



Interagency Council on Homelessness

Full Council Pre-Meeting



10 September 2024

Issue Date: 10 September 2024



Convention for Recording ICH Committee & Full Council Meetings:

- ❖ Recording for purposes of complying with the Open Meeting Act requirements
- ❖ Available for anyone who requests a copy at ich.info@dc.gov.

Meeting Agenda



- I. Opening & Welcome (5 mins)**
- II. Introductions (20 mins)**
- III. Systemwide Check-In (20 mins)**
- IV. DCPL Behavioral Guidelines (20 mins)**
- V. Seasonal Planning Check-In (20 mins)**
- VI. Summary & Adjournment (5 mins)**
 - a) September Meetings At-A-Glance (Handout)
 - b) Next Full Council Meeting: Tuesday, 12/10 from 3 – 4:30 pm (Pre-Meeting from 1 – 2:30 pm)

Meeting Agenda



- I. Opening & Welcome (5 mins)
- II. Introductions (20 mins)**
- III. Systemwide Check-In (20 mins)
- IV. DCPL Behavioral Guidelines (20 mins)
- V. Seasonal Planning Check-In (20 mins)
- VI. Summary & Adjournment (5 mins)

Live Notes on Introductions



- ❖ **Richard Reyes-Gavilan (DCPL Director):** Thank you for hosting at the library and for the invitation for the important discussion on the rules of behavior.
 - Spent 20 years working at the public libraries in New York.
 - In the past, was a posture of tolerance. This has evolved to center the experience of all residents. Proud of my very first hire, Jean Badalamenti, to begin the wave of social workers in the libraries and peer navigators. They work to connect residents to services, train staff. Thanks to this work, libraries have adopted a trauma informed approach – for healthier, more dignified approach. Does not mean there are no rules, but setting the groundwork for the historical context.
- ❖ **Kevin Donahue (OCA):** Pleasure to be here! Will be here for both meetings. Have found great value in the pre-meeting to have space and time for conversation we often can't dive into during the Full Council.

Live Notes on Introductions



- ❖ **Full Council members:** Introducing so understand what is top of mind and share feedback with the CA. Recognize your seat and voice.
- ❖ **DC Agencies**
 - CFSA – Tanya Trice, Director
 - DMHHS – Ciana Creighton, Chief of Staff
 - ✓ DMHHS - Age Friendly DC Coordinator, Gail Kohn
 - DCHA – Hammere Gebreyes, Director Pettigrew sends his regards!
- ❖ **Community Reps:**
 - Roxanne Murray, Echelon – also co-chair of REI WG
 - Tobie Smith, Street Health DC and Georgetown School of Medicine
 - Lyn Amano, Friendship Place
 - Daniel Rico, Sasha Bruce Youthwork
 - Adam Rocap, Miriam’s Kitchen
 - Nikila Smith, Street Sense Vendor
 - Rachelle Ellison, People for Fairness Coalition



❖ We also have support tables in the lobby:

- DCHA – Hammere Gebreyes
- DHS – Jenna Cevasco, Stacia Frederick
- Pathways Outreach

Meeting Agenda



- I. Opening & Welcome (5 mins)
- II. Introductions (20 mins)
- III. **Systemwide Check-In (20 mins)**
- IV. DCPL Behavioral Guidelines (20 mins)
- V. Seasonal Planning Check-In (20 mins)
- VI. Summary & Adjournment (5 mins)

Live Notes on Systemwide Check-In



- ❖ **NS:** As a homeless woman, will always talk about singles. Seems like families are more important than singles.
- ❖ **SP:** Homeless for 2 years at NYA. Appreciate a meeting like this. This is my second meeting. Last year applied for the voucher, got voucher 07/11/24. Want to talk about elephant in the room – DCHA. Got the voucher, then CM and I looked for apt in Columbia Plaza. Confirmed all docs were sent 07/26/24. The voucher has an expiration date of 07/11/24, so almost going on two months, no updates. Glad for a meeting to raise this and help solve problems to end homelessness.
 - **TS (ICH):** Thank you for your feedback. We have DCHA staff on site today to support and follow up.
 - **CA:** Hoping for answer/resolution before we leave today.
 - **TS (ICH):** DCHA has also committed to providing performance reports in the coming months and we will have a chance to review.

