

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations
2013-14 Performance Report
Pardon and Parole Board

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board is to perform its duties as imposed by Article VI, Section 10, of the Oklahoma Constitution. To serve the citizens of Oklahoma as an integral component of the Oklahoma Criminal Justice System and to protect the public by conducting informed hearings and by making careful, equitable, informed parole decisions as well as credible recommendations to the Governor. Thereby reaching the goal of successful re-entry of offenders while reducing the likelihood that an offender will commit another crime and return to prison.

The Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board is an integral part of the Oklahoma Criminal Justice System. The actions of the Board affect all of society, those who are confined and paroled, including victims and the general public. The Board is dedicated to ensuring public safety by returning qualified offenders into the community through supervised conditional release. It is the Agency's objective to provide the offender with a successful transition from confinement to responsible citizenship.

This is accomplished through a commitment to determine release suitability of eligible offenders through decisions that promote fairness, objectivity, and public safety and are responsive to the concerns of victims, members of the community, and other persons within the Oklahoma Criminal Justice System.

The Board's goals are to use appropriate Department of Correction and community resources to facilitate the offender's successful transition from confinement to community and family re-integration and to return promptly to prison those offenders who demonstrate an unwillingness to abide by the law and/or pose a risk to the public.

We believe:

- That public safety is best achieved if criminal justice policy takes both punishment and rehabilitation into account;
- That community safety is achieved through multi-agency collaboration;
- That community participation and support are essential for the successful delivery of correctional services;
- In maximizing resources;
- In teamwork and the process of continuous improvement;
- In our staff and their contributions in achieving our mission;
- That everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect;
- In utilization of evidence-based practices in our decision-making;
- In fairness throughout decision-making;
- In respect for the liberty interests, rights and entitlements of the individual;
- In the value of individual, cultural and racial diversity;
- In victim's rights;

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- That victims are entitled to restorative justice;
- That victims have the right to have an active role in determining how their needs can best be met;
- In the opportunity for offenders to become rehabilitated and thus become productive citizens;
- That offenders are responsible, to the extent possible, to repair harm done to victims and the community;
- In the potential for positive change;
- In professional self-improvement; and
- In maintaining a safe and secure environment.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Tracy L. George, Acting Executive Director, 405 602-5863

GOVERNANCE:

The Agency is headed by an appointee of an independent five member board. The Board members are appointed: Three by the Governor, one by the Count of Criminal Appeals and one by the Supreme Court. Board Member serve terms co-terminously with the Governor. Current Board Members are Dr. Marc Dreyer, Chairman; Mr. David Moore, Vice Chairman; Mr. Richard Dugger, Ms. Lynnell Harkins and Mr. Currie Ballard. There are no subgroups.

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Board meets once per month for a period of five days. Meetings are recorded on an Epiphan recorder. Staff takes written minutes of the Business Meeting portion. The meetings are divided into a Business Meeting on the first day which is adjourned at the conclusion and the Parole Meeting on the subsequent four days which is adjourned at the conclusion on the fifth day. The Board does keep a paper copy of each and every ballot voted on by the Board which is also incorporated into the minutes. The Agency is pursuing an alternative meeting schedule whereby the Board meets more often during the month to accommodate the increased work load of non-violent offender process post State Question 762.

Title 57 O.S. Section 332.4 covers Board Member attendance for meetings. There has been no occurrence when this statute has been needed but if there was such an occurrence it would be utilized. I have attached a copy hereto. Specifically this statute states: Failure of any member to attend one Board meeting in any calendar year, except for justifiable excuse as determined by the Chair pursuant to written policy established by the Board, shall preclude the right of the member to receive his or her monthly compensation established by subsection A or B of this section. In addition, any member who fails to attend two or more Board meetings in any calendar year except for extraordinary circumstances as determined by the Chair pursuant to written policy established by the Board shall be deemed to have committed official misconduct as such term is defined by Section 93 of Title 51 of the Oklahoma Statutes. To initiate a removal from office pursuant to this paragraph, the Board shall pass a resolution by a majority of the members of the Board

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detailing the alleged misconduct. Such removal shall be subject to the provisions of Chapter 3 of Title 51 of the Oklahoma Statutes. Failure to attend meetings of the Board, pursuant to the policy established by the Board, shall constitute cause for removal to Section 10 of Article VI of the Oklahoma Constitution. This statutory requirement is being followed.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

The Agency has undergone significant modernization efforts in every aspect of the Agency. These changes, while taking time, have placed the Agency well on the way to making great strides and progress toward high-level efficiency.

