

**Executive Committee  
Meeting Minutes of  
Tuesday, January 16, 2024  
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Office of HIV Planning, 340 N. 12<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 320, Philadelphia PA 19107

**Present:** Michael Cappuccilli, Keith Carter, Debra D’Alessandro, Lupe Diaz, Alan Edelstein, Clint Steib, Sharee Heaven, Gus Grannan, Desiree Surplus

**Excused:** Adam Williams

**Staff:** Beth Celeste, Tiffany Dominique, Sofia Moletteri, Debbie Law, Mari Ross-Russell, Kevin Trinh

**Call to Order:** L. Diaz called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.

**Introductions:** L. Diaz skipped introductions.

**Approval of Agenda:**

L. Diaz referred to the January 2024 Executive Committee agenda. **Motion:** K. Carter motioned; M. Cappuccilli seconded to approve the January 2024 Executive Committee agenda. **Motion passed:** 6 in favor. The January 2024 agenda was approved.

**Approval of Minutes (August 29th, 2023):**

K. Carter referred to the August 2023 Committee minutes. **Motion:** K. Carter motioned; M. Cappuccilli seconded to approve the August 2023 meeting minutes. **Motion passed:** 5 in favor. The August 2023 Minutes were approved.

**Report of Staff:**

S. Moletteri recounted from the last Executive Committee that they tried to test in-person meetings with a smaller committee. A test meeting was done with the Positive Committee, though attendance at that meeting was sparse and same as virtual attendance. They were currently looking at a way to make attending in-person meetings more engaging/exciting for members. K. Carter said he was open to any suggestion from the committee to improve attendance in person. M. Cappuccilli asked if they had masked and socially distanced during the meeting. S. Moletteri confirmed that they did use social distancing procedures and would continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

In a previous meeting, A. Williams had asked about the different places that they could meet in the future when they could meet in person. T. Dominique reported that she looked into the matter and found they would need to queue to use other locations and be subjected to the location’s schedule for when they could use the location. K. Carter asked if the committee would like to use the Health Federation as a location for their in-person meetings. T. Dominique said they could try

requesting space from the Health Federation since D. D'Alessandro was a part of the Health Federation.

**Discussion Item:**

***-Open Nominations Policy-***

M. Ross-Russell said they had received applications from two former members with disruptive pasts within the HIPC. Currently, there was no process within the Open Nominations Policy regarding individuals with a history of disruptive behavior. M. Ross-Russell had contacted their Project Officer to learn if any Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) had experienced a similar situation and could offer input. It was important that HIPC members felt safe before they returned to in-person meetings. M. Ross-Russell recalled that at one point, they had to have the Health Commissioner's security staff and the City Council security police on speed dial to ensure the safety of the other members. The Project Officer suggested adding zero-tolerance language to the ByLaws. If a member was threatening another member with violence, they would be removed from HIPC and be denied reapplication.

K. Carter asked if the two applicants were previously removed from HIPC. M. Ross-Russell said they were not removed from HIPC but were asked to leave the meeting when they were disruptive/threatening. She said the two applicants were confrontational to all including the co-chairs. She suggested they look into a process in which they maintain applicant anonymity while also highlighting any past disruptive behavior. The reason, she said, was that she did not want another situation where a co-chair must obtain a restraining order due to another member's behavior. As of now, D. Law said staff members could disclose any issues with the applicants during the nomination process such as attendance issues in the past. L. Diaz asked if the review panel had to ask the staff about these issues first and D. Law said that was the case.

M. Ross-Russell read from the HIPC Primer, page 17. She said the HIPC must have a Nominations Committee that replaces members when their terms are up or they have decided to resign. The members selected must reflect the epidemic locally in terms of race, age, and gender. The number of unaligned consumers must reflect 33% of the HIPC membership. She defined unaligned consumers as persons who do not have a conflict of interest such as being a staff member or on a board of an organization receiving Ryan White Part A funding. The HIPC should pay close attention to recruiting populations who have been historically underserved and affected by the epidemic. HIPC candidacy would be judged on their qualifications. M. Ross-Russell said it was not only their duty to advertise HIPC applications to the public but also to reduce the barriers of engagement from the community.

