



State of Oklahoma  
**PARDON AND PAROLE BOARD**

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

**Monday, September 11, 2023**  
**9:00 a.m.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Edward Konieczny, Richard Miller, Calvin Prince, Robert Reavis, and Kevin Buchanan

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF:** Tom Bates, Melinda Romero, Kyle Counts and Leroy Long

**GUESTS:** Rhonda Bear and Lee Roberts

**I. Call To Order – Edward Konieczny, Acting Chairman**

The Business Meeting of the Pardon and Parole Board (PPB) was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Edward Konieczny on Monday, September 11, 2023.

**A. Roll Call**

The members attending were Edward Konieczny, Richard Miller, Calvin Prince, Robert Reavis, and Kevin Buchanan.

**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 in accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act. This meeting was preceded by an advance notice of the date, time, and place filed with the Oklahoma Secretary of State on November 14, 2022. An amended notice was filed on May 9, 2023, which provided updated information concerning the meeting location. 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 September 7, 2023, on the Pardon and Parole Board's website, [www.ok.gov/ppb](http://www.ok.gov/ppb). The meeting is in compliance with the Open Meeting Act.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

**A. Discussion and Possible Action on August 2023 Business Meeting Minutes**

The August business meeting minutes were provided to the Board for review. Calvin Prince made a motion to approve the August business meeting minutes, Richard Miller seconded. Robert Reavis and Kevin Buchanan abstained. The Board carried the motion 3-0, with two abstentions.

**B. Discussion and Possible Action on August 2023 Parole Meeting Minutes**

The August Parole minutes were provided to the Board for review. Calvin Prince made a motion to approve the August Parole meeting minutes, Richard Miller seconded. Robert Reavis and Kevin Buchanan abstained. The Board carried the motion 3-0, with two abstentions.

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

**A. Personnel Updates** –Ms. Melinda Romero, Deputy Director, stated that there are two Field vacancies that are in the process of being filled, with interviews beginning the week following the Board Meeting. She also explained that there is one Administrative Assistant position open in the administrative office, with the posting for that position going live the week following the Board meeting.

**B. Field Updates** – Mr. Leroy Long, Field Director, reiterated the open positions. He added that he is working with a new hire for Great Plains Correctional Center. Interviews will be taking place the week after the meeting, and the job posting for the second is live and will close on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023. He also explained that the October docket is being finalized.

**C. Legal Updates** – Mr. Kyle Counts, General Counsel, stated that in the month of August there were 18 revocations, with 10 waiving their hearings and 8 receiving their hearings. He also told the Board members to be aware of rulemaking items coming up on the November agenda, and that the rulemaking intent must be voted on no later than the November meeting in order to meet the deadline for 2024. He also made the Board aware of officer elections coming up in November as well.

**D. Director’s Update** – Mr. Tom Bates, Executive Director, began by welcoming the new Board Members and shows his appreciation for them preparing for this Board Meeting on such a short time frame. He also reiterated what Mr. Kyle Counts said regarding the rulemaking process and noted that he would like all members to spend some time with Counsel in order to learn the full context and need behind the upcoming changes.

**IV. Training – Rhonda Bear and Lee Roberts– Transitional Opportunities for Women Previously Incarcerated**

**A. Rhonda Bear** - Ms. Bear, being previously incarcerated, shared with the Board that a greatly important goal for her once being released from prison was to reunite with her children. She says that her faith led her to having a heart for children. She stated that she started a transitional housing program around 15 years ago and has helped over three hundred (300) children reunite with their mothers who were previously incarcerated. Ms. Bear also runs a work training program through a coffee shop called ‘She Brews’, hosting locations in Claremore and Tulsa, Oklahoma. These programs help previously incarcerated women develop skills necessary to reintegrate successfully into society. Ms. Bear states that her programs see approximately a 10% recidivism rate.

**B. Lee Roberts** – Ms. Roberts explained her history in volunteer work with incarcerated women. She stated that there are many women who need the opportunity to be successful

once they are released, and that in reflecting on the women she has worked with she truly believes in second chances.

**V. New Business Not Known or Which Could Not Have Been Reasonably Foreseen Before the Posting of the Agenda**

No new business.

**VI. Adjournment of the Business Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kyle Counts  
General Counsel

The minutes for the September 2023 Pardon and Parole Board Business Meeting were approved by a majority vote on the 9th day of October 2023.