

**Approved on 3.9.26**

**Special Commission on Correctional Consolidation & Collaboration Meeting Minutes**

Date: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM, February 9th, 2026

Location: Room 428, 24 Beacon St, Boston, MA 02133

**Commission Members in Attendance:**

- William Brownsberger, Chair- State Senator, Suffolk
- Daniel Hunt, Chair – State Representative, 13<sup>th</sup> Suffolk District
- Estela Reyes- State Representative, 4th Essex District
- Andrew Peck- Undersecretary of Criminal Justice, EOPSS
- Andrea Cabral- Former MA Secretary of Public Safety + Former Sheriff,
- Robert Gittens- Former Executive Director, Bridges Homeward
- Patrick Cahillane- Sheriff, Hampshire County
- Nicholas Cocchi- Sheriff, Hampden County
- Meaghan Dupuis- Executive Director, ForHealth Consulting
- Mac Hudson - Paralegal at Prisoners' Legal Services
- Harry Jean Jaques
- Carla Montiero

**Staff To Be Contacted:**

- Eric Helmuth, Senator Brownsberger's Staff Director - [Eric.Helmuth@masenate.gov](mailto:Eric.Helmuth@masenate.gov)
- Teri Valentine, Senator Brownsberger's Legislative Director - [Teri.Valentine@masenate.gov](mailto:Teri.Valentine@masenate.gov)
- Erin Walsh, Representative Hunt's Staff Director – [erin.walsh@mahouse.gov](mailto:erin.walsh@mahouse.gov)
- Cassie Tobin, Representative Hunt's Legislative Aide - [cassie.tobin@mahouse.gov](mailto:cassie.tobin@mahouse.gov)

## **1:05 PM Start**

Attendance taken and 1/12/26 meeting minutes approved

### **Presentation By Angelo Gomez Jr., Chair of the MA Parole Board**

#### **Mission Statement:**

- We promote public safety through supervised, conditional release of inmates to the community, so that a successful transition from confinement to discharge from parole provides a basis for continued responsible conduct.
  - o The Massachusetts Parole Board is the agency authorized to grant paroles, supervise the parolee, and make recommendations to the Governor regarding pardons and commutations.
  - o We work with individuals who are serving terms of 60 days or more in state or county correctional facilities.
  - o We play a key role in facilitating the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals into the community by building strong partnerships with state and local stakeholders who provide employment, housing, treatment, and rehabilitation services in support of individuals under supervision.
  - o We ensure that individuals under supervision is in compliance with conditions of parole by striving to provide the most equitable and responsive intervention for our population geared toward reducing recidivism and maintaining public safety.

#### **Who We Serve:**

- The agency serves the public, victims, eligible incarcerated individuals, individuals released on parole, and petitioners for executive clemency throughout the Commonwealth by conducting hearings, supervising paroled individuals in the community, providing notice and assistance to victims and their families, and providing reentry services to individuals leaving custody, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 127, § 158
- In Calendar Year 2024:
  - 2,810 Institutional Release Hearings were held for incarcerated individuals housed in the Massachusetts Department of Corrections and House of Corrections facilities.
  - 141 Initial and Review Hearings were held for incarcerated individuals sentenced to life.
  - 100 Victim Access Release Hearings were held for incarcerated individuals serving state sentences for crimes which resulted in death, for violent crimes or a sex offense.
  - 18,238 notifications of parole events were sent to registered victims, surviving family members of homicide victims, and citizen-initiated petitioners.
    - o Victim Services works to notify the relevant affected members of the public.

