

# THE MARYLAND PAROLE COMMISSION



## FISCAL YEAR 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

**Larry Hogan**  
Governor

**Boyd K. Rutherford**  
Lt. Governor

**Robert L. Green**  
Secretary

**David R. Blumberg**  
Chairman

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## Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

### Maryland Parole Commission

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STATE OF MARYLAND

STATE OF MARYLAND

LARRY HOGAN  
GOVERNOR

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD  
LT. GOVERNOR

ROBERT L. GREEN  
SECRETARY

DAVID R. BLUMBERG  
CHAIRMAN

September 30, 2021

The Honorable Secretary Robert Green  
Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Service  
6852 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sykesville, MD 21784

Dear Secretary Green,

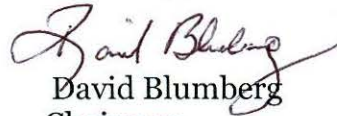
I have never been prouder to submit an annual report, my 18<sup>th</sup> as Chairman, to my departmental Secretary.

Despite the COVID pandemic, the Maryland Parole Commission held every single parole and revocation hearing as scheduled. With remarkable cooperation with both Division of Correction facilities and local jails, both computers and telephones were utilized to conduct business.

During this report period, the Commission was either reached or surpassed Managing for Results objectives and continued to conform to Justice Reinvestment Act guidelines.

Fiscal year 2021 was truly challenging. However, it allowed the Maryland Parole Commission to exceed expectations and strive to continue to reach the high standards the citizens of Maryland deserve.

Sincerely,

  
David Blumberg  
Chairman



## MISSION STATEMENT

The Maryland Parole Commission aims to provide offenders with timely parole and revocation hearings, strives to promote safe communities by promptly processing retake warrants, uses sound judgment in conjunction with utilizing validated risk assessment tools during the decision making process, encourages victim input when applicable, maintains strong relationships with other criminal justice agencies, allows access to the general public and releases those offenders who have the potential to become law abiding citizens.



## OVERVIEW

Under Title 7 of the Correctional Services Article of the annotated Code of Maryland, the Maryland Parole Commission hears cases for parole release and revocation across the entire state, and are authorized to parole inmates sentenced to a term of confinement of six months or more from any correctional institution in Maryland except the Patuxent Institution.

The Commissioners' are authorized to issue warrants for the return of alleged violators to custody and revoke supervision upon finding that a violation of the conditions of parole or mandatory supervision release has occurred. The Commission also makes recommendations to the Governor regarding pardons, commutations of sentences and parole of inmates sentenced to life imprisonment.

Currently, there are 10 commissioners including the Chairman, 10 hearing officers, and 48 other staff members employed at the Maryland Parole Commission.





## DEFINITIONS

- **Administrative Release** allows certain offenders to be released without a hearing after serving one fourth of sentence and meeting other certain eligibility requirements created by the Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA).
- **Administrative Reviews** are not face to face hearings but rather “paper” reviews of offender files at the Commission office. These reviews are conducted at five-year intervals until an offender reaches parole eligibility and ensures that all the essential documents and intuitional adjustment summaries necessary for a parole hearing are obtained and placed in a case file.
- **Commission Cases** are heard by a panel of two Commissioners and include cases with a loss of life, life sentences, or life sentences with all but a fixed number of years suspended, and open parole hearings.
- **Geriatric Parole** allows offenders that have reached the age of sixty to petition the parole commission for relief under certain criteria established by the Maryland Parole Commission.
- **Gubernatorial Commutation** orders that the grantee shall suffer a lesser penalty for the offense than imposed by the court. The commutation of an offenders’ sentence is normally considered by the Parole Commission only upon demonstration of extraordinary circumstances.
- **Gubernatorial Pardon** absolves the grantee of guilt for his criminal act(s), and exempts the grantee from the resulting penalties. Criteria for the pardon consideration are set by the Governor and normally require the passage of a substantial period following the end of the incarceration or any form of supervision before a pardon will be entertained.
- **Hearing Officer Cases** are non-Commissioner cases heard by the Hearing Officers who make recommendations reviewed by Commissioners. If the reviewing Commissioner agrees with the Hearing Officers recommendation, that recommendation becomes the Commissioners decision. An offender may appeal this decision to a panel of two Commissioners. In instances where the reviewing Commissioner does not adopt the Hearing Officers recommendation, an in house appeal results and a panel of two Commissioners make a final decision that is not appealable by the offender.