The Agency has reviewed each and every paid contract in an effort to reduce expenditure costs. Several contracts were negotiated down for lower costs. Several contracts were cancelled and were replaced by less expensive contracts.

The Agency switched telephone companies which resulted in a cost savings. The Agency is currently attempting to move to a newer and less maintenance heavy system than the one currently used. The current system has repair costs which are running high due to the age of the system and the company servicing the system is no longer in business and there is no one to actually service repairs on the current system.

The Agency negotiated its copier services contract resulting in a cost savings and a newer more efficient copier. The Agency has removed individual printers for each employee and is utilizing the new copier for all employees resulting in a cost savings on toner/ink. Investigators are utilizing copier equipment within the D.O.C. Facility they are housed instead of individual printers.

The Agency is attempting to implement video-conferencing for staff meetings to continue the cost savings we have realized already. We are also implementing an on-line tutorial training system to ensure continuing education and level of professionalism for our Investigators in the field but still enjoy the reduced financial costs we have realized already.

In the past, the Agency utilized the furlough option to its maximum level resulting in a cost savings. In the past, the Agency participated to the extent it had the funds to in the voluntary buyout program, have had eligible employees retire, and initiated a reduction-in-force on the business office transferring services to shared services in OMES, all of which resulted in cost savings as most of those positions have not been refilled. The reduction-in-force of the business office resulted in a cost savings even though the Agency has to contract and compensate OMES for personnel services. The Agency continues to manage personnel costs by hiring Investigators and temporary 999 staffing in replacement of full-time employees at a cost savings for outlying field work. Current staffing levels are at critical levels as the administrative office is functioning with 3 staff members and there are several D.O.C. Facilities being currently covered by 1 Investigator.

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The Agency has recently gone through a complete redistricting of the field staff. The redistricting plan is a more efficient use of staffing as well as enables more complete coverage of the Facilities throughout the State. The plan calls for 1 Investigator in each D.O.C. facility and each private prison throughout the State with the remainder of halfway houses and GPS offenders being covered by the investigative staff within that District. The redistricting plan also allows for an Investigator Supervisor for each of the 5 Districts which will allow the Agency to function more efficiently with regards to training, auditing of work product, etc. This plan is a more efficient use of staff. The Agency does need the funding to allow hiring of additional Investigators in order to provide this complete coverage. Post SQ762 the non-violent offender workload has increased throughout the entire paroling process. The Agency has 47 FTE's allowed; currently the Agency has approximately only 26 FTE's filled. The Agency has undertaken a review of its mission and its current workload and restructured work load where possible in order to maintain high quality work and its mission with fewer FTE's.

The Constitutional Amendment taking the Governor out of the non-violent offender parole process has resulted in a cost-savings to the State by expediting the processing of paroles. The Agency has implemented procedures to process non-violent paroles in the most efficient manner which has resulted in a cost savings to the State. The Agency is processing paroles every two weeks (down from the previous 30 to 90 days in the old process) which saves the State money.

A change for this agency that is resulting in higher efficiency, more expedient work product, and which benefits not only this agency but the public and other agencies is the current project to upgrade the antiquated computer system which would allow many criminal justice agencies to link to the same information utilized by them all on a daily basis, and which would allow elimination of each agency inputting the identical information each time it is needed. The first phase of this project has been completed and our Investigators are currently utilizing the more efficient and less time consuming report preparation process. The second phase of this project is currently being reviewed with regards to cost and to ensure we have proper funding to continue the process. The second phase will enable the parole decisioning process, certificate preparation, tracking system and docketing process to be rolled into the web-based system and allow other entities to have portal access to the parole process without duplication of duties on several levels.

Also, the Agency has recently created an OK.Gov sponsored website.

CORE MISSION:

There are no services provided outside of the core mission. There are no duplicative services that this Agency provides that another agency also provides. We have been able to provide all of our core services.

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

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Services provided by the Parole Board are not performed in the private sector. There have been no privatization efforts with regards to this Agency.