- Processed 53 Pardon and 70 Commutation Petitions and 41 Early Termination of Parole applications.
- Supervised 2,993 Massachusetts committed parolees

### **Discretionary Parole Process**

- Parole is the procedure whereby eligible incarcerated individuals are released prior to the expiration of their sentence, permitting the remainder of their sentence to be served in the community under supervision, subject to specific rules and conditions of behavior.
- The Parole Board has statutory responsibility for administering the parole process. It determines whether and under what conditions an eligible individual sentenced to a correctional institution should be issued a parole permit.
- Once released, it supervises all individuals released under parole conditions. It also determines whether alleged parole violations warrant revocation of parole permits, and whether the circumstances warrant early termination of parole before the actual parole discharge date

### **Transitional Services Division**

- Parole Intake:
  - o Compute parole hearing date
  - o Initiate hearing eligibility tracking notification to victims of PE
- Hearing Preparation
  - o Generate hearing eligibility tracking report and hearing notification as required
  - o Collects and verifies reports and documents
  - o Interviews inmates
  - o Prepare case material
  - o Coordinates and schedules hearings
  - o VSU notification of parole hearings to victims
- Parole Hearing
  - o Conducted up to 60 days prior to initial parole eligibility date
  - o Case presented to hearing panel by IPO
  - o Hearing panel reviews case file and interviews offender
  - o Hearing panel conducts confidential deliberation and renders a decision
- Comprised of Institutional Parole Officers based in each of the 32 state and county correctional facilities across the Commonwealth.
- Responsible for determining inmates' parole eligibility and parole discharge dates.
- Gathers necessary case information for the Board by reviewing the parole eligible incarcerated individual's master file, analyzing and summarizing information, interviewing the incarcerated individual and completing an assessment of his/her criminogenic factors, using the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI), a validated risk/needs assessment tool

- Schedules, monitors, and prepares inmates for all release, rescission, and revocation hearings to be heard by the Parole Board.
- Coordinates with Victim Services Unit and with Field Services Staff
- 2024 Hearing Outcomes:
  - o House of Correction: 1,437 Positive to 595 Denied (Paroling rate of 71%)
  - o Department of Correction: 487 Positive to 291 Denied (Paroling Rate of 63%)
  - o Total positive outcomes: 1924
  - o Total denied outcomes: 886
  - o The average of the 2,810 hearings resulted in a 68% parole rate.

### **Life Sentence Unit**

- Comprised of Special Investigators responsible for preparing all eligible incarcerated individuals sentenced to life in prison for parole hearings.
- Coordinates with affiliate agencies such as the District Attorneys' Offices, Attorney General's Office, Massachusetts State Police, local police departments, and the DOC to gather comprehensive case information for the Board.
- Organizes initial life sentence hearings and review hearings
- 2024 Life Sentence Hearings Outcomes:
  - o Initial: 30 positive votes to 18 denied votes (Paroling rate of 63%)
  - o Review: 71 positive votes to 22 denied votes (Paroling rate of 76%)
  - o Total positive votes: 101
  - o Total denied votes: 40
  - o The 141 Life Sentence hearings resulted in an average paroling rate of 72%.

### **Victim Services Unit**

- Comprised of Victim Service Coordinators responsible for providing victim notification for all parole related events, including notice of parole hearing dates conducted for incarcerated individuals sentenced to life in prison, clemency petitions, and applications for early termination of parole, parole hearing decisions, and parole releases in accordance with 120 CMR 400.
- Provide victims and family members with guidance, support, and information throughout each step of the parole process, including assistance during Victim Access Hearings and Life Sentence Hearings when victims and family members are provided the opportunity to attend the parole hearing in person and give oral testimony.
- 2024 VSU Services Provided by Hearing Type
  - o VAH (Type A): 45 Hearings with Attendees (19%), 115 Attendees (19%)
  - o VAH (Type B State): 34 Hearings with Attendees (14%), 55 Attendees (9%)
  - o VAH (Type B County): 42 Hearings with Attendees (18%), 45 Attendees (8%)
  - o Life Sentence: 110 Hearings with Attendees (46%), 370 Attendees (62%)

- Executive Clemency / Termination: 7 Hearings with Attendees (3%), 13 Attendees (2%)