- **Interested Party** is an individual who is not a “victim” but rather an individual who has a “special interest” in the status of the offender as determined by the Commissioners Victim Services Coordinator.
- **Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA)** Bill passed by the Maryland General Assembly that became law on October 1, 2017. The JRA seeks to reduce Maryland’s prison population and use the savings to provide more effective treatment before, during, and after incarceration. The intention is to reduce the likelihood of reoffending, as well as to benefit victims and families. The specific parts of the JRA that pertain to the Maryland Parole Commission provide for administrative release, and caps for technical violations of parole or mandatory release.
- **Liaison Agent/ Waiver (LAW)** hearings are revocation hearings conducted by the Commissioners on offenders who have “technical” violations and admit fault/guilt to the stated violations. These offenders waive the presence of an attorney or their agent of record. For these hearings, the Division of Parole and Probation LAW unit provides an agent to act as a liaison agent who testifies during the entire docket as to the facts of each case using information provided by the agent of record.
- **Medical Parole** allows consideration for an inmate who is chronically debilitated, or incapacitated by a medical or mental health condition, disease or syndrome as to be physically incapable of presenting a danger to society to be released on medical parole at any time during the term of that inmate’s sentence without regard to parole eligibility.
- **Mandatory Supervision Release** is the release of an offender from the Division of Correction due to diminution credits earned and awarded. The offenders are supervised by parole agents and are subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission after release until the maximum expiration of their sentence. Any alleged violation of mandatory release supervision conditions may result in a revocation hearing.
- **Open Parole Hearings** are essentially the same as regular parole grant hearings except it has been opened to the public at the request of the victim or victims representative who is permitted to speak at this hearing. Individuals must make a request in writing to attend these proceedings and the Commission determines who may or may not attend. Open hearings are conducted by two Commissioners.

➤



- **Parole** is the discretionary and conditional release of an offender into the community by the Commission to continue serving the term of confinement under the supervision of an agent of the DPSCS Community Supervision Unit until the expiration of the full, undiminished term. If any conditions of parole are violated, the offender is subject to revocation and re-incarceration.
- **Parole in Absentia** a parole hearing that occurs when an offender is housed in a jurisdiction outside the State of Maryland.
- **Parole Eligibility** is determined by sentence length and the specific crime (s) for which the offender is incarcerated.
- **Parole Grant Hearing** is an interview with the offender conducted by a Commission panel or Hearing Officer to elicit information from and about the offender. This interview along with information contained in the parole file form the basis of the Commissions' decisions.
- **Preliminary Revocation Hearing** is held before a Hearing Officer who determines if probable cause exists with respect to the stated violations. If probably cause is found, the offender is scheduled for a revocation hearing before a Commissioner. Alleged violators may elect to have or waive preliminary revocation hearings.
- **Public Safety Program** is an agreement between the offender and the Commission in which the offender is granted discretionary parole with the stipulation that he/she will received services through the compact provided to those returning to Baltimore City.
- **Revocation Hearings** are conducted by Commissioners on those offenders who allegedly have violated the conditions of parole or mandatory supervision and are returned to the customer of the Division of Correction or a Local Detention Facility. The supervising agent, who initiated the retake warrant process testifies at this hearing and is subject to cross-examination. The Public Defenders Officers or a private attorney represents offenders.
- **Victim** is a person (or a designated family member of a deceased person) who has suffered actual or threatened physical, emotional, or financial harm as a direct result of a crime.



# COMMISSION UNITS

## ADMINISTRATION

Oversees daily operations of the Commission and ensures compliance with statutory requirements. Responds to Public Information Act requests, processes candidates for Public Safety Compact program, fee waiver and travel requests.

