

**Shelter Grievance Advisory Committee (SGAC)
Meeting Minutes
June 12, 2019, 2:00-4:00PM, 1360 Mission Street, San Francisco**

Members Present: Commissioner Scott Kahn – Chair, Jose Landaverde, Jeffrey Livingston, Nicholas Kimura, Henry Brown, Lessy Benedith, Jennifer Friedenbach

Members Absent: Terezie Bohrer, Kate Shuton, Dr. Joe Kenan, Stephen Irwin

Shelter Client Advocates Present:

HSA Staff Present: Cordell Thompson, Scott Walton

Others Present: John Ouertani, Martha Bridegam

Introductions and Welcome: Members and guests introduced themselves.

Meeting Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – 3/19/19: Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

SGAC Business

SGAC Bylaws Update

Scott Walton outlined the minutes of the previous meeting regarding bylaws that the Shelter Grievance Advisory Committee (SGAC) approved in September of 2017. He explained that they went to the Local Homeless Coordinating Board (LHCB) for their meeting in May, where the bylaws were passed.

HSH Updates

Scott presented Mayor Breed's announcement from last fall regarding adding 1,000 beds in SF Shelter Navigation Center Emergency Placement System by 2020. He explained that this would happen at the Navigation Center at Division Circle, which has 126 beds. There is construction underway to add another 60 beds. Additionally, 20 units will be added to the Civic Center Hotel. There is work being done on the

Seawall site in the Embarcadero which will have 200 beds. Going forward, there will be shelter grievance training and a post training test will be implemented by next month. There will be several improvements made to the grievance process including offering a refresher course to remind shelter staff of the process.

Cordell Thompson explained that the next meeting would be held at the Born Auditorium at 170 Otis Street. The following meeting will be held on December 9th at the main library in the Latino Room. He stated that the space at 440 Turk was not ready for use.

Jennifer Friedenbach outlined the latest budget and how it related to the expansion of shelter beds. She explained that there is much work being done to expand the shelters and emphasized the importance of client outreach. The current FTE for shelter staff is lower because the contract hasn't kept up with the cost of doing business. There needs to be more funding for the shelters, which has been verified with the mayor's budget staff.

Scott explained that the budget was presented to the Board of Supervisors and it should be approved by July. He emphasized the importance of adding different aspects to the budget to fit the needs of the program as it grows.

Scott understood that everyone in city government was under pressure to expand their services. He explained that he and his team had done additional outreach and wellness checks on the streets.

Henry Brown asked if the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) was ready to handle the upcoming fire season.

Scott explained that there are three protocols including cold, wet weather, heat and air quality. Part of his job is to track the weather and the air quality every day to be prepared. He explained that last year, during the dangerous air quality warnings, HSH coordinated with other city departments.

Henry asked if there were any masks available.

Scott explained that the Department of Public Health (DPH) was responsible for providing the masks. He said that HSH was approved to hand them out to those who are unsheltered.

Clarify Denials of Service for Eligibility Qualifies for Shelter Grievance

Nick Kimura explained that a client won an arbitration on a seven-day notice, which led to the client getting an extension in a family shelter. He adds that Elizabeth Medina, Family Shelter & Transitional Housing Program Manager, stated that was something that should not be allowed in the future. Additionally, he explained that seven day notices have been under the grievance policy for the last decade or so, and needed a justification for why it need to be changed.

Scott provided background for the issue of denial of service in shelters. He explained that the SGAC does not set the rules at shelters, but creates the parameters within which the rules function and in the policy under categories of denials of service. He explained that clients cannot stay in family shelters unless they have custody of minors. In the event clients loose temporary custody of their children, they cannot stay in those shelters in the meantime. Additionally, they are not eligible to stay if they're unable to self-care.

Review of Shelter Grievance Statistics

15 Month Denial of Services, Internal Hearings and Arbitrations Report 1/18-3/19

Summary of DOS's by Shelter for January-March 2019

Scott brought up the concerns about the extreme drop in numbers of arbitrations. The Data & Performance team discovered that there was an error in the actual production of the report. The corrected report was emailed to committee members.

Nick believed that the perceived drop in numbers is related to the client advocates cancelling arbitrations when they can't get in touch with the client. He understood how this affects the stats.

Scott pointed out that the no-show occurs when the arbitration is scheduled and the client doesn't show. He stated that Nick is referring to the minutes from the last meeting. If the client advocates couldn't reach a client, they would cancel the arbitration. As a result, the client would not receive no-show ruling in the arbitration. Scott suggested the client advocates should tracked the arbitrations that they canceled, so it can be represented in the report.

Scott moved on to another point on this topic regarding more detail in the report. He explained that the data performance staff had discussed this in a previous meeting. He stated that based on the interest in this there should be some thought to the categories. "There shouldn't be too many categories to the point where it's hard to manage," Scott said.

In response, Jennifer felt that the threat of violence is substantively different from actual violence. Combining the two can become complicated.

According to Commissioner Scott Kahn, "there is not a true difference between the threat of violence and violence in the context of the shelter, because both require actions and are difficult to deal with."

