



City and County of San Francisco  
SHELTER MONITORING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES [DRAFT]

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 | 10:00 AM  
Room 408, City Hall

**Present:** Chair Diana Almanza  
Vice Chair Britt Creech  
Committee Member Charles Deffarges  
Committee Member Melanie Muasau  
Committee Member Belinda Dobbs  
Committee Member Justice

**Excused:** Secretary Angie David  
Committee Member Steven Clark  
**Absent:**  
Committee Member Traci Watson  
Committee Member C-J Ross  
Committee Member Kaleese Street

All SMC meetings are public. Homeless and formerly homeless San Franciscans are encouraged to attend.  
**PUBLIC COMMENTS WILL BE TAKEN AFTER DISCUSSIONS & BEFORE VOTES/ACTIONS**

I. A. CALL TO ORDER/LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS 5 min  
Meeting began at 10:12 AM. There was no quorum: Meeting was informational only.

B. MINUTES DISCUSSION/ ACTION  
FEBRUARY MINUTES CHAIR ALMANZA 8 min  
Members reviewed the minutes from last month.  
**Proposed action:** Tabled

**Public Comment:** Azeen ZiaEbrahim recalled that the committee had been discussing on-site grievances. This topic should not fall off our radar. As with other contract requirements, the language tends to be written “to protect the city.” Member Deffarges introduced himself.

II. OLD BUSINESS/REPORTS DISCUSSION/ ACTION

A. TRAINING FOR SHELTER STAFF DISCUSSION MEMBERS 10 min

Members are asking for more information during shelter visits.

**Public comment:** Azeen ZiaEbrahim, “feeling like a survivor” of a kind of “Shelter Industrial Complex,” reminded meeting participants that “we are using hurt people to serve hurt people.” Those with lived experience face extra challenges managing the sort of problems they encounter while working at shelters. Again, too often what we see is largely performative [as opposed to substantive]. There is a lot of burnout, people falling back into being clients, and even suicide. Staff with lived experience are worth taking care of/nurturing. There should be more of a focus on mental health [for staff]. Member Street assured those present that the Policy Subcommittee continues to work on training. Fred Fajardo works at Compass and says the training offered online is not as good as in-person training. Chair Almanza agreed.

**B. BYLAWS EDITS AND ADMIN CODE UPDATE**

**DISCUSSION**

**CHAIR ALMANZA**

*5 min*

The changes have yet to go before the Board of Supervisors. Hilary Ronen is the potential sponsor. Allegations of abuse [or violence] are to be reported to the Chair.

**Public Comment:** None

**Member Comment:** Charles will be happy to consider ideas to help with recruitment.

**III. NEW BUSINESS/REPORTS**

**A. POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

**DISCUSSION/ACTION**

**SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

*5 min*

The subcommittee continued discussing training of shelter personnel and the proper use of video surveillance/recording systems.

**Member Comment:** C-J Ross requested that we add auditability of contract requirements to the next subcommittee meeting agenda. Member Street agrees. Angie David stated she appreciates the work of the Subcommittee.

**Public Comment:** None

**B. VIDEO RECORDING AT SHELTERS**

**DISCUSSION**

**STAFF**

*15 min*

The 2018 video surveillance policy was shared. Staff suggested that the lack of mention of SMC or of explicit rules prohibiting staff from recording the live feed are examples of things that could be clarified if a new version were drafted.

**Member Comment:** Charles Deffarges isn't sure Clause #2 is balanced. [Footage cannot be used as a basis for warnings/DOS, except for incidents of violence. Other violations must be witnessed by staff in real time, or real time on a camera monitor.] People may feel they are being watched. Hopefully staff are not hovering over the system trying to catch people doing something wrong. Chair Almanza has not seen this issue come up. [Clients making complaints to staff have expressed the view that surveillance is abused by the shelters.] Member Creech says that footage should always be under lock and key. Member Street reminded Members that the Subcommittee is working on this.