## INSTITUTIONAL PAROLE ASSOCIATES

The Institutional Parole Associates (IPA) are assigned to each region as they are the liaison between the Commission and the Division of Correction. Their responsibilities include but are not limited to providing assistance to the Hearing Officers and Commissioners during parole and revocation hearings, conducting file review with offenders prior to the parole hearing, delivering parole decisions, explaining the appeal process and ensuring that offenders are properly released when scheduled. This unit is also responsible for ensuring that the attendees of Open Parole Hearings are informed of the process and provided an opportunity to ask questions.

## PARDON AND EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY UNIT

This Unit is responsible for reviewing and processing all pardon and executive clemency applications, reviewing, and distributing all medical and geriatric parole requests as well as handling all correspondence with the Governor.

- Pardon Applications processed      103
- Medical paroles processed      24

## PAROLE SERVICES UNIT

The Parole Services Unit handles all scheduling and docketing of parole hearings for the Division of Correction DOC and Local Detention facilities to include parole in absentia cases where Maryland offenders are serving sentences in other states. They also open cases and preliminarily calculate parole eligibility.

➤ DOC hearings conducted	4840
➤ Detention center hearings conducted	529
➤ Detention center hearing on site	0
➤ Detention center hearings on video or telephone	529
➤ Parole in absentia hearings	75

## POST- RELEASE UNITS

The Warrant Unit is responsible for preparing and processing retake warrants, notifying outside jurisdictions of pending parole violations, and updating the appropriate databases for each case.

The NCIC Unit ensures warrants are tracked appropriately in the national database and responds to inquiries from law enforcement and other jurisdictions.

The Revocation Unit is responsible for scheduling preliminary hearings, issuing subpoenas, and scheduling revocation hearings for offenders incarcerated at the DOC as well as local facilities for offenders charged with violating the terms of their supervision. This unit coordinates with private attorneys and public defenders to provide representation to these individuals.

➤ Warrants prepared	1107
➤ Subpoenas prepared	0
➤ Revocation hearings conducted	1177
➤ Preliminary hearings conducted	70
➤ Supervision revoked	162



## RECORDS UNIT

The Records Unit is responsible for maintaining files on all offenders currently incarcerated as well those under supervision by the Department of Parole and Probation until five years past the maximum expiration of sentence. This Unit is also responsible for retrieving and processing supervision reports and warrant requests from the Division of Parole and Probation. All reports must be prioritized in accordance with the specificity of the request.

- Reports retrieved from the Division of Parole and Probation 4890

## RELEASE UNIT

This unit is responsible for preparing parole release orders and coordinating releases for offenders granted parole from the Division of Correction and the 23 Local Detention facilities. Prior to preparing release orders, staff must ensure that the offender is serving a parole eligible offence, have completed all pre-release contingencies, ensure there are no outstanding warrants and/or detainers, and the offenders home plan has been approved.

- Division of Correction Release 1262
- Local Detention Facility Releases 122

## SUPPORT SERVICES UNIT

This Unit is responsible for handling time keeping and personnel matters, securing hotel reservations, assigning state vehicles, maintaining inventory, monitoring fleet usage and maintenance, completing injury reports handling computer issues, maintaining secure access for employees, handling property transfers, and maintaining training schedules.

## SECRETARIAL UNIT

This Unit is responsible for providing secretarial support to Commissioners, Hearing Officers, and Administrative staff. This unit is also responsible for coordinating video hearings, (parole and revocation), processing parole decisions appeals, monitoring

cases placed on hold, distributing incoming mail, providing switchboard coverage, and entering information into the Offender Case Management System (OCMS).

### VICTIM SERVICES UNIT

The Victim Services Unit ensures timely notification to victims and/or their representatives of hearings, decisions, and release dates. They also advise victims of their right to “open” a parole hearing and are responsible for scheduling and coordinating these hearings. In addition, the Unit advises victims or their representatives of their rights and provides referrals for services when appropriate.

