

**Shelter Grievance Advisory Committee (SGAC)
Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2020, 2:00-4:00PM
Microsoft Team Video Conference**

Members Present: Terezie Bohrer – Chair, Jose Landaverde, Nicholas Kimura, Henry Brown, Stephen Irwin, Lessy Benedith, Jennifer Friedenbach

Members Absent: Kate Shuton, Dr. Joe Kenan, Jacquelynn Evans Gbogboade

Shelter Client Advocates Present: Leah Simon-Weisberg, Ben W. Baczkowski, Maria Bellinger, Rodrick Smith, Kenyaun Christie, Eunice Feathers, Emeka Nnebe

HSH Staff Present: Cordell Thompson, Scott Walton, Louis Bracco

Others Present:

Introductions and Welcome: Members and guests introduced themselves.

Meeting Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – 3/4/20: Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

SGAC Business

Update and overview of the COVID response system being set up and operated by the City’s Emergency Operations Center (DPH, HSA, DEM, HSH and other City departments).

SGAC discussion about the current COVID response system from the perspective of:

Scott Walton provided an overview of the COVID response system. The Department of Emergency Management (DEM), Department of Public Health (DPH), Human Services Agency (HSA), Controller’s Office, Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) and other City departments are working together to coordinate a response to the Covid-19 crisis. He explained that the Shelter In Place

(SIP) hotels were setup for those who are unsheltered or vulnerable due to age and / or medical issues. Plus, there are Isolation and Quarantine (I & Q) sites. I & Q sites were setup for people who tested positive for Covid-19 or have been in direct contact with people who have tested positive.

What is happening to and available in the pre-COVID shelter and navigation center systems.

Base on DPH guidelines, HSH reduced the population of all its congregate sites (shelter and navigation centers) and tested clients for the virus. For those testing negative, clients were placed into SIP hotels, while others remained in our congregate sites. Scott informed the SGAC that there will be no new placements into congregate sites. Due to an outbreak at MSC South, clients were tested and sent to an I & Q site. As a result, MSC South was repurposed as a post Covid positive site.

After testing clients, Central Waterfront and Bryant Navigation Centers were closed due to their size and the navigation center staff were redeployed to other programs. Also, the Next Door Shelter was shut down and being repurposed. Currently, clients at Embarcadero Navigation Center are being tested. After testing clients at the Division Circle Navigation Center, it reopened as a Covid negative site.

Concerns about the grievance process as it relates to sites that are part of the COVID response system, whether repurposed shelter/navigation center sites or newly established temporary sites.

Scott mentioned that HSH was working on a grievance memo. At the time of this meeting, it had not been finalized. Once completed, it will be sent out. He explained that HSH wanted to address serious matters such as acts and threats of violence. In those cases, the department will work to place the client into alternative settings.

Chair Terry Bohrer asked how many clients were being served.

Scott replied that the City is trying to activate 2,500 beds in the SIP hotels.

Fortunately, the feared surge did not occur, so several I & Q beds will be turned into SIP beds. In the Covid negative sites, there are 200 beds. In the post Covid positive sites, there are 111 beds. Also, Scott said that there are one thousand congregate beds available.

The Chair asked if more clients were being housed during the pandemic.

Jennifer Friedenbach responded that less were being placed into shelters. Based on a report from DPH, the number of people who have died on the streets had triple compared to the same time last year. Jennifer believed that the City and County of San Francisco should have moved the entire shelter system into the SIP hotels.

In response, Scott said that the City was trying to balance treatment with placement when housing clients.

Nick Kumara had a question regarding vulnerable people on the streets.

According to Scott, DPH had a list of unsheltered people at risk based on their medical history. That list could be used to target outreach by SF Hot and Street Medicine. Furthermore, The Health Street Operation Center was targeting areas of the city.

What next steps does the SGAC want to take regarding these issues and concerns.

The Chair asked Scott about the grievance response system in relation to the clients in the SIP hotels.