K. Carter asked about the process for rejecting an application. D. Law said they would send the applicant a letter communicating that their application was not recommended to the Mayor's Office. M. Ross-Russell said they should expand the procedure to include a situation if the Mayor's Office did not approve the application. D. Law noted that this was already the case. K. Carter asked about the reasons an applicant would be rejected by the Mayor's Office. D. Law said some reasons included not meeting the needs or providing an incomplete application. M. Ross-Russell said another frequent reason was related to tax clearance. M. Ross-Russell said the city government itself may also have its own "blacklist."

M. Cappuccilli and K. Carter shared their concerns that a disruptive person could enter an in-person meeting and endanger the safety of all the members. T. Dominique said it was easier to enforce the code of conduct if they were in a virtual environment since they could simply block or kick someone out of the Zoom call. M. Cappuccilli asked what the main goal of the meeting was. L. Diaz and K. Carter agreed that the safety of the members and staff was paramount. L. Diaz said the situation revealed a flaw within their processes that they could amend. That would prevent disruptive members from resuming their membership after their term had ended.

M. Cappuccilli asked if they could add a section in the application for applicants to disclose whether they had disruptive behavior in the past. A. Edelstein said he did not believe applicants would answer that question. He instead suggested that they add the code of conduct to the application and have the applicant sign it. If the applicant violated the code, they would be penalized.

K. Carter asked if they could include in the application whether the applicant was removed from a meeting before if they were a returning member. D. Law said there was a section in the application for the applicant to describe their experience in HIPC. D. Law said they could add a question that the applicant could check if they were removed from a meeting. C. Steib raised his concerns that applicants would not answer the question and asked whether OHP had a blacklist of individuals. M. Ross-Russell said they had a list that documented any glaring membership issues – it was a matter of keeping the list updated. D. Law said the folder with the list had not been updated since the last incident and she was unsure which staff person was in charge since the last staff member responsible for the list had left OHP.

M. Cappuccilli asked whether the applications handed to the Nominations Committee were screened by any staff members. D. Law said she was not the first one to see the applicants. She explained that M. Ross-Russell and S. Moletteri saw the applicants on SurveyMonkey first and D. Law would review the applicants after them. C. Steib said it sounded like they had a process for the situation and would simply need to add it to the ByLaws in written form. M. Cappuccilli requested a new section on the evaluation form for the Nominations Committee where the review panel could reflect on the information presented by the staff on the applicant's past behavior. D. Law said this request was feasible. K. Carter suggested having a legal advocate draft the language to address the situation. M. Ross-Russell said the code of conduct was drafted by AIDS Law. She cautioned that they needed to steer away from making the application process too prohibitive to the point that it raised a barrier to joining HIPC. K. Carter said he felt that having disruptive persons in HIPC was a barrier because it pushed non-disruptive persons away from HIPC.

S. Moletteri said they believed the direction of the discussion was moving towards adding language to the code of conduct that stated that any member who would violate the code of conduct would be documented and the staff would be obligated to mention the infraction during the Nominations process. M. Ross-Russell said the staff could answer the proposed question on the application on whether the person was removed from the HIPC or not. D. Law said the issue was that one of the two disruptive applicants were not removed from the HIPC; their term had simply expired. K. Carter said that he had infringed on the code of conduct and felt that it was fair to ask if a person was safe if they violated the code. L. Diaz said that they were imperfect

people and each had their moments. She said it was not a matter how they started but if they improved consistently as a member. She remembered a member who had attendance issues but improved their attendance soon after a private discussion. She said the Nominations Committee looked at all aspects of the member.

M. Cappuccilli suggested that they follow S. Moletteri's suggestion to add a mechanism to alert the Nominations Committee regarding a member's behavior during the nominations process. K. Carter asked if they could add a probationary period during which the infringed member would be given a second chance before they were removed from HIPC.

M. Ross-Russell said they had ground rules for the HIPC meeting which defined the behavior expected of the members. She believed they had the members sign the ground rules in 2019. K. Carter asked if they should review the ground rules annually. M. Ross-Russell said that they could do that. She agreed that they should add language to the application and review the criteria of the nominations process. M. Ross-Russell said if they were to add this language, they would need to make a change to the Nominations Policy. M. Cappuccilli asked if OHP could draft the language for the code of conduct. M. Ross-Russell said that was possible and it would be based on the ground rules. M. Ross-Russell prefaced that any changes to the ByLaws would need to be made public and have a waiting period of 30 days before being voted on in the next HIPC meeting.