- Victim notification letters sent to victim or representative 5412



## **COMMISSIONER BIOGRAPHIES**

**David R Blumberg- Chairman**- appointed as a Commissioner October 2003; appointed Chairman July 1, 2004; continuing for three consecutive terms, term to expire December 2021. Chairman Blumberg received a Bachelor's of Arts degree in political Science from Loyola College and a Master's of Science degree in Library Science from the University of Maryland. For twenty years, he was the director of the Baltimore City Detention Center Enoch Pratt Library. Chairman Blumberg is a member of the Board for John Hopkins Club, Chairman of Santa Claus Anonymous, President of the Village at Home, an aging in place non-profit for North Baltimore City, as well as the Secretary of the Hampden Midtown Kiwanis. In May 2015, Chairman Blumberg was recognized by the Association of Paroling Authorities International, (APAI) a worldwide organization representing all releasing authorities, with the Ben Baer Award. This award was established to recognize and reward an individual who has demonstrated significant service in the field of parole or community corrections. Chairman Blumberg was elected July 1, 2018 to be the President of APAI.

**Sam Billotti IV** – appointed July 2019: term to expire December 2024. Commissioner Billotti received a Bachelor's of Arts degree from Shepherd College and a Juris Doctorate from University of Baltimore School of Law. For the six years prior to his appointment, he was in the private practice of law in the area of Criminal Defense, Civil, and Estate Work. Commissioner Billotti started his working career in law enforcement with the Frederick County Sheriff's Office where he rose to the rank of Lieutenant, and retired after twenty years of service with the agency. He then moved on to the Washington County Sheriff's Office and commanded several sections of the Office at the rank of Major, before retiring to practice of law.

**John W. E. Cluster Jr.** – appointed August 2016; term to expire December 2021. Born in Baltimore Maryland, graduated Catonsville High School 1972, and attended Essex Community College. Commissioner Cluster is a former member of the Maryland House of Delegates from July 2003 to January 2007, January 2011 to July 2016; resigned from membership in July 2016. While serving in the House of Delegates he was honored to be named Legislator of the year many times from the law enforcement community. As a member of the House he served in both the House Environmental Matters from 2003-2007 and House Judiciary Committees 2011-2016. Prior to the House Delegates, Commissioner Cluster worked as the Director of Facilities at the Department of Juvenile Services 2003. Member of Charles H. Hickey Jr., School Advisory Board, 2005-07. Chair, Maryland Correctional Enterprises Management Council, 2015-16.

**Steven J. DeBoy Sr.** – appointed January 2017; term to expire December 2022. Commissioner DeBoy has been married to his wife Jenny for 44 years resulting in 3 children, and 3 grandsons. He is a graduate from Catonsville Community College with an Associate of Arts degree in Criminal Justice; also graduated from University of Baltimore with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. Commissioner DeBoy graduated from the Baltimore County Police Department Academy in 1977 and served as a police officer and detective for over twenty years before retiring in 1995. He served in the Maryland House of Delegates from 2003-2015 as a representative of Baltimore and Howard Counties. During his legislative tenure, he served on the House Appropriations Committee and championed legislation promoting public safety for law enforcement, the fire



service, and corrections. Upon his retirement from the legislature, he was asked to serve as Deputy Legislative Officer for Governor Larry Hogan. Stationed in the Governor's legislative office he was responsible for the public safety agenda before the Maryland General assembly.

**Jason Keckler** -appointed in January 2018; term to expire December 2023. Commissioner Keckler retired from the Frederick Police Department as a Lieutenant with 22 years of service. He possesses numerous certifications and was a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and International Association of Ethics Trainers. He remains actively involved in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy Associates. Commissioner Keckler is a graduate of the 246<sup>th</sup> Session of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. In addition to holding college degrees from Frederick Community College and the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, he possesses a Graduate Certificate in Criminal Justice Education from the University of Virginia.