## **Field Services Division**

- 70% of the work is done in the community, an additional 25% of the work is done in local offices.
- Release:
  - A parole officer investigates to ensure that the home/ work exists and are suitable for the parolee
  - The home/work plan is verified
  - A release permit is issued
- Regional Intake Office:
  - A parole officer conducts initial interviews/ orientation
  - Conducts a risk/ need assessment
  - Level of supervision is determined
  - Establishes supervision plan
- Supervision by Field Parole Officer:
  - Conducts regular and unannounced home and work visits and collateral contacts
  - Develops and maintains law enforcement and social service relations
  - Utilizes graduated sanctions as a case management tool
  - Enforcement of parole conditions set by board
  - VSC identifies and assists new victims in restraining order plaintiffs
- Discharge/ Termination:
  - Parole supervision can end by discharge or completion of term of parole/ termination or vote of the Board to terminate the parole sentence.
  - Ongoing support services includes social services support available for all ex-offenders.
- Comprised of Field Parole Officers assigned to 9 Regional Offices across the state.
- Responsible for community supervision of parolees and assuring they remain in compliance with the conditions of parole by conducting home, office, and community visits, and verifying employment, programming, and treatment status of individuals on parole. (NOTE : Also responsible for supervising individuals who have been paroled via the Interstate Compact Program and Mandatory or Medical release)
- Delivers reentry services to parolees to support their successful transition into the community.
- Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 127, § 130C, implements policy and procedure for issuance of compliance credits to paroled individuals for satisfactory conduct.
- When a parolee does not comply with conditions of parole and/or when an appropriate range of sanctions and interventions have been utilized but been ineffective, a revocation process is initiated by the Field Parole Officer and the paroled individual is re-committed to the terms of their original sentence, following a final revocation hearing.
- Releases to Supervision (2,036):
  - 1,760 Discretionary Releases (86%)
  - 265 Mandatory Releases (13%)

- 11 Medical Releases (1%)
- On the account of early release, the average length of parole ranges from 76 to 79 days (2024)
- 2024 Releases to MA Supervision by Regional Office (1,858)
  - Region 9 Framingham: 81 (4%)
  - Region 8 New Bedford: 291 (16%)
  - Region 7 Brockton: 149 (8%)
  - Region 6 Lowell: 204 (11%)
  - Region 5 Springfield: 415 (22%)
  - Region 4 Worcester: 203 (11%)
  - Region 3 Lynn: 138 (7%)
  - Region 2 Dorchester: 172 (9%)
  - Region 1 Dorchester: 205 (11%)
- Outcomes for MA Commitments under MA Community Supervision (2023 : 2024)
  - Successful Discharge/Continued Supervision
    - Successfully Discharged from Parole Supervision 1,191 (41%): 1,174 (39%)
    - Active Parolees on Continued Supervision: 1,176 (40%): 1,280 (43%)
  - Revocations
    - Non-Crime/Technical Revocation: 255 (9%) : 236 (8%)
    - New Crime Revocation: 47 (2%) : 47 (2%)
  - Other
    - Detained, Pending Revocation or Whereabouts Unknown: 114 (4%) : 153 (5%)
  - Other Discharges from Parole
    - Deaths, court release, closed from Institution while on Parole status etc.: 134 (5%) : 103 (3%)
- Compliance Credits Earned by Years of Release:
  - 2023: 365 people eligible for credits vs 269 people earned credits (74%)
  - 2024: 378 people eligible for credits vs 257 people earned credits (68%)
- Early Discharge from Supervision due to Compliance Credits (CCs) among CC Eligible Commitments Successfully Discharged from Supervision.
  - 2023: 236 People eligible for CC vs 207 People Discharged Early due to Earned CCs (88%). On average 70 credits were earned.
  - 2024: 228 People eligible for CC vs 212 People Discharged Early due to Earned CCs (93%). On average 75 credits were earned.

## Evidence based practices

The Parole Board is motivated to align with evidence-based and evidence-informed practices that will support rehabilitation and positive outcomes for individuals so they can lead productive and law-abiding lives.

- Community Pathways Foundational Training (UMass Chan)
- Risk/Needs/Responsivity Mapping (UMass Law & Psychiatry)

- Risk/Needs/Responsivity Framework for Inmate Questionnaire & Commitment Summaries (UMass Law & Psychiatry)
- Promoting Parsimony in Parole Condition Setting (UMass Lowell)
- Evidence Based Decision-Making (UMass Law & Psychiatry)
- Parole Officer as a Coach: Improving Treatment & Recovery Outcomes for Adults in Reentry (Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant #O-BJA-2024-172030 Pilot Project with Justice System Partners)

1:27 PM Senator Brownsberger Q: Can you talk about promoting Parsimony?