G. Grannan asked if the incidents of disruptive behavior as mentioned within the ground rules was cumulative or per meeting. M. Cappuccilli and M. Ross-Russell said it was per meeting. G. Grannan said they should consider recording incidents of disruptive behavior past one meeting. M. Ross-Russell asked if the ground rules addressed this question. The ground rules did not directly reference the situation. M. Ross-Russell said she believed the language they would draft in the future would be a combination of both the ground rules and the code of conduct where the member was required to sign annually. She said they would need to reference other applications in other places to see if they could find similar language. She said they could also contact J. Baez to know whether they had violated any laws or rules. T. Dominique said every member should sign the code of conduct annually because a member's situation could vary from year to year such as a new conflict of interest. L. Diaz said it was a good reminder that they must follow the rules. L. Diaz said they should add language to the code of conduct that members must also be respectful to one another outside of meetings since she had experience where she had to have a restraining order against another member. M. Ross-Russell said she did not know if they could moderate people's behavior out of meetings. M. Cappuccilli asked when the two applicants would be reviewed in the Open Nominations process. D. Law said they would review the applications in Spring 2024 if they have enough applications. M. Cappuccilli asked if disruptive behavior should leave a paper trail on the applicant's profile. L. Diaz said they should have a paper trail. She said they could ask D. Law to staple the past conduct onto the applicant's profile.

K. Carter asked what they would do once a person was rejected or removed from HIPC and they chose to appear at a meeting. M. Ross-Russell said there was a security door to enter the building. She said if the person bypassed the first security door, they would need to bypass the second security door between the elevator and the office. She said the security flaw was that if a stranger in the building with the codes let them into the building, a person can enter without a

code. K. Carter said they needed a way to monitor people at their door. M. Ross-Russell said she would look into placing a monitor at their door.

***-Letter of Acknowledgement Process-***

M. Ross-Russell said organizations would ask the staff or HIPC for a letter of support. The HIPC would not know what activities they were being asked to support. The current policy was to have the organization come forward to HIPC with a presentation of the activities they conducted and then the HIPC would present a letter of acknowledgement if they agreed with the presentation. M. Ross-Russell said this decision was made by HIPC long ago and they do not have formal language describing why the process was the way it was.

M. Cappuccilli asked about next steps. M. Ross-Russell said she would draft language describing their process for handling letters of acknowledgement. M. Ross-Russell asked the committee if they had any thoughts or opinions on the next steps. The committee agreed that they were content with the next steps.

L. Diaz asked if they should meet again as the Executive Committee or if they should draft the letter and present it at the HIPC meeting immediately. M. Ross-Russell asked what was the precedence for adding or changing policy. S. Moletteri said the last time they added or changed the policy, the language was drafted and then voted on by the Executive Committee to recommend for approval by the HIPC. T. Dominique said they had a Treatment Update for HIPC in March and the HIPC would utilize most of the meeting time for that presentation. L. Diaz said they would have to meet sometime between January 22st to January 30th. L. Diaz asked D. Law what they were doing in the next Nominations Committee meeting. D. Law said the next meeting would be focused on reviewing attendance. L. Diaz asked if they could host the Executive Committee at this meeting and review the policy. The committee agreed that they would meet at the Nominations Committee meeting to discuss the policy. It was decided that at the next Nominations Committee meeting, they would host the Executive Committee to discuss the letter of acknowledgement as well as changes to the application and the bylaws. They would review the language prior to the meeting so they could add comments. Then, they could vote on it during the meeting to recommend the HIPC approve the new and updated materials later that day.

**Any Other Business:**

None.

**Announcements:**

None.

**Adjournment:**

L. Diaz called for a motion to adjourn. **Motion: K. Carter motioned, and L. Diaz seconded to adjourn the Executive Committee meeting. Motion passed: All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Trinh, staff

Handouts distributed at the meeting:

- January 2024 Meeting Agenda
- August 2023 Meeting Minutes
- Open Nominations Policy