD**

**PARDON AND PAROLE BOARD**  
**Business Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, October 12, 2020**  
**9:00 a.m.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Robert Gilliland, Allen McCall, Larry Morris, Kelly Doyle, and Adam Luck. All Board Members appeared remotely via Zoom Webinar as panelist as authorized under HB 661.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF:** Tom Bates, Melinda Romero, Leroy Long, and Kyle Counts. All staff appeared remotely as panelists via Zoom Webinar.

**GUESTS:** None

**I. Call to Order – Chairman, Robert Gilliland**

The Business Meeting of the Pardon and Parole Board (PPB) was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Robert Gilliland, on Monday, October 12, 2020, on the Zoom Webinar ID#92679581801.

**A. Roll Call**

The members attending as panelists via Zoom Webinar were Robert Gilliland, Allen McCall, Larry Morris, Kelly Doyle, and Adam Luck. The voting order was announced as Robert Gilliland, Larry Morris, Kelly Doyle, Adam Luck, and Allen McCall.

**B. Assurance of Compliance with Open Meeting Act**

General Counsel Kyle Counts provided assurance of compliance with the Open Meeting Act. The business meeting of the Pardon and Parole Board was convened via Zoom Webinar in accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act as amended under HB 661. This meeting was preceded by advance notice of the date, time, and place filed with the Oklahoma Secretary of State on November 13, 2019. Notice of this meeting was also given at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the meeting by posting notice of the date, time, virtual meeting place, and agenda of the meeting at 4:15 PM. on October 8, 2020, on our website, [www.ok.gov/ppb](http://www.ok.gov/ppb). The meeting is in compliance with the Open Meeting Act.

**II. Business Meeting**

**A. Discussion and Possible Action on September Business Meeting Minutes**

The September business meeting minutes were provided to the Board for review. Allen McCall made a motion to approve the September business meeting minutes, Larry Morris seconded. The Board approved the motion 5-0.

**B. Discussion and Possible Action on September Parole Meeting Minutes**

The September parole meeting minutes were provided to the Board for review. Mr. McCall made a motion to approve the September parole meeting minutes, Mr. Morris seconded. The board approved the motion 5-0.

**C. Discussion and Possible Action on Agency Updates**

**1. Personnel Updates: Deputy Director, Melinda Romero**

Ms. Romero shared that there had been no new hires or separations. Two positions will be filled for investigators and positions closed on Friday. Melinda and Leroy will be conducting interviews and completing later in the week. Chairman Gilliland asked about vacancies and Ms. Romero shared that there are two. Chairman Gilliland asked about any temporary agents and Ms. Romero shared we have two employees utilizing Galt Agency. Executive Tom Bates asked after filling those two positions will all budgeted positions be filled, and Ms. Romero shared all positions would be filled at that point.

**2. Administrative Staff Activities – Deputy Director, Melinda Romero**

Ms. Romero stated she had no updates on staff activities this month.

**3. Field Updates – Field Director, Leroy Long**

Mr. Long advised that he would be working on a Covid testing mandate with DOC. DOC put out a policy to test all their staff by the end of month. Mr. Long and Mr. Counts wrote a policy and got a memo out to get all the field investigators to be Covid tested by October 30, 2020. Mr. Long is working with Ms. Romero to conduct interviews and get two positions filled. Mr. Long has completed work on November 2020 docket. Mr. Long took nine investigators and had them review 1,800 commutation applications and will have them complete by Friday. Mr. Long will then proceed to the December 2020 docket.

**4. Legal Update – General Counsel, Kyle Counts**

General Counsel Kyle Counts provided an update on the temporary amendments to the Open Meeting Act, reminding the Board they will expire on November 15<sup>th</sup> and that in-person meetings will resume in December, at the latest. Mr. Counts gave an update on the status of the rulemaking project. Mr. Counts and Mr. Long worked together on the process for the backlog of applications. It has been invaluable gaining a perspective on where the issues lie with the applications process. Once work on commutations is complete, Mr. Counts will move on to rulemaking for parole and pardons. Ms. Doyle asked if it was possible the rules on videoconferencing for meetings would be extended. Mr. Counts stated the earliest the policy would be revisited is in February 2021 when the legislature is back in session. Ms. Doyle asked if will still broadcast the meetings via Zoom for people who want to watch. Mr. Counts answered yes. Mr. Morris asked if we have verified access to the meeting room at Kate Barnard and Mr. Counts said he would check on it. Executive Director Bates stated they will ensure the conference meeting room is safe. Mr. McCall asked if we have the capability to have some board members on Zoom and others in person for the sake of Medical need. Mr. Counts stated he will look into that possibility and Executive Director Bates indicated there are some specific requirements the PPB would need to follow. Mr. McCall asked about a case that had a default judgement rendered against the PPB. Mr. Counts updated the Board that the earliest it would be heard is in February 2021.

**5. Executive Director Bates – Executive Director, Tom Bates**

Mr. Bates has met with every employee. He is very impressed by the team and the staff. Melinda, Kyle, Leroy, and Board members have made the transition smooth and he is very

appreciative. Mr. Bates' big focus is on the commutation backlog and he will go into that in detail on the next agenda item. Mr. Bates has heard from stakeholders in the process and they have expressed concerns about some practices at the PPB. Mr. Bates will meet with stakeholders in the next coming weeks to understand and review concerns. He wants to fully hear and understand what the concerns are and then focus on next actions.

**III. Update on Commutation Docketing – Chairman, Robert Gilliland**

Executive Director Bates became aware of the backlog of commutation applications and felt it was important for the Board and the public to be updated on the plan for tackling it. Mr. Bates met with the leadership team and General Counsel assisted with developing documentation and instruction and worked with Mr. Long to train the investigators on its implementation. The first phase of the review touched 1,800 applications and the total backlog is about 3,000. The strategy is to divide the backlog into manageable buckets using objective criteria that will help the Board prioritize pending applications. Mr. Counts briefly explained the process. Chairman Gilliland stated that the Board has reviewed an overwhelming number of commutations based on the law changes and commended the staff. Chairman Gilliland also stated that the PPB is a part-time Board and that he appreciates efforts to improve processes. Mr. McCall asked if people were getting special treatment on the commutation docket and if exceptions are being made. Mr. Counts answered that any exception request will be brought before the board.

**IV. Discussion and Possible 2021 Meeting schedule – Chairman, Robert Gilliland**

Chairman Gilliland asked for any comments, questions, or issues about the 2021 proposed schedule provided by our Deputy Director Ms. Romero. Hearing none, Chairman Gilliland moved to approve the regular schedule 2021; Mr. Allen McCall seconded. The board approved the motion 5-0.


**V. New Business Not Known or Which Could Not Have Been Reasonably Foreseen Before the Posting of the Agenda – Chairman, Robert Gilliland**

No new business.

**VI. Adjournment of Business Meeting – Chairman, Robert Gilliland**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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Kyle Counts  
General Counsel

The minutes for the October 2020 Pardon and Parole Board Business Meeting were approved by a majority vote on the 2 day of November 2020.