**Robyn Erica Lyles** – appointed January 2020; term to expire December 2025. Commissioner Lyles is a twenty-year criminal justice professional. She received her Bachelors of Science degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Missouri – St. Louis and her Masters of Science degree in the same from the University of Baltimore. Commissioner Lyles has worked for the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services since August of 2004, first as the Policy Management Unit Director for the Information Technology and Communications Division, and now as a Commissioner. Since August of 2011, she has been an Adjunct Instructor at Stevenson University. Commissioner Lyles is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, a member of the Ladies of Vision Charities, Incorporated where she serves as the Bylaws Chairman and a member of the Monumental Bar Association, where she is the Secretary.

**Jane Chace Miller**– appointed September 2016; term to expire December 2021. Commissioner Miller is an attorney with a background in criminal law and domestic law. She previously served as an Assistant State's Attorney on Maryland's Eastern Shore and as a Special Prosecutor in several other Maryland counties. Commissioner Miller is a Member of the Maryland State Bar Association and former President of her local Bar Association. Commissioner Miller is the former President of the Chesapeake Women's Network and is currently on the United Way's Board of Directors. She also donates her time to local charities and events in our community.

**Christopher J. Reynolds** – appointed to an interim term in April 2011; re-appointed in January 2012, Commissioner Reynolds was re-appointed January 2019; term to expire December 2023. Commissioner Reynolds has been engaged in the private practice of law for over 45 years in the District of Columbia and Maryland. He has been active in a number of civic and community groups serving in leadership positions and giving guidance on governance issues. When he is not working with the Parole Commission, he is a volunteer for the United States Tennis Association (USTA) serving on numerous committees and in several leadership roles.



**John D. Smack**- appointed August 2016; Commissioner Smack was reappointed in January 2021; term to expire December 2026. Commissioner Smack retired in July 2016 from the Worcester County Sheriff's Office at the rank of Chief Deputy with 29 years of law enforcement experience. Commissioner Smack served as a commander in Patrol, SWAT and Special Operations. Smack received additional training from the University of Louisville, Southern Police Institute and FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development. Smack was elected as an Orphans' Court Judge for Worcester County in 2006, 2010 and 2014. In 2014, Smack was appointed by Governor Hogan, as the Chief Judge until his current appointment. He has served with several organizations in his community as a member of the Board of Directors and as President.

**Lisa A. Vronch** – appointed December 2019; term to expire December 2024. Commissioner Vronch graduated from the University of Baltimore with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice. In 1984 she graduated from the University of Maryland Police Department Training Academy and served on the police department at the University of Maryland Baltimore until 1988, and the Anne Arundel County Police Department until 1999. Since then Commissioner Vronch worked in the science and technology fields at the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Army Research Laboratory, managing various technology portfolios. Most recently, Commissioner Vronch worked in the Information Technology and Communications Division of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services managing the criminal history and law enforcement systems. Commissioner Vronch is an active member of the Project Management Institute, the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International Standards Development E-54 Committee, the National Criminal Justice Association, the American Society for Public Administration, and the American Institute of Conservation.