Live Notes on Systemwide Check-In



- ❖ **JC (Advocate):** The lack of love among our community, agencies and people is alarming. Grateful for experiences and truth that woke me up to face myself. Disappointed by the DC Executive Office and partnerships. When there is love, do not have to suffer. This is America, we are not dumbed down. The suffering is real.
 - Had an incident the other day in being accused. The things they do deny life and liberty. Suffering is real. Vulnerability on the street. I work on this level with the community, with the police. It is time to give our people the chance. Use your voice to let them know. Their policies are hurting our longevity. No one wants to speak about the mishaps.
 - If we do not deal with the real issues, we are wasting time and money. We need better programs and services where they are. People are not able to relate to them. I stand because I come from poverty. I need the people in this room to not create backgrounds for me. I am honest. That can be perceived negatively by people. Character matters.
- ❖ **TS (ICH):** Thank you for your persistent reminder that we should not continue to pathologize poverty, rather than dealing with meeting basic needs. If programs are not adequately funded, case managers are not making food appear out of nowhere. Need to ensure hearts are in the right places.
- ❖ **CA:** You started and ended with the idea of self love. Recognizing what does not work and what needs to be better. What would you say is top of the list?
 - **JC:** the operations are not adequate – technology, business standards are not adequate for where we are now. We should have apps, etc. to ensure safe access to services. Takes a significant amount of time to see changes, operations are behind.
- ❖ **CA:** The other item you highlighted is self-reflection. We take too much pride sometimes. Lifting up the hard truth about the work that needs to happen.

Live Notes on Systemwide Check-In



- ❖ **Michael Coleman:** Want to address my departure from the council. This council has a real problem. We need people to represent us, not handpicked representatives.

Live Notes on Systemwide Check-In



❖ **Eric Sheptock:**

- Spoke in the March meeting about DCHA concerns and issues with rental payments. When things go well, want to be sure to share – everything worked out and has been resolved. It takes time, but it got done so want to lift that up!
- Re: families prioritized over singles – spoke to David Burns back in 2012 about the same issue. He said sometimes decisions are budgetary and financial. It costs more to shelter a homeless family than it does to house them. The system only has so much money. Sometimes need to shelter individuals instead of house them. Hate to say it, but sometimes that's how it works. Direct and honest about the pressures in the system.

❖ **TS (ICH):** Follow up question, Eric – how do we change that equation? And make it cheaper to house individual? Can we pilot that with PSH?

- **ES:** That is a big question. The quick answer is to foster more cohabitation. Understand liabilities and considerations of placements, but can find a way! Would love to brainstorm to make it happen. See people who are not disabled get PSH and their rental housing costs is \$2500 vs cost of shared housing. Know there was a DHS audit years ago on singles being put into two-bedroom units. Need to make better use.

Live Notes on Systemwide Check-In



- ❖ **CA:** We do not do enough innovation on the ways singles can be housed. The point on cohabitation is a good one as it seems more efficient and cost effective. We also do not do enough SROs. There are probably 2-3 other ideas we could come up with to improve housing for singles especially as we head into this budget season.
 - It is expensive to run shelters. We rarely close shelters, so cost of housing is sometimes seen as add on. E.g. even if house 50 people from shelter, still have full cost of shelter to manage. Cost is also reflective of how people may feel about shelter.
 - Try to look at how much value in services the direct consumer is receiving. A lot is lost between what is paid out and what makes it to the person. It could be more efficient. How do we unwind to ensure more of what we spend is received by the beneficiary.
- ❖ **ES:** Study 5-6 years ago (by Max?) on the cost for CM for families and the rate of income increased. \$15,000 on CM for a \$68 increase in monthly income.

Live Notes on Systemwide Check-In



- ❖ **Gina:** Happy to participate in this meeting. Looking at homelessness in the US...the US is like the light of the world. How they treat their citizens. It pains to see people sleeping on the streets. Have never seen that before. The DC have to show concern for humanity. See measures taken for youth. How do we feel when we sleep comfortably in our own homes and beds? How can they plan their future when they have no home? Something has to be done.

