



**Tompkins County
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD**

**Tompkins County Whole Health
201 East Green Street
Ithaca, New York 14850-5635**

Jan Lynch, Chair

Sheila McEnergy, Vice Chair

Frank Kruppa; Commissioner

Harmony Ayers-Friedlander,
Deputy Commissioner/Director of Community Services

Larry Roberts, Chair,
Mental Health Subcommittee

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Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee

Jacob Parker Carver, Chair
Substance Use Subcommittee

**Tompkins County Community Mental Health Services Board
201 East Green Street, Ithaca, NY 14850
Monday, January 5, 2026, 5:30 p.m. Meeting Minutes**

**Minutes Approved
February 2, 2026**

[YouTube recordings](#)

Present: Jan Lynch; Mary Hutchens; Jacob Parder Carver; Jessica Conner, PsyD (Zoom); Nicole Zulu, PhD;

Excused: Travis Winter; Sally McConnell-Ginet; Dr. Auguste Duplan; Howard Reid; Anna Tamis, PhD; Sheila McEnergy; Larry Roberts; Stu Bergman; Khaki Wunderlich

Legislature: Randy Brown

Guests: Liddy Bargar, Human Services Coalition; and Lisa Barrett, Director of Housing and Shelter Services, Volunteers of America

Staff: Jennie Sutcliffe, Commissioner; Harmony Ayers-Friedlander, DCS; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

Ms. Lynch called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Introductions were made. A quorum was not met, and the December 2025 minutes could not be approved.

Privilege of the Floor & Announcements: A quorum must be present to vote on the slate of nominations.

Tompkins County Homelessness Update: Liddy Barger, Director of Housing Initiatives at Human Services Coalition, presented an update on homelessness in Tompkins County, focusing on the local Continuum of Care's mission to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time. She explained the system's metrics and goals, including the target of keeping homelessness to no more than 40 days and ensuring that people experience homelessness only once. Lydie also highlighted the importance of using data to measure progress and promote equitable resource distribution.

HUD Homelessness Data Trends - Liddy explained how HUD data are collected through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which tracks community-wide homeless response data and submits it to Congress. She presented system performance measures and point-in-time counts showing a reduction in homelessness between 2023 and 2025, though the average length of homelessness remains above the 40-day goal. Liddy also discussed emergency shelter data, noting a decrease in first-time homelessness experiences since 2022 and highlighting the significant presence of domestic violence and trauma among shelter residents.

Tompkins County Homeless Data Overview - Liddy provided data on individuals who identify as victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, including 14 veterans, 21 chronically homeless people, 466 adults, 55 children in families, and 38 unaccompanied youth. She explained that the information was gathered from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to which all homeless response system service providers in Tompkins County contribute. TCMH inquired about the origin of homeless individuals, and Liddy clarified that while the county of origin is not yet fully tracked, about 75% of the HMIS homeless population is from Tompkins County, with the rest primarily from nearby counties.

Addressing Homelessness in Tompkins County - Liddy discussed the challenges of homelessness in Tompkins County, primarily attributing it to the scarcity of affordable housing and the silos between state and local agencies. She highlighted incremental progress toward housing stability, despite ongoing issues, and expressed hope in the community's willingness to collaborate and address these challenges.

Youth Housing Coordination Progress Update - Liddy discussed challenges in coordinating McKinney-Vento efforts across six school districts and highlighted a barrier for 18-21-year-olds accessing shelter due to parental responsibility requirements. She noted progress in youth housing through Asteri's success in placing 40 people in permanent supportive housing. Lisa Barrett from Volunteers of America reported their shelter's current capacity of 45 beds, exceeding last year's maximum of 5-6 women, and recent access to HMIS data.

Facility Capacity and Peer Services - The facility's capacity and operations, including its ability to accommodate up to 40 additional beds in open spaces. The facility's case manager and peer services were highlighted, with the peer providing personal recovery experiences and advocacy, while the case manager focuses on connecting individuals to long-term housing. The discussion also covered access to amenities such as showers, laundry, and food, with specific rules and challenges addressed, including issues with hot water, prioritizing bed-turnover laundry, and the recent theft of laundry detergent pods, which led to increased staff supervision.

Tompkins County Code Blue Shelter Operations Update - Lisa Barrett, Director of Housing and Shelter Services for Volunteers of America, discussed the operations and services at the Code Blue Shelter, including basic hygiene supplies and meals, with community donations supporting additional amenities. Staff addressed accessibility concerns, noting that although the current facility is not ADA-compliant, DSS accommodates individuals with accessibility needs by securing hotel stays. Plans for future renovations and the potential use of the shelter space through the summer were discussed, with a new 88-bed shelter projected to be completed by 2027.

Dental Care Access Challenges – Providing dental services to homeless populations and the broader community is challenging. Lisa highlighted the need for better coordination between medical and dental care, noting that emergency rooms are often used for dental issues due to limited access to qualified dentists. TCMH also described VOA's transportation services for homeless individuals, including scheduled pickups and drop-offs, and shared success stories of helping people transition from encampments to shelter.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The Next Community Mental Health Services Board Meeting is Monday, February 2, 2026, at 5:30 pm.