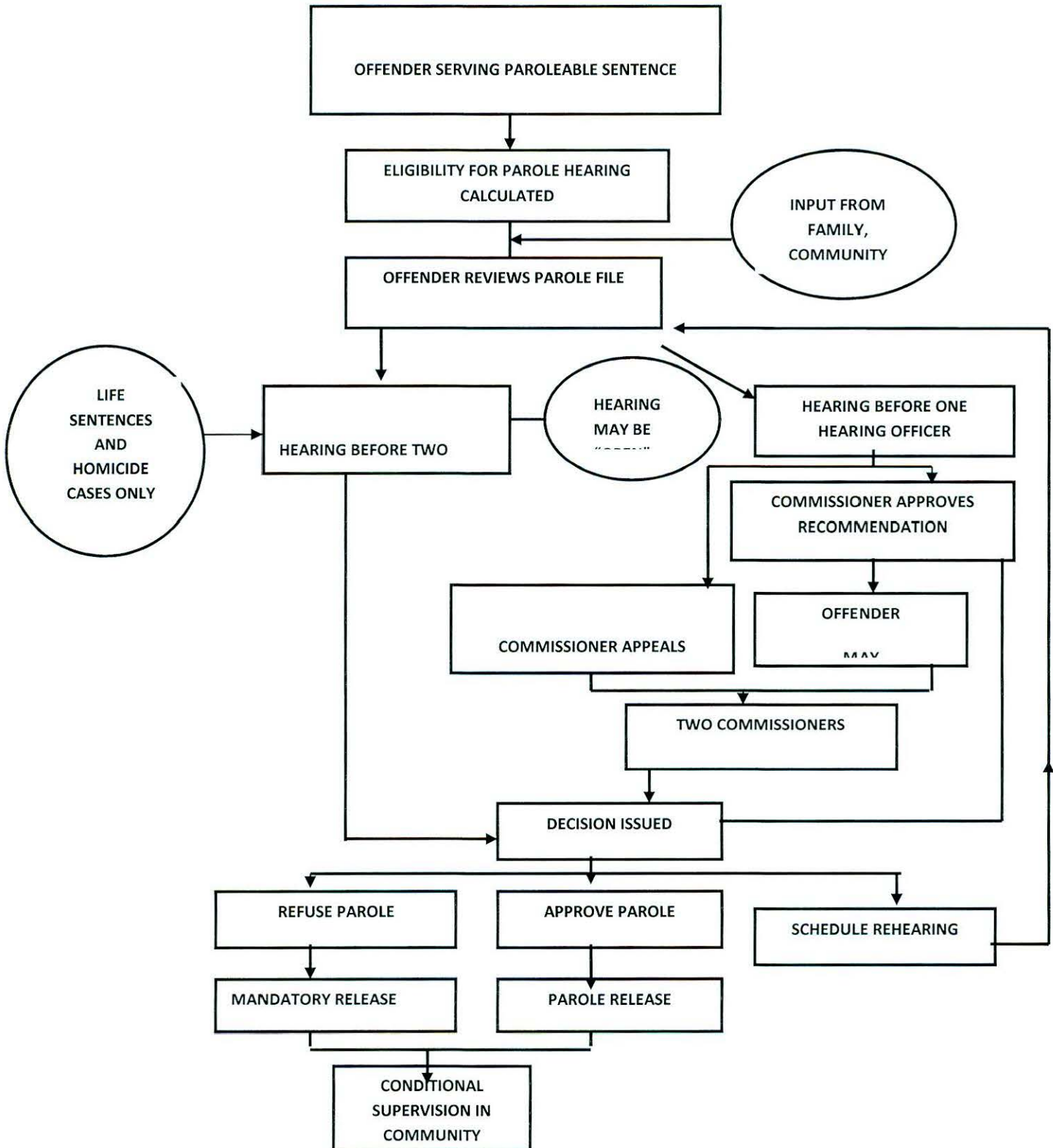
## **APPENDIX I: STANDARD CONDITIONS of PAROLE**

1. **Report as directed to and follow your Parole Agent's instructions.**
2. **Work regularly.**
3. **Get permission before:**
  - a. **Changing your home;**
  - b. **Changing your job; or**
  - c. **Leaving the State of Maryland**
4. **Obey all laws.**
5. **Notify your Parole Agent immediately if you are arrested.**
6. **You shall not illegally possess, use, or sell any narcotic drug, "controlled dangerous substance", or related paraphernalia.**
7. **You shall not own, possess, use, sell, or have under your control any dangerous weapon or firearms of any description without approval of the Parole Commission.**
8. **You shall so conduct yourself as not to present a danger to yourself or others.**
9. **Special conditions: See page 1 of this agreement.**