Jennifer expressed concern of cultural bias in terms of a threat of violence. A non-threatening situation can be interpreted as a threat of violence when no real threat existed. "Somebody could give you the threat of violence because it's a large African-American man and the way that he's presenting, he puts his body a certain way, that's interpreted as a threat of violence. But actually, from his perspective, that was just his way of expressing himself which is where implicit bias comes in."

In response to a question about navigation centers stats in the future reports, Scott explained that they have not been able to move the navigation center into the One System. Also, he stated that the Shelter Monitoring Committee has yet to start monitoring the navigation centers.

Client Advocate Reports

Hearing and Arbitration Monthly Comparison Report – January-March 2019

Hearing and Arbitration Analysis Report – January-March 2019

The client advocate report was not made available.

Old Business

Commissioner Kahn shared that in June of 2014, Will Daley wrote him an email:

"Hi, Scott. Thanks for reaching out yesterday. I was very much enjoyed our conversation. And thanks so much again for asking at the SGAC meeting, "How can we fix this?" And proposing to bring it to the human service commission. After I

spoke of the budget cut to the shelter client advocate program, my uncertainty as to whether or not I could afford to continue working as a client advocate. As I told you, it's a job I love, and it would be very difficult thing for me to have to leave it. To your point about encountering homeless folks on the street, we are all human, we all have a right to exist, and we all need acknowledgment as such. I sometimes tell folks that if we can step out of our comfort zone a little bit and look someone we perceive to be homeless in the eyes and acknowledge that they too are human, that can have a huge impact on the person. Homeless folks often feel ignored and invisible. This speaks precisely to what you told me you did one Thanksgiving at MSC getting folks to shake hands. While I don't have any data to back this up, I suspect that sometimes folks with mental challenges will act out just so that they can-- just so they can't be ignored. I believe that we, as individuals, as well as the collective society, were able to focus more on what we all have in common, the world would be a much more better place. Our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future, and we are all mortal. That was said by John Fitzgerald Kennedy. In the '90s, I had the privilege of working as a hospice volunteer. I encountered people from all over walks of life all in the last stages of their life. And to a person to the extent that they had regrets those regrets were never-- that they had wished that they had spent more time at work or they had acquired more material wealth. Those regrets were always about how they had treated their fellow human beings. On behalf of the clients we serve, and Nick and myself, I just wanted to say thank you for your faith in us and for going to bat for us. I feel confident that with your help, the funding cut will be restored, which will allow us to give the best possible service to our clients and to the shelter grievance process. A process that may be unique in all the country, if not, in all the world. With much appreciation, Will.”

Commissioner Kahn reminded everyone of what Will really stood for. He felt very strongly about recognizing Will's accomplishments. He would like to honor Will by establishing a place in the city, but not necessarily through Parks and Rec. Instead, Commissioner Kahn felt a memorial in a supportive housing setting would be more appropriate. He mentioned that both he and Scott Walton will be working with the Humans Services Facilities Manager, R.E. Walsh to find an available spot for Will's memorial.

Jennifer felt it might be worth putting in an application to Rec and Park to see what happens. “In thinking about where Will spent his time—he spent a lot of time in the Panhandle, Golden Gate Park, etc.,” she said. “So that could be a good option if we wanted to do two paths simultaneously.”

New Business

Acting Chair (Vice Chair)

Commissioner Kahn expressed his interest in having a vice chair. He felt that a vice chair would be useful in the event he could not attend the meeting. He asked for a volunteer for the position.

Nick responded and said he was willing to be acting chair.

Commissioner Kahn stated that he was appointing Nick to be the acting chair of the SGAC.

Discussion regarding types of candidates to be placed on the SGAC

Jennifer explained that she would like to see the SGAC’s membership reflect the demographics of the homeless population. Also, She stated she would like to think about LGBTQ representation.

Scott believed the targeting of specific populations to join the SGAC should be made known in the recruitment. Plus, the Local Homeless Coordinating Board (LHCB) should be onboard with the change in the promotion of members, since they approve membership. Scott pointed out that the current policy does not speak on how many seats will be designated based on race or sexual orientation.

Jennifer expressed her concern regarding the lack of African American representation, since their makeup in the shelters is over-represented.

Jeffrey Livingston Leaving the SGAC

Jeffrey Livingston told the SGAC members that he was resigning from the committee. He is entering a new chapter in his personal life and moving away from the Bay Area. Jeff expressed that he has seen this committee evolve over the years.

According to Jeff, “the shelters have done a really good job over the years in reducing or eliminating the kinds of abuses that exist and for that he is very grateful.” However, Jeff feared that homelessness will be recognized as a part of life.

Jennifer expressed her appreciation for Jeff’s commitment and positive contributions to the group. She felt that he really understood the process and was a big help to the group.

Commissioner Kahn motioned to adjourn the meeting in honor of Jeff Livingston's service to the group.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, September 4, 2019

2:00-4:00PM

Born Auditorium

170 Otis Street

Meeting Adjourned