

Shelter Grievance Advisory Committee (SGAC)
Meeting Minutes
December 8, 2020, 2:00-4:00PM
Microsoft Team Video Conference

Members Present: Terezie Bohrer – Chair, Lessy Benedith, Jennifer Friedenbach, Meghan "RK" Johnson, Jane Ginsburg, Jose Landaverde

Members Absent: Nicholas Kimura, Stephen Irwin, Kate Shuton, Henry Brown

Shelter Client Advocates Present: Mairi S. McKeever, Ben Baczkowsk, Christopher Garcia

HSH Staff Present: Cordell Thompson, Mecca Cannariato, Cathy Perdue, Janay Washington, Genevieve Herreria, Lisa Rachowicz, Louis Bracco

Others Present: Alejandro Nuno, Maria Bellinger, Michelle Diaz, Yesenia Lacayo

Introductions and Welcome: Members and guests introduced themselves.

Meeting Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – 10/22/20: Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

SGAC Business

Welcome Lisa Rachowicz

Lisa Rachowicz will replace Scott Walton as the liaison to the Shelter Grievance Advisory Committee (SGAC). She is the Manager of the Navigation Centers and Shelter System with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH).

New SGAC Members

Meghan "RK" Johnson was introduced as the new member representing families. Jane Ginsburg was introduced as the new member representing the arbitrator seat.

Review of Shelter Grievance Statistics

15 Month Denial of Services, Internal Hearings and Arbitrations Report 8/19-10/20

Summary of DOS's by Shelter for July – September 2020

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

Client Advocate Reports

New Client Advocate Attorney Mairi S. McKeever

Mairi was introduced as the Interim Directing Attorney for the Shelter Client Advocates.

Hearing and Arbitration Monthly Comparison Report – July – September 2020

Mairi went over the Client Advocate Report. The client advocates shared their concerns about clients in Shelter-In-Place (SIP) Hotels not properly being informed why they are being exited.

Mecca Cannariato offered to provide support to the client advocates regarding their clients in the SIP Hotels. When needed, HSH staff would follow up with the Covid-19 Command Center (CCC).

Old Business

Proposed Addendum to the Shelter Grievance Policy (Elisabet M.)

Unfortunately, there was not enough time to go over the addendum. It will be covered during the next SGAC meeting in March.

SIP congregate rule changes recommendations

Chair Bohrer praised Lessy Benedith and the Shelter Provider's work on a memo suggesting changes to the rules in the Congregate Shelter Operations Manual. The Chair had concerns that none of the suggested rule changes had been implemented into the operations manual.

Genevieve Herreria acknowledged that she received the suggested rule changes. Even though Genevieve didn't incorporate the exact language of the memo, she directed the reader of the operations manual to refer to the Shelter Grievance Policy for guidance.

Chair Bohrer was disappointed that the rule changes were not added to the operations manual, considering the amount of work the providers put into the memo.

Mecca said that she would re-review the memo and provide a response to the Chair.

New Congregate Shelter Operations Manual

The Chair asked HSH to explain the current changes to the Congregate Shelter Operations Manual.

Genevieve referred the Congregate Manual Cover Memo:

“This manual applies to the guests and staff of Congregate Shelter Program sites to which the COVID-19 Command Center coordinates placements ("covered Congregate Shelter sites"), including seasonal shelters that fall within these parameters, such as the 2020 Interfaith Winter Shelter. The manual does not apply to shelter sites that coordinate placements outside of the CCC's centralized referral process, including CCSF-funded shelters serving families and Transitional Housing programs serving minors.”

“Additionally, these policies and procedures do not apply to the SIP Hotel or Safe Sleep Programs, which are (SIP Hotels) or will be (Safe Sleep) governed by separate program operations manuals.”

“The Shelter Grievance Policy, as modified according to a new San Francisco Department of Public Health Addendum to the Shelter Grievance Policy Concerning COVID-19 (Addendum), shall be used to address safety exits from covered Congregate Shelter sites that existed prior to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors' confirmation of a local health emergency on March 10, 2020 under Section 101080 of the California Health and Safety Code.”

Jennifer Friedenbach wanted clarification why the Shelter Grievance Policy would not apply to the SIP Hotels. She believed that the SIP Hotels are temporary shelters, so the Shelter Grievance Policy should apply.

Genevieve referred Jennifer back to the Congregate Manual Cover Memo.

The Chair referenced Section J of the cover memo and asked if there was a limit on the number of animals a client could possess.

J. Animals:

“After intake, guests may bring additional animals onsite with prior approval from site staff.”

Genevieve stated the number of animals admitted would be left up to shelter staff.

Lessy Benedith’s biggest concern was how the SIP Hotel client population would be impacted by the lack of due process. Plus, she asked how many congregate sites were in operation.

Louis Bracco replied that approximately 8 sites were open, with 300 available beds. All 8 sites are Covid-19 unknown or Covid-19 recovered. None of the sites are Covid-19 positive.

Alejandro Nuno expressed concerns about the length of time it takes to implement changes to the rules. Furthermore, he felt that shelter staff could be better served with clear delineation of the rules.

Yesenia Lacayo wondered why the client advocate’s contact information was not added to the SIP Hotel rules when it was released. Also, she believed that the clients will be kicked out of the hotels once they are vaccinated.

Department of Public Health Addendum & Grievance Procedure in SIP Hotels

The Chair discussed the draft received from Deborah Borne, in which the SGAC responded back on November 24, 2020. Dr. Borne replied to the committee’s memo on December 3, 2020. Chair Bohrer believed the assessment by The Department of Public Health (DPH) should take place after the grievance process. Also, the SGAC insisted that the hearings must take place in person.

The Chair read from Dr. Borne’s Memo dated 12/3/20:

“SFDPH case reviews shall be completed as soon as possible to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection among guests who have been exited from a Congregate Shelter site and to enable SFDPH case reviews to meet the timelines established by the Shelter Grievance Policy. Shelters are responsible for notifying SFDPH via their COVID-19 Command Center program manager (weekdays 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.) or the on-call program manager (weekends and on weekdays between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.) that a guest has requested a shelter hearing or arbitration.”

“The applicable timelines in the Shelter Grievance Policy are stated in its rules for the Application of the Shelter Grievance Policy.”

- Shelter hearings. Section IV, Paragraphs A, C, and G; and Section IX.
- Arbitrations. Section IV, Paragraph B; Section VI; and Section IX.

The SGAC members and client advocates shared their disapproval of the provisions set forth in Dr. Borne’s memo.

Jennifer made a motion to create a subcommittee to meet with Dr. Borne to work out the SGAC’s issues with their proposals, so the process doesn’t drag out. It was seconded and passed.

The Chair said she’d be a part of the subcommittee. Also, Ben volunteered to be the client advocate representative on the subcommittee.

Another motion was made by Jennifer:

“Due to the SIP Hotels closing and pandemic surge, The SGAC asks that the Covid-19 Command Center implement the existing grievance procedure as quickly as possible.”

The motion was seconded and passed.

New Business

There was no New Business.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

2:00-4:00PM

Video Conference

Meeting Adjourned