

Shelter Grievance Advisory Committee (SGAC)
Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2021, 2:00-4:00PM
Microsoft Team Video Conference

Members Present: Terezie Bohrer – Chair, Lessy Benedith, Jennifer Friedenbach, Meghan "RK" Johnson, Jane Ginsburg, Jose Landaverde, Stephen Irwin, Kate Shuton, Cris Plunkett

Members Absent: Henry Brown

Shelter Client Advocates Present: Mairi S. McKeever, Ben Baczkowski, Christopher Garcia, Ramsey Dunlap, Tyler Rougeau

HSH Staff Present: Cordell Thompson, Lisa Rachowicz, Louis Bracco

Others Present: Amanda Wright

Introductions and Welcome: Members and guests introduced themselves.

Meeting Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – 3/9/21: Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

SGAC Business

New Member Cris Plunkett

Cris introduced himself to the Shelter Grievance Committee (SGAC) Members. Also, he provided a brief history of his experience with homelessness as a transitional age youth. Cris expressed his gratitude to being selected to the SGAC.

Membership

The SGAC Bylaws were mailed out to the committee members. Chair Terezie Bohrer suggested that a committee be formed to update the bylaws.

Review of Shelter Grievance Statistics

15 Month Denial of Services, Internal Hearings and Arbitrations Report 2/20-4/21

Summary of DOS's by Shelter for January – March 2021

Chair Bohrer reviewed the 15 Month Denial of Service and Arbitration Report.

Jane Ginsburg asked why there were fewer arbitration than normal.

According to Louis Bracco, Covid-19 created a situation where there were fewer shelter beds and rules.

Chair Bohrer wondered why several shelters did not have any statistics in the report.

Louis explained that many of the shelters have been closed during the duration of the pandemic.

Ben Baczkowsk asked why navigation centers were not represented in the report?

Louis told the committee that he would check with Shelter Management and the Data and Performance Team.

Client Advocate Reports

Hearing and Arbitration Monthly Comparison Report for January – March 2021

Mairi McKeever announced that she'd be leaving her position as The Directing Attorney for the Client Advocate Program. Tyler Rougeau was introduced as her replacement. Tyler expressed his excitement in taking on his new role.

Mairi McKeever reviewed the Client Advocate Report.

During her presentation, Mairi brought up her concern that the Congregate Shelter Operations Manual rules are creating confusion among the shelter providers. Based on the Congregate Shelter Operations Manual, the providers are not allowed to use their existing shelter rules and must rely on the rules set forth in the

congregate manual. According to Mairi, the new rules have created a situation where providers are unclear on how to operate their shelters.

Mairi stated that The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) did not clearly communicate the changes to the providers. As a result, the providers have not trained their staff effectively on how to implement the new rules.

Furthermore, she felt that the Client Advocate staff and arbitrators needed to be trained on the new procedures.

Lisa Rachowicz responded that HSH has been working weekly with the providers to help correct any confusion they might have.

Mairi suggested that everyone would benefit from more frequent mandatory trainings. Plus, shelter staff should not be authorized to submit denial of services if they have not attended a training.

Old Business

Status of Grievance Procedure Under COVID - Jennifer Friedenbach

Jennifer Friedenbach mentioned that she'd like to see the Shelter Grievance Policy reinstated by June 15th in the shelters and the Shelter In Place Hotels (SIP).

Jennifer said that shelter providers can exit clients without documentation and there's no way for the clients to return. She used the 48-hour rule as an example, which is in the grievance procedure. In the past, you could appeal the 48-hour no show rule and return the same day.

According to Lisa, the Shelter Grievance Policy is in effect with the programs. The denial of service is issued based on the grievance policy. She acknowledged that there might be some confusion or disagreement on the 48-hour rule. Lisa said the rule was pre-Covid-19. If a client could show they were hospitalized or had another reasonable justification, the client would be able to appeal any denial of service.

Meghan "RK" Johnson stated that the Client Advocates never received any notification that the Shelter Grievance Policy was reinstated. She has not seen any evidence that the providers are operating under the grievance policy. Also, Meghan mentioned that none of their clients have been able to seek a grievance against the 48-hour rule. She's never been given a clear explanation on why this is.

Jennifer believed that it was peculiar that the City would develop grievance procedures without any input from the SGAC. She told Lisa that policies should not be developed behind closed doors and HSH needs partners.

Lisa stated that she'd love to collaborate with the SGAC. She believed that the clients would benefit if everything is consistent and everyone's the same page.

Domestic Violence Addendum

Jane Ginsburg reviewed the Domestic Violence Addendum and approved the language.

Also, Jennifer supported the Domestic Violence Addendum and made a motion to approve the new language in the addendum.

It was seconded and approved by the SGAC members.

Chair Bohrer asked if HSH management would need to approve of the addendum.

Cordell Thompson said he'd pass it on to HSH management for their review.

New manual – Congregate Manual

Chair Bohrer reached out to the Department of Public Health (DPH) in December to discuss the congregate manual. Unfortunately, she has not received the final copy from them. She was surprised to still see certain DPH information within the congregate manual without any review from management.

According to Lisa, HSH has not been applying that part. Her team is working on clean up any inconsistencies. Lisa explained that they plan to remove that section from the congregate manual.

Steps Moving Forward - Jennifer Friedenbach

Jennifer expressed her opinion that the Safe Sleep Sites and future shelter spaces be covered by the grievance policy.

Chair Bohrer requested a meeting with HSH Director Shireen McSpadden to discuss the concerns of the committee members.

Lessy Benedith showed support toward the concerns brought up by Mairi and the Client Advocates regarding the confusion and poor implementation of the congregant manual. Also, she suggested that the pre-covid practice of service providers notifying the Client Advocates of denial of service be reinstated.

Mairi pointed out the discrepancies between the HSH denial of service report and the client advocate report. She had concerns that the shelters weren't submitting their data to HSH.

Chair Bohrer asked who was responsible for making sure that the shelters provided the proper denial of service data to HSH?

Cordell explained that the Data and Performance team was the unit responsible for collecting data from the shelters. He would reach out to the Data and Performance manager to follow up on the issues brought up by Mairi.

New Business

Officers – Election

Chair Bohrer mentioned that the Bylaws were silent on the election of the Chair. At a minimum, there should be a Vice Chair. The Chair suggested that there should be a Bylaw Committee to review and update the document.

Legislation committee

Chair Bohrer would like to setup a Legislation Committee, so it can get the Shelter Grievance Policy turned into law. She's met with members of the Board of Supervisor to discuss this possibility.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

2:00-4:00PM

Video Conference

Meeting Adjourned