Live Notes on Systemwide Check-In



- ❖ **Joshua Drumming (WLCH):** Appreciate the hard work on the Winter Plan.
 - Concerned that projection for family system is too low and the expected inflow is too low. It only accounts for 25% monthly surge in entries, however, PIT in 2024 showed 39% increase in family homelessness. Since then, DHS has exited or plans to exit ~2000 families and cut the funding for the program in FY25. Over 500 families have lost assistance and likely facing eviction. When the winter is in full force, will likely see families reexperiencing homelessness.
 - Recommend increase family shelter capacity in the plan or keep families housed before they are able to move in with HCVP vouchers. The point of the winter plan is to adequately meet shelter needs. It does not meet the need to pass a plan that does not adequately address.
- ❖ **CA:** Want to share some additional context on FRSP –
 - Started before COVID, exit families at 12 – 18 months. After one year ~15% return. COVID happened and there were no exits for an extended period of time and funded it through the addtl federal funding. Those sources have dried up and city budget is flat. There are families being exited. Change of policy at DCHA to prioritize families exiting RRH so do not enter the family system.
 - The question of Plan B is a good one. The short answer to that is to closely monitor that via shelter utilization and entries. DHS Director can speak to this more deeply. Have an obligation to shelter families. The evidence prior to COVID is that relatively few reenter, does not necessarily mean they were stably housed, but did not reenter.

Live Notes on Systemwide Check-In



- ❖ **JD (WLCH):** Agree there should be monitoring of the situation. There is a logistical hurdle in transitioning from shelter to housing. Easy to underestimate the trauma of experiencing homelessness on the street. Easy to look at numbers to project.
 - **TS (ICH):** Families are exiting FRSP, but they are not at risk for being on the street. People are well ahead of that. That is not the situation at hand. We did see 39% increase at PIT, but in terms of shelter capacity right now – we are at the same level of occupancy that we were last year. There is something about FRSP that is materially far that what you describe. We are very far from that reality.
 - **JD (WLCH):** All we can do is speculate. We do not know what may change. There is an extended eviction process, but also know from talking to clients and ICH meetings, that it is scary to face program termination. One thing we have seen is people elect to leave programs prematurely because expect to be put on the street. People do not know all the processes and programs. They are thinking about their children, spouses so do not want to wait for the other shoe to drop. The budget and winter plan are moral documents.
 - **TS (ICH):** How many units are you recommending? What threshold should we trigger additional beds?
 - **JD (WLCH):** Need to account for 39% surge, in lieu of the 25% surge. Need to constantly monitor. Will do some additional research to recommend a number.

DELIBERATIVE PURPOSES ONLY | SEND COMMENTS/QUESTIONS TO ICH.INFO@DC.GOV

Live Notes on Systemwide Check-In



- ❖ **JC:** have experience in street homelessness with my family and my son. Through the VWFRC and their partnerships we were denied. WLCH failed to do their job. Allowed them to remove my son and gave unstable background and create what they want. When things come up, there are families who do have the injustice of being separated, children adopted off. There are ways life and liberty are denied at every level.
- ❖ **MC:** The PIT count is a joke. It is not accurate. That is why the winter plan are going on inaccurate numbers.

Live Notes on Systemwide Check-In



- ❖ **Certified Peer Specialist (did not catch name)**
 - Breaks my heart to have people on the street. We need more funding and education. Education on being homeowners, credit score improvement, more fruitful in society today.
 - As far as housing is concerned, big kudos to Mayor Bowser for building affordable housing with the buildings closed during COVID.
 - Thanks to those who shared today. The spirit of advocacy is out!
 - Case management can help. Community Connections was good to me and helped me get my housing, connect to benefits. Thank you for the time.
- ❖ **TS (ICH):** Thank you for uplifting the good news in addition to the things we have to work on. Also highlighting that homeownership is top of mind. Connecting with DMPED on potential opportunities.