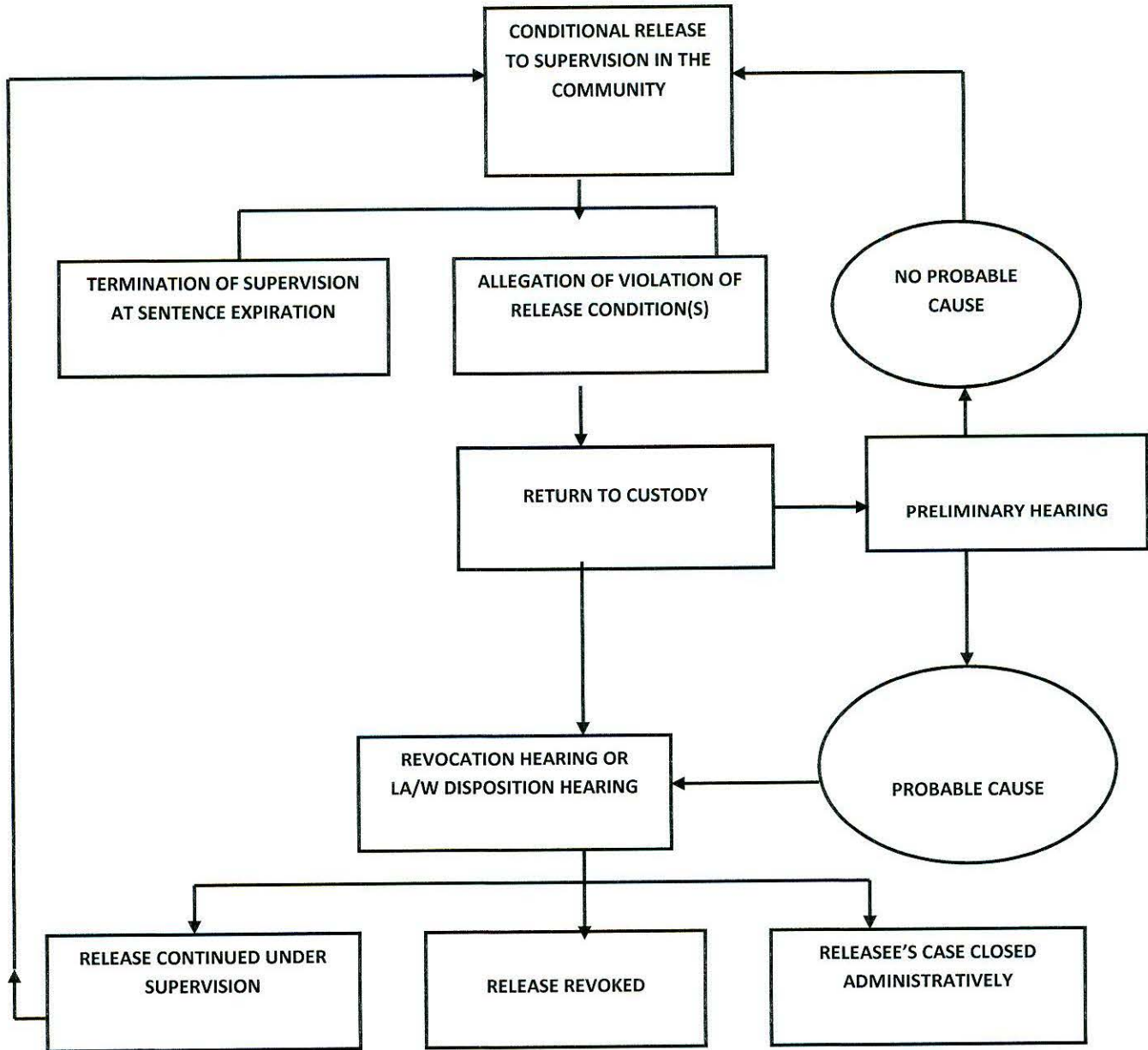
**NOTE: Conditions 10 and 11 apply to parolees whose term of confinement resulted from a crime or crimes committed on or after May 1, 1991.**
10. **You must pay a monthly supervision fee as required by law unless the Parole Commission exempts you wholly or partly from payment of the fee.**
11. **If ordered by the Parole Commission to undergo drug or alcohol abuse testing, you must pay for the testing if required to do so by the Division of Parole and Probation**