**Public Comment:** Rory Gambrell stated that cameras never work, and film takes a long time to get. He would like a probe of his incidents. He was "assaulted by staff several times." He was hospitalized [and is unsatisfied with SMC's investigation]. Azeen ZiaEbrahim has worked with two different programs with two different camera systems. The Navigation Centers have no access except through HSH. Video records are hard to get and there are delays. At another project, all employees had access in real time and to the recordings. This was actually very helpful. After initial concern, clients came to accept it because it gave them protection. Patrick Buckalew of HSH introduced himself as Navigation Center Program Manager. To provide some context, different programs have different access based on the facility setup. HSH owns/controls some systems. The [2018] policy is not meant to be all-inclusive. Video recordings should not be used to prove theft but can be used to help deescalate problems. All [most] sites should have real-time video systems in place.

**C. DEPT OF HOMELESSNESS AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

**HSH**

*10 min*

Using a report taken from the Public Temporary Shelter Dashboard, HSH Manager Patrick Buckalew reported that MSC-South does not take HOT referrals. They have more vacancies than usual due to a recent cluster of 48-hour exits. In the Navigation Center portfolio, Taimon Booton is still working through the onboarding of the new vendor. Some dormitory areas there need work. The target capacity at this site will be 84. The community referral

system should soon lead to new referrals. There is a new family site called Mission Cabins that will open in April with 60 rooms (cabins).

**Public Comment:** Azeen ZiaEbrahim expressed frustration that supervisor Rafael Mandelman is not being helpful. Staff are suffering. The mayor and others want more sites and beds, but they should not be added without more support for staff. Also, the Supreme Court has determined that gender dysphoria is protected under ADA. Some anonymity from other beds is important for this population, and having no real dividers is a real problem.

**D. STAFF REPORT**

**DISCUSSION**

**STAFF**

*15 min*

Staff provided a review of inspections, complaints, and investigations in February. There were nine complaints filed through SMC, and 9 different SOCs allegedly violated, some several times. All complaints were responded to timely by the shelter involved. (An uptick in the frequency of late responses was observed late last year. SMC is now flagging these publicly and taking other actions to address this.)

**Public Comment:** Azeen ZiaEbrahim believes some complaints [submitted at the shelters] go into the shredder. Staff will even brazenly tell this to guests. A lock box could be the solution. Complaints should bypass staff. Retribution is all-to-common, and staff protect each other. Patrick Buckalew states that HSH requires all providers to have an internal grievance policy, posted, in writing. Many issues are [and should be] handled without the need for external intervention. All clients have access to the Shelter Monitoring Committee. Rory Gambrell reports that he was a victim, and his shelter did not respond to his complaint. He had an eye injury and a head injury. He is still not getting a response. He would like a public hearing on his incidents. He has talked to 911 and 311. He feels his rights are being denied. Dawn, who works at the Baldwin Navigation Center, reports that they have a box for complaints in the lobby. Supervisors tell people to turn their complaints in however suits them best but encourage use of the lock box. They have a tracking process. She handles her site. They talk to the client and then respond in writing. Samara, who also works at the Baldwin, handles responses to complaints that come from/through the City. They talk to the client and try to accommodate them. There is a written response and they take the client's complaints seriously. Complaints can be taken to anyone the client is comfortable with. Five Keys feels these are a very important paper trail/record. Member Creech has seen a lot of retaliation. This is a particular challenge. Member Deffarges asked about SMC's procedures.

**IV. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

**DISCUSSION**

*8 min*

Members of the public may address the Committee on items of interest to the public that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Committee.

**Public comment:** Azeen ZiaEbrahim worries that “a lot is lost in translation.” Clients have varying degrees of comprehension on how systems work. We want to be a support to those who are the most marginalized. Our focus should not be merely to “push the numbers.”

**ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: Unanimous**

*Meeting adjourned at 11:25 AM*

Action Item	Assigned To
Send proposed Administrative Code changes to Member Deffarges	Staff
Follow up with HSH to get a commitment to periodically check video systems.	Staff

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