- A: It is how the Board has been attempting to follow the best practices recommended to them.
- Ex: Knowing when and how to implement GPS monitoring.

1:29 PM Representative Hunt Q: What effects do these conditional regulations have on these populations?

- A: We look at their success primarily through their willing collaboration with outside stakeholders (Ralph Gantz Project). Their voluntary contributions are accounted for in our policy determination. We are working on a reward system rather than a punitive system, and bring people to treatment centres rather than custody.
- We have 32,000 points of community contact with the Field Services Division alone and our recidivism rate remains around 11%.

## Vital Partnerships

- Massachusetts Probation Service (MPS)
  - o The Parole Board and MPS partner to enhance public safety, reduce recidivism, and support reentry through coordinated supervision, evidence-based practices, and shared resources.
  - o On average, approximately 23% of active parolees are involved with both Parole and Probation
  - o Regional Variations (Active Paroles: On Probation (% on Probation))
    - Region 1 Dorchester: 188 : 34 (18%)
    - Region 2 Dorchester: 145 : 36 (25%)
    - Region 3 Lynn: 100 : 33 (33%)
    - Region 4 Worcester: 157 : 33 (33%)
    - Region 5 Springfield: 250 : 44 (18%)
    - Region 6 Lowell: 148 : 37 (25%)
    - Region 7 Brockton: 129 : 41 (32%)
    - Region 8 Dartmouth: 170 : 39 (23%)
    - Region 9 Framingham: 151 : 34 (23%)
    - Grand Total: 1,438 : 331 (23%)

1:36 Representative Hunt Q: Can you discuss the population distribution?

- A: We recently redistricted but we attempt to distribute cases evenly to have 34 to 50 individuals per parole officer.

1:40 Senator Brownsberger G: How many people were release into custody? And what was the average duration of their parole? I would be interested in the varying lengths of parole time.

- A: 68% were released and 9 months on average, with 400 ( out of roughly 1,200) life sentences. But the numbers can fluctuate with revocations, and the data shows changes from 2023 to 2026.

1:44 PM Sheriff Callihane Q: On slide 6 is that 2,810 number a reflection of individuals released from custody?

- A: No it is a combination of the positive and denied votes. That 68% is equivalent to the paroling / release rate.

1:46 Cocchi Q: Do you have the release numbers for 2025? How many people are currently on parole? How many members of staff do you have? How many individuals partake in the aforementioned housing, treatment and workplace services? Has there been a visible uptake in people denying parole?

- We're working on the data for 2025, our data gathering year ends in December.
- We fluctuate between 1600 to 1800 on any given day.
- We have roughly 184 members of staff.
- We have limited data as to why people deny parole, but one of the issues is that they don't want to bring pending issues before the board.

Key collaborations include:

- o Global Positioning System (GPS) Program
- o Community Based Residential Reentry Programs
- o Sober Housing Programs
- o Ralph Gants Project- Co-location of Parole Board's Region 6 field office with MPS Community Justice Support Center in Lowell.
- Massachusetts Sheriff's Association
  - o The Parole Board and Sheriffs Offices in the Commonwealth partner to enhance system coordination and align in-custody rehabilitative programming with parole requirements, aiming to improve public safety and support offender reentry.
  - o Rocky Hill Transitional Housing Program with Hampshire County Sheriff's Office.
  - o Co-location of Parole Board's Region 3 field office with Essex County Sheriff's Office in Lynn.
  - o Co-location of Parole Board's Region 8 field office with Bristol County Sheriff's Office in Dartmouth

- Department of Correction (DOC)
  - o The Parole Board and DOC partner to educate and support incarcerated individuals through the parole process, enhance participation in and completion of recidivism reduction programs in facilities, improve reentry planning collaboration, and reduce delays in the release of parole eligible individuals.
  - o MA Parole Orientation Program (M-POP)
  - o Delays in Parole Release Project (via UMass Law & Psychiatry)
  - o Community Pathways Program (via UMass Chan)

**Presentation Ends at 1:54 PM**

1:55 Representative Hunt Q: Have there been any gaps or successes in the collaboration between different services.