Live Notes on Systemwide Check-In



- ❖ **Queenie Featherstone:** Have 12 years of lived experience. Know we have to talk and talk, plot and plan to get things done, but put your money where your mouth is! To help, to get things done. Yes, there is a lot of work and few hands to meet the need. I understand there are federal, regular vouchers on one hand, but on the other hand, you say there are none. Another example – if there are 100 homeless and only 10 vouchers (federal or regular), 90 people are going to be without. Need more social workers and they need to be trained. The wait weighs you down and is nerve-racking. If there are vouchers – who do you talk to?
 - **CA:** Short answer is that there will be two people here later to help out with your question on the vouchers – DHS Director and DCHA senior representative. You are right that we fund vouchers and some sit there. The paperwork involved in applying is extensive, so we need to work to streamline. Units have been more difficult to find.
 - **CA:** In terms of budget and affordable housing – many of affordable housing buildings are in financial crisis. There are buildings that were funded as affordable, with long term covenants, but owners are now on verge of bankruptcy. When that happens, keys go back to the bank. I am learning about how serious this is. Everything costs more now, buildings have had flat revenues, and rent is not being paid. Natl banks assess DC **<need to pull from audio recording...>** will raise alarm bells to preserve what we built. Likely requires mixture of legislation and funding to be fair to tenants and preserve affordability.

Meeting Agenda



- I. Opening & Welcome (5 mins)
- II. Introductions (20 mins)
- III. Systemwide Check-In (20 mins)
- IV. **DCPL Behavioral Guidelines (20 mins)**
- V. Seasonal Planning Check-In (20 mins)
- VI. Summary & Adjournment (5 mins)