Scott explained that the grievance response was being produced by the Emergency Response System, not solely HSH. He acknowledged the committee's frustration about not getting clearly defined written procedures.

The Chair expressed her concerns that the pandemic might last another six months, with the possibility of another big surge. Due to the sudden appearance of the virus, the Chair felt that we're not fully prepared to deal with the crisis. However,

going forward, there should be plans on where clients will be housed.

Jennifer had concerns about the City's plan to scrap the use of the grievance procedures for the SIP hotels. She felt the rules in the new policy were too narrow in scope. Jennifer believed that the existing grievance policy should be used. She acknowledged that some tweaks might need to be made due to the pandemic.

Jennifer made the following motion: "I would like to make a motion that we recommend HSA and HSH adopt the uniform grievance policy in the hotel system, given that we believe our policy in this emergency should be abided by as hotels are serving as temporary shelters."

The motion was seconded and approved.

Review of Shelter Grievance Statistics

15 Month Denial of Services, Internal Hearings and Arbitrations Report 2/19-4/20

Summary of DOS's by Shelter for January-March 2020

Scott went over the 15 Month Denial of Services Report.

Nick asked the client advocates if clients were still being issued denial of service (DOS) from Hamilton.

Ben Baczkowski stated that he had received an overall decrease in shelter hearing requests due to the moratorium on DOS's. Recently, the client advocates received a few DOS's related to acts / threats of violence from Hamilton. Ben said that Hamilton, as well as other shelters, had worked out agreements with the advocates to keep people housed.

Client Advocate Reports

Hearing and Arbitration Monthly Comparison Report – January-March 2020

Hearing and Arbitration Analysis Report – January-March 2020

Leah Simon-Weisberg went over the Client Advocate Report.

Leah said there were noticeable reductions in DOS's due to the pandemic. However, she still had concerns regarding people getting written up for threats of violence. Leah mentioned the possibility that verbal arguments with shelter staff were being elevated to threats of violence. Also, she brought up that the client advocates didn't have a clear picture on how many people are being asked to leave shelters / SIP hotels due to the new process.

Leah stated that internal shelter hearings were being held at HSH's offices. The location was selected to provide a safe venue to prevent the spread of the virus.

Old Business

Increasing SGAC Membership

According to Scott, the SGAC had 10 active members, with the possibility to increase up to 15. Due to Scott's deployment to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), he was not able to work on building up membership or calling a meeting of the domestic violence subcommittee. The Covid-19 response became his priority.

Scott reminded the SGAC that the purpose of the domestic violence subcommittee was to bring the Shelter Grievance Policy and federal law more into alignment, since the grievance policy requires an eyewitness, whereas federal law takes the accuser at their word.

Scott said that he would reach out to Elisabet Medina to coordinate with the rest of the subcommittee members to get the ball rolling.

New Business

Alternative Shelter Arrangements i.e. hotel rooms - as shelters are closing down and moving people to hotel rooms. The city is deciding NOT to follow grievance procedure and create something new all together.

COVID Hotel Grievance Policy

Jennifer voiced her concerns about the reopening of congregate settings in the future. Due to clients sharing dining and restroom facilities, she felt the cramped

conditions posed a risk. Also, she worried that shelter staff might have issues maintaining social distancing within the shelter.

Henry Brown asked how often clients got tested within the congregate settings.

Scott stated that DPH provided test at Covid negative sites once a month, while test will be offered to shelter staff twice a month.

Nick asked Scott if the City had plans to expand the number of SIP hotel rooms.

At the time of this meeting, Scott didn't have the answer.

Jennifer made a motion: "The SGAC recommends that the City offer hotel rooms to all unhoused people, and that new indoor congregate settings are opened only as a last resort."

Lessy supported the motion. However, she had concerns that there wasn't a enough service providers to staff more hotels.

The motion was seconded and passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, September 8, 2020

2:00-4:00PM

Video Conference

Meeting Adjourned