# APPENDIX II: PAROLE HEARING FLOW CHART



## APPENDIX III: PAROLE AND MANDATORY SUPERVISION PROCESS FLOW CHART

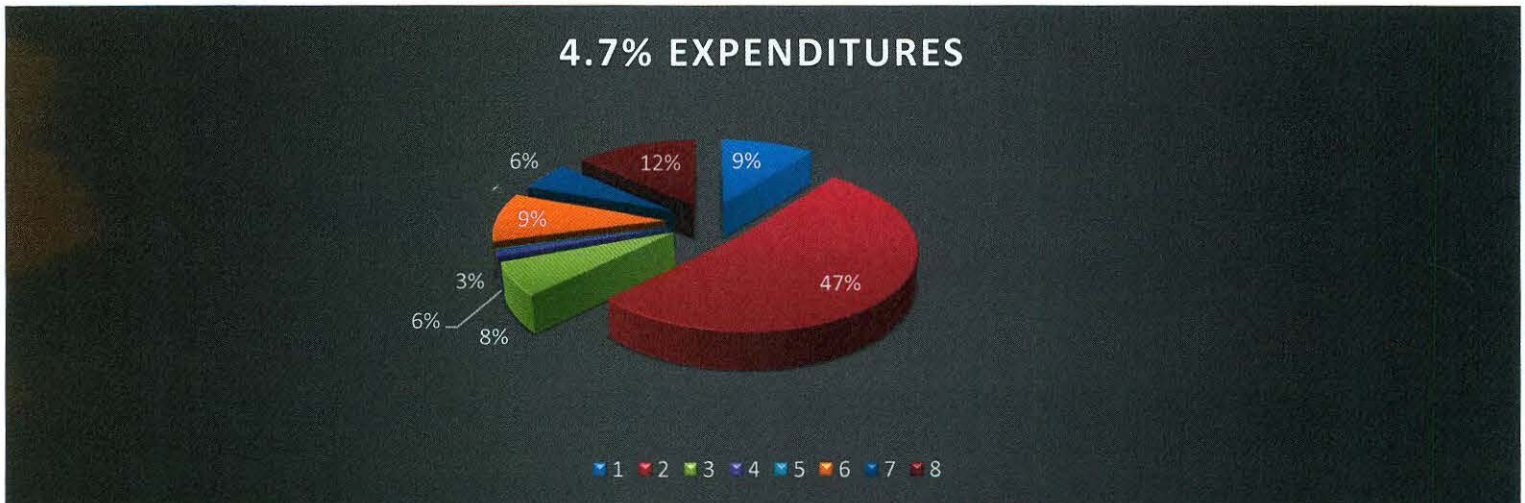




## BUDGET EXPENDITURE – FISCAL YEAR

CATERGORY	EXPENDITURES	% of Exp.
COMMUNICATION	26,401	0.47%
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	131,487	2.18%
FUEL & UTILITIES	16,635	0.28%
MV OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE	29,945	0.05%
REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT	9	0.01%
FIXED CHARGES	183,117	3.03%
SALARIES, WAGES, AND FRINGE BENEFITS	5, 580,650	92.36%
SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	27,573	0.41%
TECHNICL/SPECIAL FEES/TEMP STAFF	34,737	0.57%
TRAVEL	14,477	0.24%
	6,045,031	
 Total Expenditure:		 6,045,031
Less Salaries/Fees:		<u>5,580,650</u> 464,381
 Less Lease (Fixed Charges):		 <u>183,117</u>
Controllable Expenditures:		281,264
 % of Expenditure:		 4.7%

The remaining 4.7% of expenditures a depicted below:



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication</li> <li>2. Contractual Services</li> <li>3. Fuel &amp; Utilities</li> <li>4. MV Operations &amp; Maintenance</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Replacement Equipment</li> <li>6. Supplies &amp; Material</li> <li>7. Travel</li> <li>8. Technical/Special Fees/Temp Staff</li> </ol> |
|--|---|