DC Public Library

Welcome Everyone



DC Public Library Value: Welcome Everyone

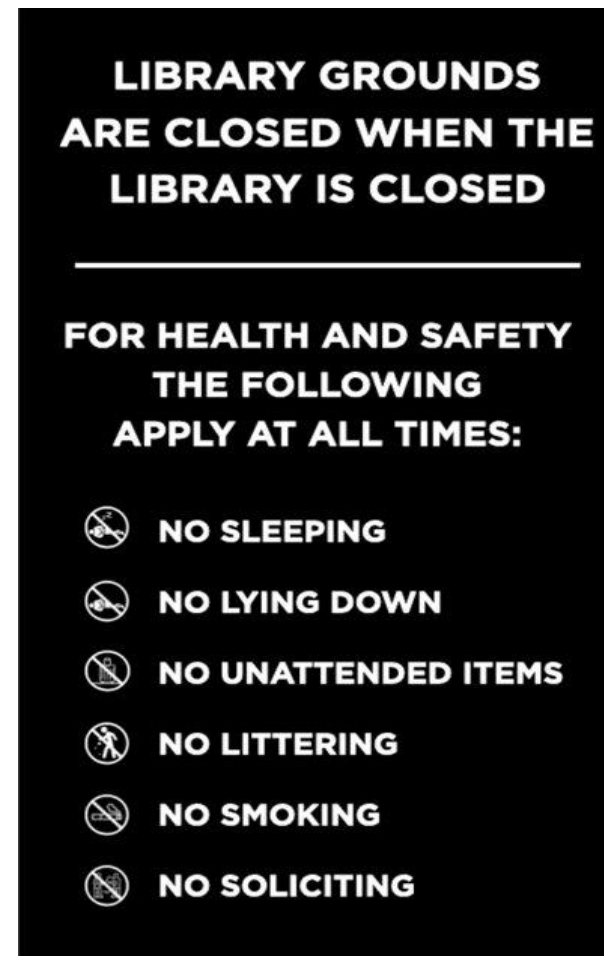
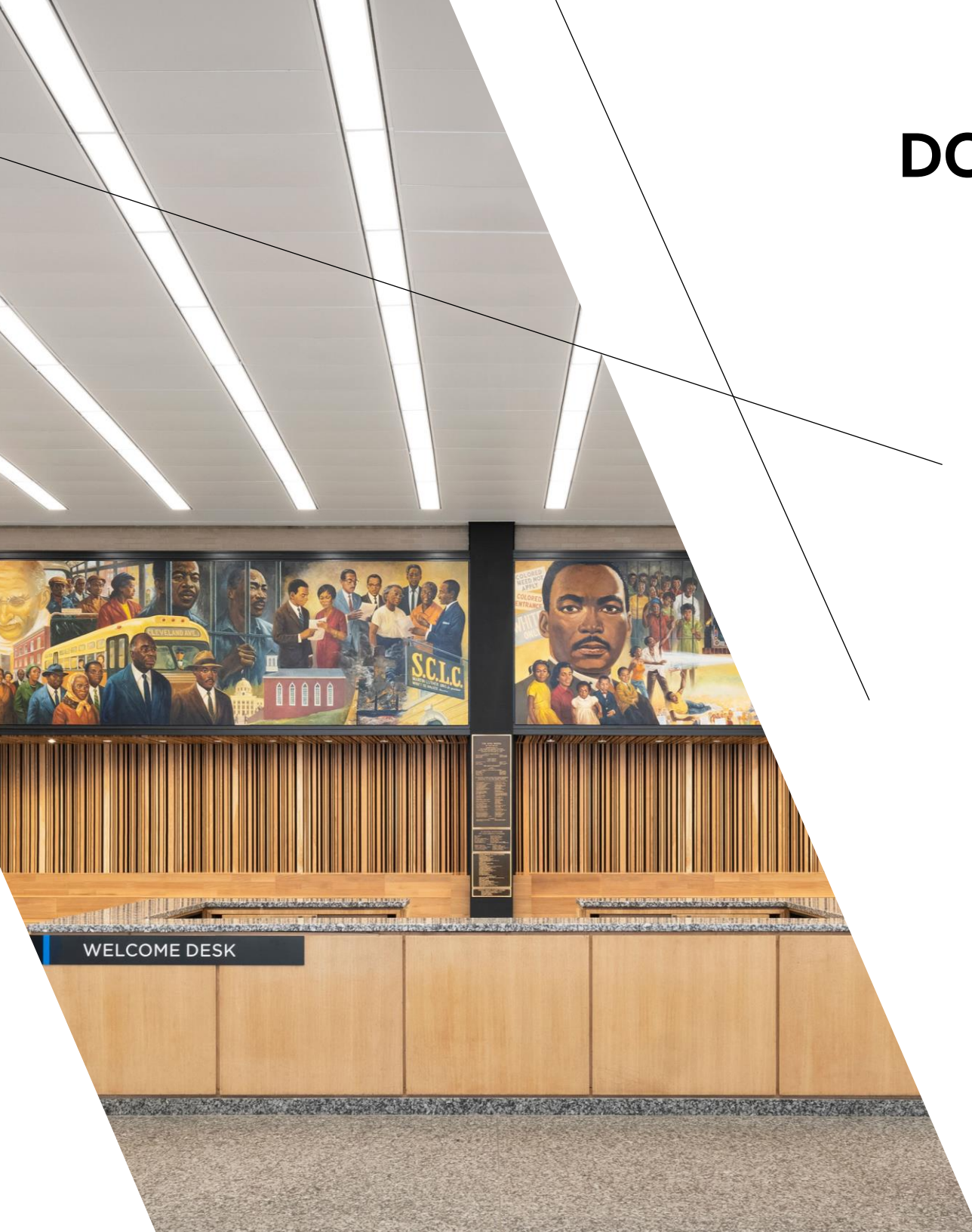
How: Provide environments that are Kind, Clean, and Safe

- Libraries are a space to safely meet, to relax, to read, to reflect, to gather, and to work
- DCPL staff strive to connect people to programs, resources and information
- DCPL partners with government agencies and non-profits like DBH and Pathways that offer direct social services
- DCPL users are expected to follow Rules of Behavior

DCPL Rules of Behavior

-Developed in 2014; temporarily relaxed in 2020 to be flexible during pandemic

-Signage reflects current behavior rules



Rules of Behavior - Enforcement

Approach with Compassion - library staff including library public safety trained in Trauma-Informed Care Framework

- Ask if person is okay, inform person of the behavior rule, ask person to change/stop behavior
- Bar from library ONLY if person refuses to comply
- Asked to leave premises if person returns during bar

Rules of Behavior – The Future

- Revision to reflect Welcome All vision and maintaining a kind, clean, and safe environment
- Input from staff happening now
- Input from library users and partners, community starting fall 2024
- Target completion – Spring 2025



❖ Ms. Umi:

- Very unhappy with this policy. It is being framed as something that was in place and is now being enforced. Now it is being framed as a money issue, but you have money for police and security.
- People want to respect policies, but it is very difficult for people with belongings to come in if they can not leave items unattended outside. I don't want to block space for other people at the computers with my bags.
- People who are not unhoused use the library and the overhang. How do you pick and choose who to enforce? If I come in as unhoused with luggage, will I be discriminated against versus someone with traveling with luggage?
- Use money to provide storage, showers, resources.
- Very frustrating. There should have been a grace period. You can not punish all for one or a few bad actors.