- A: Our work with the sheriff's offices and the Department of Corrections has helped transition individuals into society.
- We also frequently work with probation and share some lighting line items for funding
- While 36% of our parolees find housing upon release we do see waitlists for housing, agency services (Sober Housing, Rocky Hill and HOPE Programs), and Medicaid coverage.
- We also need to evolve to meet an older population, we're behind on policy development.

2:05 PM Commissioner Peck Q: I can't appreciate the work of parole officers enough, for the work they do in the community; but on a separate note, how has your collaboration with UMass worked?

- A: UMass allows us to have a point of feedback for best practices and collaboration with the other branches, like the with DOC and denying their housing plans (6-11% of the time).
- Their oncall pharmacist has also been helpful in the screening of inmates who may test positive.

2: 10 PM Senator Brownsberger Q: Can you get us the statistics on program outcomes? How many people come from HOC? What does the release process look like?

- A: Yes, we can put together material. And the majority of releases come from the HOC at 1,437 people, from the DOC there are 487 releases.
- There is a release plan that is made in collaboration within different programs, which often share resources. There is extensive communication through the HOC, DOC and transitional parole and probation staff.

2:15 Commissioner Peck Q: I'd like to see the break down in the denial of seeing the parole board on the basis of avoiding longer treatment plans.

- A: Roughly 1000 people deny parole, some avoid the Board because of ongoing matters, but some do not want 3+ months of supervisions. Roughly 23% denies parole, some prefer to serve shorter sentences than longer supervisions.

2:24 Commissioner Hudson Q: What is the breakdown for the housing demographics? Does parole have a housing budget? How do you work to find people employment?

- A: We house 30 – 36% of our population at any given time, typically they can stay for 90 days, if they can't find alternatives within that time, we try to place them another program for an additional 90 days. We currently have 160 sober homes, housing anywhere from 400 to 500 people a month, there are 160 CRJ beds at roughly 80% capacity. A large percentage of this population is able to transition out within 90 days. Sex offenders and arsonists are the hardest populations to place.
- There is a line item in the State Budget for housing, and we work in collaboration with other departments to secure funding or beds.
- For employment opportunities we turn to community justice centers and programs like the Raph Ganz program.

2:34 PM Commissioner Hudson Q: Has the recent SJC Mattis decision affected population numbers? How many people have been released? (The MA Supreme Court Decision that decided mandatory life without parole sentences for offenders aged 18–20 is unconstitutional)

- A: As of January 2024, there were 210 individuals, but only 144 are immediately eligible for a hearing. In 2024 there were 53 pardons, 70 commutations, and 41 early terminations. We started clemency hearings in January, but the Board is advisory to the Governors office, so we can't outline a specific timeline for that process.

2:44 PM Senator Brownsberger Q: A quarter of parolees are on probation, but what is the flip side of that statistic?

- A: From our presentation in the summer, it was roughly 2,500 (in the community) to 3,000 people. The average probation is 3-5 years, with longer sentences for sex offenders.

2:48 Representative Hunt Q: Have you seen a change in your numbers in response to criminal justice reform?

- A: Our numbers are up by 3.5%, with the release of "lifers", medical cases and rolling rates. But this is not necessarily a negative.

2:50 PM Commission Dupuis Q: Do you track the length of incarceration and what is that ratio'd to the duration of parole?

- A: That data is available online, the DOC published it recently.

2:51 Commisioner Hudson Q: Are you still aggregating consecutive sentences for the purpose of parole? And do those with life sentences have good recidivism rates?

- A: Yes to both, those with life sentences "age out of crime".

2:53 House Keeping

- Contact the staff with further questions.
- RSVP to the Norfolk and future facility visits.
- We have noticed low attendance rates on these tours, please consider this when voting time comes.
- Our next meeting is March 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM, where we will be hearing from the public, with special input from those with lived experience.

Adjourned at 2:58 PM