



State of Oklahoma
PARDON AND PAROLE BOARD

PARDON AND PAROLE BOARD
Business Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 11, 2021
9:24 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Adam Luck, Allen McCall, and Larry Morris were present at Kate Barnard Corrections Center; Kelly Doyle was present at Tulsa City Hall. All Board Members appeared via Zoom Webinar.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF: Tom Bates, Melinda Romero, Leroy Long, and Kyle Counts. Tom Bates and Melinda Romero were present at Kate Barnard Corrections Center. All staff appeared as panelists via Zoom Webinar.

GUESTS: None

I. Call to Order – Adam Luck, Acting Chairman

The Business Meeting of the Pardon and Parole Board (PPB) was called to order at 9:24 a.m. by Acting Chairman Adam Luck, on Monday, January 11th, 2021.

A. Roll Call

The members attending were Allen McCall, Larry Morris, Adam Luck, and Kelly Doyle. The voting order was announced as Allen McCall, Kelly Doyle, Larry Morris, and Adam Luck.

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 an amended advance notice of the date, time, and place filed with the Oklahoma Secretary of State on December 30, 2020. 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 on January 6, 2021, on our website, www.ok.gov/ppb. The meeting is in compliance with the Open Meeting Act.

II. Business Meeting –Tom Bates, Executive Director, Melinda Romero, Deputy Director, Leroy Long, Field Director, and Kyle Counts, General Counsel

A. Discussion and Possible Action on December Business Meeting Minutes

The December business meeting minutes were provided to the Board for review. Allen

McCall made a motion to approve the December business meeting minutes, Larry Morris seconded. The Board approved the motion 4-0.

B. Discussion and Possible Action on December Parole Meeting Minutes

The December parole meeting minutes were provided to the Board for review. Mr. McCall made a motion to approve the December parole meeting minutes, Larry Morris seconded. The Board approved the motion 4-0.

C. Discussion and Possible Action on Agency Updates

1. Personnel Updates – New Hires and Separations

Deputy Director Romero reported to the Board that there was one separation since the last meeting. The recently hired investigator for Mabel Basset resigned effective December 21. Ms. Romero further reported that she and Field Director Leroy Long would be posting that position within a week to refill.

2. Field Updates

Mr. Long expressed hope that the vacant investigator position at Mabel Bassett is filled quickly. Mr. Long reported that the investigators had just completed the February docket. Mr. Long stated that Covid continues to create difficulties and he is working to keep everyone safe as the investigators do their work.

3. Legal Updates

Mr. Counts updated the Board on the rulemaking process, and said the rules are posted on the website and reminded the Board the public hearing would be at 9:00 AM on February 8, at the Board's regular meeting. Mr. Counts reported to the Board that the 2021 Oklahoma Legislature would be in session at the beginning of February and that he would track legislation affecting the Pardon and Parole Board and keep the Board updated. Mr. Counts advised that tie votes are considered denials, but there are mechanisms for the Board to reconsider inmates except on parole for violent crimes, which has a statutory three-year prohibition against reconsideration. Ms. Doyle confirmed that the hearing on the administrative rules would take place during the Board's next meeting. Mr. McCall asked if the statutory three-year wait applied to commutations for violent crimes or just parole, and Mr. Counts answered that it only applied to paroles. Mr. McCall asked if the next appointed Board member would be casting tie-breaking votes and Mr. Counts stated any cases would have to be reconsidered by all five Board members. Mr. Counts explained that the Board member would have missed not only the vote, but also the presentations and deliberations that affected the outcome. Mr. Counts advised that the Board would need to take the issue up as an agenda item once there is a fifth member appointed, and decide whether to reconsider cases and, if so, what cases to reconsider. The Board discussed the issue and Acting Chairman Luck asked that it be an agenda item at the February meeting if a fifth Board member has been appointed by that time.

4. Director's Update

Director Bates reported that things are going smoothly at the agency. Dir. Bates updated the Board on the budget process, stating he would keep the Board updated on those discussions. Regarding annual reports, Dir. Bates reported there were technical issues and questions about the way data was entered so the reports would not be ready as originally planned. Dir. Bates believes both annual reports will be ready for the Board by the March meeting. Dir. Bates stated there has been

discussion across stage agencies about how well teleworking has worked and its impact on office space needs. Dir. Bates stated he and Ms. Romero will be evaluating those needs and have had discussions about taking advantage of the cost savings created from teleworking and reduced office space needs. Dir. Bates believes the legislature will take up the Open Meeting issue early in the session and that the March meeting will likely be held completely over Zoom. Dir. Bates reminded the Board that the March meeting would include the rest of the commutation backlog, and that staff is working to get those applications to the Board within the next couple weeks to allow ample time for review. Dir. Bates closed by providing statistics from the annual report to the Governor's office. The Board considered 9,211 cases in 2020, up from 6,940 in 2019. Dir. Bates congratulated the Board and the staff for this achievement. Mr. McCall agreed with Dir. Bates and pointed out that the Board had not missed a single meeting through Covid and other challenges in 2020. The Board thanked the agency's leadership and staff for their work.

III. Discussion and Possible Action on Resolution of Appreciation to Robert Gilliland for Outstanding Public Service and Leadership – Adam Luck

Acting Chairman Luck reported that former Chairman Robert Gilliland had resigned and read a resolution of appreciation into the record:

Whereas, Robert Gilliland, was appointed to and honorably served on the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board from February 26th, 2019 to December 17th, 2020.

Whereas, Robert Gilliland, was twice elected by his colleagues as Chair of the Board and performed the duties of his role with great integrity and distinction.

Whereas, Robert Gilliland, lead the Board with excellence, as its work was recognized with the Governor's Leadership Award in 2019, and the CARE award from the Association of Paroling Authorities International in 2020.

Whereas, Robert Gilliland, during his tenure confronted the challenges from the pandemic, and diligently advanced the mission of the Board as it held every scheduled meeting.

Whereas, Robert Gilliland, fulfilled all duties of a Board member with exceptional thoughtfulness, wisdom, and dignity.

Whereas, Robert Gilliland, left an indelible impression on the Pardon and Parole Board with his humor, kindness, and graciousness.

Be it resolved, that the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board does hereby extend its sincerest appreciation to Robert Gilliland, commends him for his outstanding public service to the State of Oklahoma, and wishes him good health and good fortune as he enjoys his retirement.

Acting Chairman Luck moved to approve the resolution and Mr. McCall seconded. The Board approved the resolution 4-0. Dir. Bates thanked Chairman Gilliland for his help during Dir. Bates transition into the position and reported that the Governor's office will be doing a commendation soon. The Board reiterated their appreciation for his service. Acting Chairman Luck advised that he would be the acting chair until a fifth member is appointed and elections are held.


IV. New Business Not Known or Which Could Not Have Been Reasonably Foreseen Before the Posting of the Agenda – Adam Luck

Acting Chairman Luck asked if the Board had any items to discuss. Mr. McCall inquired about training as it had been scheduled for December but postponed. Mr. McCall stated the Board members are required by statute to do six hours a year and the new member will need to complete 12. Because the Board is behind and will do 12 hours in 2021, Mr. McCall suggested doing all the training once a new member is appointed. Mr. McCall believes it would be helpful to have Richard Stroker back for one of the training sessions as his previous training was a good teambuilding exercise for the Board.

V. Adjournment of Business Meeting – Adam Luck

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kyle Counts
General Counsel

The minutes for the January 2021 Pardon and Parole Board Business Meeting were approved by a majority vote on the 8th day of March 2021.