Live Notes on DCPL Behavioral Guidelines



- ❖ **RRG (DCPL):** Not looking to prevent hanging out or bringing materials into the library. Goal is to welcome. How can we do that in a compassionate, safe and clean way. Libraries serve everyone. Our challenge is how do we make it welcoming to all?
 - The policy we are now enforcing is the sleeping. Find it very difficult to provide a safe environment for anyone sleeping under the overhang. Want to ensure there are no barriers to accessing the library. Over 2100 people per day here at MLK.
 - Opportunity to Inform Updated Guidelines: DCPL is rewriting the guidelines. Currently in staff engagement. Later this fall there will be opportunities, including with ICH. What is the bag, food, policy, etc.? Focus on keeping clean, safe and kind environments. Director of Community Engagement is managing this project and there will be ample opportunity for constituents to inform.
- ❖ **Ms. Umi:** Disagree – why was this given to homeless outside? You spray painted outside. How much did you spend? Why did you print and distribute?
- ❖ **RRG:** For the time being, the ideas that have re-introduced on the columns outside. Will have opportunity to talk about why and changes to make.
- ❖ **Ms. Umi:** Why did you make those decisions? Understand t keep items outside so not taking up space and blocking carts. Now worried it will be trashed.
- ❖ **RRG:** There is a process by which unattended items are addressed – depends on size, length of time. Normally end of day thing. Do respect belongings.
- ❖ **Ms. Umi:** You say that, but officers are not.
- ❖ **RRG:** Thanks to work with Jean, have been additional training.
- ❖ **Ms. Umi:** Library staff are great, police are not. You are not homeless.

Live Notes on DCPL Behavioral Guidelines



- ❖ **TS (ICH):** What is the grievance protocol? Ensuring people enforcing the policies are doing so with compassion. Need to ensure you are empowered to tell someone about concerns for when security is not using the most trauma informed policies.
- ❖ **JC:** Echo concern about security. Have seen improvement with police but need to address.
- ❖ **Ms. Umi:** The library is pickup/drop off for shelter transportation. According to library policy, I have to be off property at 9pm.
 - **RRG:** Right now, the policy does not say that standing is not allowed.
 - **Ms. Umi:** Police are saying something different. They are not nice. Try to encourage people, but it is too much for people to deal with.

Live Notes on DCPL Behavioral Guidelines



- ❖ **ES:** Historical context of how programs and buildings change here. For example, make new day program more useful. Re: bags – there used to be a scanner at the entrance of MLK. If it didn't fit, not allowed in. Advocates fought to get that removed. Years ago, videos to feature experience of homelessness and understand each other. Review what has been done before coming up with new stuff!
- ❖ **Peer Specialist:** Breaks my heart. I am DC ward 8 resident. Would love to be involved in planning. Can we get lockers on each floor of the library? Have some storage. Have to be considerate. If not for the people, would not be people. For the officers, need to do trauma informed training.
- ❖ **TS (ICH):** Appreciate time of CA and DCPL Director today. Can dedicate time at Front Door Services WG and ERSO CMTE.

Meeting Agenda



- I. Opening & Welcome (5 mins)
- II. Introductions (20 mins)
- III. Systemwide Check-In (20 mins)
- IV. DCPL Behavioral Guidelines (20 mins)
- V. Seasonal Planning Check-In (20 mins)**
- VI. Summary & Adjournment (5 mins)

Live Notes on Seasonal Planning



❖ **FL (Org):...**

Meeting Agenda

- I. Opening & Welcome (5 mins)
- II. Introductions (20 mins)
- III. Systemwide Check-In (20 mins)
- IV. DCPL Behavioral Guidelines (20 mins)
- V. Seasonal Planning Check-In (20 mins)
- VI. Summary & Adjournment (5 mins)**
 - a) Next ICH Full Council Mtg: December 10 from 3 – 4:30 pm (Pre-Mtg 1 – 2:30 pm)

