**Shelter Grievance Advisory Committee (SGAC)**

**Meeting Minutes**

**March 8, 2022, 2:00-4:00PM**

**Microsoft Team Video Conference**

**Members Present:** Terezie Bohrer – Chair, Jennifer Friedenbach, Meghan "RK" Johnson, Jane Ginsburg, Jose Landaverde, Katherine Morales, Patrina Harrison

**Members Absent:** Lessy Benedith, Cris Plunkett, Kate Shuton, Henry Brown, Stephen Irwin

**Shelter Client Advocates Present:** Ramsey Dunlap, Tyler Rougeau, Waldo Campos, Ben Baczkowski

**HSH Staff Present:** Cordell Thompson, Lisa Rachowicz, Christopher Kramer

**Others Present:** Yesenia Lacayo

**Introductions and Welcome:** Members and guests introduced themselves.

**Meeting Agenda:**  The agenda was reviewed and approved.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – 12/7/21:** Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

**SGAC Business**

**Chairperson – Selection**

Chair Terezie Bohrer offered to serve as the SGAC Chair for the next 6 months. Plus, she offered to mentor any future candidates for the position.

Jennifer Friedenbach encouraged Meghan "RK" Johnson to pursue the position of chair. She believed that her lived experience in the shelter system would make her an incredible candidate for the position.

Ramsey Dunlap provided encouragement to Meghan to apply for chair of the committee.

**Review of Shelter Grievance Statistics**

**15 Month Denial of Services, Internal Hearings and Arbitrations Report 11/20 – 1/22**

The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) did not submit a Denial of Services Report for this meeting.

**Client Advocate Reports**

**Hearing and Arbitration Monthly Comparison Report for October – December 2021**

Tyler Rougeau reviewed the Client Advocate Report.

Jennifer wondered when closed shelters and navigation centers would reopen?

Lisa Rachowicz, Interim Manager of Navigation Centers and Shelter Programs reported that the Central Waterfront Navigation had reopened. Plus, she mentioned that the Bryant Navigation Center would be opened soon.

Jennifer noted that the Client Advocate Report didn’t show data for zero requests for hearings. She believed that this information would be helpful to flag possible issues at the shelters.

Chair Bohrer asked Lisa to explain why HSH didn’t submit a report.

Lisa stated that the department’s Data and Performance Team was busy preparing the City’s Point-In-Time Count. Due to this mandated obligation, HSH was not able to submit the report.

**Old Business**

**Shelter Grievance Legislation**

According to Jennifer, the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee will hold a hearing on April 7th to discuss the legislation.

**48-hour rule: the Application of the Grievance Policy and how the current policy of the 48-hour rule under HSH effects and limits COVID positive shelter residents**

Meghan had concerns that the 48-hour rule was still not grievable.

Tyler explained that several shelter clients were denied entry into a shelter after completing their Covid-19 quarantine due to the 48-hour rule.

Lisa acknowledged a few clients were denied entry, since they didn’t complete the mandatory 10-day quarantine or test out of the isolation facilities. She asked Tyler to follow up with her on the incidents with his clients.

Jennifer motioned that The City adhere to the 48-hour rule, and it should be grievable.

Lisa stated that most of the people who fall under the 48-hour rule abandon their bed and never returned to the shelter. Since the clients do not return, they will never know that they received a denial of service.

Jennifer believed that having a structure in place for those who do return is important for the client’s due process.

Ben stated that the 48-hour rule is less permissive than the shelter’s curfew violations.

Chair Bohrer asked what HSH’s process would be to make the 48-rule grievable?

Lisa explained that the providers weren’t supportive of making this rule grievable. From HSH’s standpoint, the department does not believe it’s denying the clients services, since they voluntarily left the shelter.

Meghan felt that the 48-hour rule is ambiguous and believes most provider do want this rule to be grievable.

Jennifer amended her motion by adding that any future HSH meetings with providers regarding the 48-hour rule should include SGAC members and shelter client advocates.

The amended motion was approved.

**Demographics of Arbitrators**

Cordell Thompson reported that there was a total of 13 active arbitrators. Of those arbitrators, three were male and ten were female. The racial backgrounds consisted of eleven Caucasians and two Asians.

Tyler mentioned that he updated the client advocate report with demographic information, including gender identity. Unfortunately, he was not able to include an income bracket since most of their clients are indigent.

Chair Bohrer asked if HSH captured any income data from the shelter clients?

Lisa replied that the department doesn’t collect any information on the incomes of clients. In some cases, a client’s income is reviewed if they are receiving case management.

Patrina Harrison shared her concern that lower income people and minorities did not receive equitable due process in the shelter system.

**Updates from HSH to questions asked at the last SGAC meeting by the committee**

Lisa reiterated a past statement that the SGAC does not have authority to make shelter rules. She stated that the Shelter Grievance Policy limited the committee to oversight of rules.

Jane Ginsburg wondered why the Adult Congregate Shelter Program - Manual and Guidance allowed a non-immediate denial of service for three rule violations of the same rule in a thirty-day period, but a non-immediate denial service was not given for violation of any three random rules?

Meghan explained the nature of the non-immediate denial of service for three of the same rules allows the client to correct that specific behavior.

**New Business**

**Private Arbitrator Services**

Chair Bohrer asked Patrina to chair a subcommittee to investigate the feasibility of her plan to use private arbitrators and come back with recommendations.

**Current Policy under HSH and Applying the Grievance Policy towards Temporary Winter Shelters**

Meghan believed the grievance policy should apply towards temporary winter shelters, because clients are being denied services. She used the Cova Hotel as an example. The hotel used to be covered under the Shelter Grievance Policy but was reclassified as a winter shelter. As a result, the clients at the Cova Hotel are no longer covered under the policy.

Ramsey Dunlap asked why a client being denied services from a winter shelter would not be covered under the grievance policy.

Lisa will investigate the situation at the Cova Hotel. The hotel is managed by HSH Shelter-In-Place management, so it’s not part of her purview. She mentioned that the logistics to oversee a pop-up shelter makes it difficult to provide resources and training to staff during an emergency.

Meghan made a motion that the Shelter Grievance Policy be applied to all temporary winter shelters.

The motion was not able to be voted on due to lack of quorum.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Next Meeting**

June 14, 2022

2:00-4:00PM

Video Conference

**Meeting Adjourned**