



Tompkins County
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD

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

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Jan Lynch, Vice Chair

Frank Kruppa; Commissioner

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

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Stu Bergman, Chair,
Substance Use Subcommittee

Tompkins County Community Mental Health Services Board
201 East Green Street, Ithaca NY 14850
Monday, June 5, 2023, 5:30 p.m. Meeting Minutes

Approved
7/10/23

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkpJNVbpLLbEbhoDbTIEgSQ>

Present: Jan Lynch; Mary Hutchens; Sheila McEnergy; Dr. Auguste Duplan; Stu Bergman; Travis Winter; Sally McConnell-Ginet; and Larry Roberts (Zoom)

Excused Ellice Switzer; and Jessica Conner, Psyd.

Unexcused: Sullymar Pena Vazquez

Legislature: Randy Brown

Guests: Liddy Bargar

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

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Ms. Lynch. Introductions were made. A quorum was not met, and the April and May 2023 minutes could not be approved.

Privilege of the Floor & Announcements: Ms. Lynch reminded all to complete the Needs Assessment Survey. She announced that a successful Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Resource and Job Fair was held at the YMCA earlier today.

Chair's Report: Ms. Lynch discussed the July meeting, and all agreed to meet on Monday, July 10th @ 5:30 pm. The three candidates will be recommended to the legislature.

Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County - Liddy Bargar, Director of Housing Initiative: Ms. Bargar spoke on the "Home Together: Tompkins" plan. It is the Continuum of Care homeless response system plan for the ending of unsheltered homelessness along with enhancing the service delivery for people who experienced severe service needs in Tompkins County. The complete plan can be found at https://hsctc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Home-Together-Tompkins_Final.pdf.

The Continuum of Care (CoC) is a program by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) dedicated to organizing community-wide involvement in preventing and ending homelessness. The CoC promotes access to supportive housing and other supportive services for individuals experiencing homelessness through the coordinated entry and organizing community planning and education regarding building a more trauma-informed, housing-first homeless response system.

Commissioned by the CoC, Tompkins County Legislature, and the City of Ithaca a "Tompkins County Homeless and Housing Needs Assessment" report found areas that needed support and provided recommendations. The findings aligned with the federal strategic plan to end homelessness incorporated with evidence-based strategies and aims to build safe, low-cost housing and increase accessibility through targeted programming and framing issues using a public health lens.

Key findings:

- The length of time homelessness is increasing in our continuum
- Returns to homelessness in TC are the highest of comparable CoCs
- Chronic homelessness is increasing
- The outcomes for other populations including couch surfers, youth, and people of color

Home Together: Tompkins - Goals

- Quickly identifying and engaging people at risk of experiencing homelessness
- Intervening to prevent people from losing their housing and divert people from entering the homelessness services system.
- Providing people with immediate access to shelter and crisis services without barriers to entry if homelessness does occur.
- Quickly connecting people experiencing homelessness to housing assistance and services tailored to their unique needs and strengths to help them achieve and maintain stable housing.

Home Together: Tompkins - Components

- A commitment to building 100 studio and 1-bedroom units of PSH.
- A low-barrier shelter that uses a trauma-informed approach to safety.
- A “housing surge” strategy and by-name list to better serve people living in unsheltered locations.
- Mitigation funds for business owners and landlords.
- Other incentives such as a shopping cart exchange and cash for trash programs.
- Low-barrier move-in packages and assistance for moving from homeless to housed.
- Three enhanced, centralized housing navigator positions.
- Paid board positions for people with lived experience to monitor and approve Home, Together: Tompkins.
- Professional development opportunities for people with lived experience

Recommendations:

- Build more permanent supportive housing
- Build more low-cost single-unit housing
- Enhanced housing navigation
- Heightened outreach to youth, people of color and couch-surfers
- Expand the capacity of our emergency shelter

A community-wide buy-in and when homelessness is not viewed as a single system issue, we will see changes in the community. HUD monies via CoC and the Homeless Response System, Community Development Block Grant Funding, OTDA, rental supplement programs, and Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI) and creative funding help fund and finance.

The median person experiencing homelessness in Tompkins County is a single, white, male between 35-42 years of age with a dual diagnosis of mental health and substance use disorder who has experienced more than three episodes of homelessness in his homeless history.

Ms. Ayers-Friedlander asked Ms. Bargar what does she need to execute the Home Together: Tompkins plan and how it aligns with other plans (TIDES proposal). Ms. Bargar responded that funding is important and being aligned with the community wide-plan and Continuum of Care approved enhances federal and state funding and other opportunities.

The meeting adjourned @ 7:00 pm

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**The Next Community Mental Health Services Board Meeting is
Monday, June 5, 2023, at 5:30 pm.**