



**Tompkins County  
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD**

Tompkins County Whole Health  
201 East Green Street  
Ithaca, New York 14850-5638

Ellice Switzer, Chair

Jan Lynch, Vice Chair

Frank Kruppa, Commissioner

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

Larry Roberts, Chair  
Mental Health Subcommittee

James Beaumont and Jeff Boles, Co-Chairs  
Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee

Stu Bergman, Chair  
Substance Use Subcommittee

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**Tompkins County Community Mental Health Services Board  
201 East Green Street, Ithaca NY 14850  
Monday, January 9, 2023, 5:30 p.m. Meeting Minutes**

**Approved 2.6.23**

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

**Present:** Mary Hutchens; Ellice Switzer; Jan Lynch; Stu Bergman; Sally McConnell-Ginet; Sheila McEnery; and Jessica Conner, Psyd., Larry Roberts (Zoom); Tom Lipa (Zoom); and Sullymar Pena Vazquez (Zoom)

**Excused:** Travis Winter; and Dr. Auguste Duplan

**Unexcused:** Dorothy Lovelace

**Legislature:** Veronica Pillar

**Guests:** Tiffany Bloss, Suicide Prevention & Crisis Service

**Staff:** Harmony Ayers-Friedlander, DCS; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

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The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Ms. Hutchens. Ms. Lynch moved to approve the November 2022 minutes, seconded by Ms. McEnery with one correction; Ms. McConnell-Ginet moved to approve the December 2022 minutes seconded by Dr. Conner; all were in favor.

**Privilege of the Floor:** Mr. Roberts shared that the Community Justice Center is moving forward with pairing Ithaca Police Officers with Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) and would like an update at the next meeting. Ms. Ayers-Friedlander suggested inviting Mona Smiley of the Community Justice Center for an update. She added that the co-response team will begin in the county and the city will follow. The co-response team will look different as the Sheriff's department has a special vehicle and different uniforms which will respond via dispatch/911/988. The rural outreach program with Family & Children's Services will continue to respond without law enforcement for less significant situations. There are several models of the unarmed co-response for people with mental health crisis under review.

**Announcements:** None

**Vote on Slate of Nominations:** Ms. Ellice Switzer was appointed to be the new Chair of the CSB and Ms. Jan Lynch was appointed as the new Vice-Chair of the CSB.

**Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service (SPCS) Update:** Executive Director, Tiffany Bloss has been in non-profit mental health leadership for 20 years and shared her personal family mental health experiences. These experiences gave her the opportunity to spread the word and to help break the stigma

SPCS has answered 6,186 calls in the last eight months with 988 answering 1,865 of those calls and averages a 91% answer rate and a 60-minute talk time. SPCS receives calls from around the country and from their google website with many being former students or residents who keep the number.

She said that 988 officially rolled out in July 2022 giving people easier access to services as seen in the increase in the volume of calls. 988 will begin a nationwide marketing campaign in the spring and summer.

#### Community Education:

- Safe Talk is taught monthly
- Monthly Assist training for crisis line workers (trainings will soon be open to the public at no cost via Zoom)
- Working with Cornell Ears making sure all their students have active training
- Trainings with the American Foundation for Suicide
- Early Alert – SPCS is partnering with the nationwide organization proactive about suicide prevention and offers a texting feature to subscribers for weekly wellness checks. Subscribers comments are triaged to the Suicide Prevention for risk evaluation. SPCS has triaged 201 requests since pairing with them in December 2022

#### Staffing at SPCS:

- Three internal promotions
- New Director of Operations
- Hiring for six crisis line workers, a part-time community relations position and a licensed social worker
- A goal of 40 – 50 volunteers working four hours per week to compliment the crisis line
- New leadership on the Board of Directors

#### 2023 Goals:

- Operational hours 24/7 by February 1<sup>st</sup>
- Introduction of a 24/7 Warm Line in February
- Outbound Telecare check-ins ( 5-7-minute calls to the elderly population recently discharged from the hospital)
- Full renovation of the call center in the spring
- Expanding call center from 4 to 12 stations
- Re-acquiring 11 counties based on the recent progress and changes in staffing acknowledged by OMH
- Piloting a nationwide adult LGBT crisis line later this year

Ms. Bloss stated that school districts engagement has been minimal, but the schools are looking for chat services for the kids as many may not use the phone. SPCS is implementing chat services on their website which should be available the end of the month. She has reached out to the schools for an invitation to their social workers regular meetings.

Ms. Bloss stated they are fully funded with opportunities for additional funding especially with 988's large pool of federal funding and also being a pilot program for the new service. Ms. Bloss provided the names of their board members and some they are vetting.

#### Networking and building connections:

- Regularly meeting with Scott McLeod of the Sophie Fund for updates, history, and prospects
- Teaching several classes at Cornell on Suicide prevention building connections with professors
- SPCS restarting monthly groups at CMC's Behavioral Health Unit
- Member of the Executive Exchange in Tompkins County
- A Rotarian

**Deputy Commissioners Report:** Ms. Ayers-Friedlander reported on establishing the 2023 Local Services Plan (LSP) which will be a 3-year (2024, 2025 and 2026) multi plan. She will keep the Board posted as more information from the State becomes available in March. She referred to the detailed documents emailed to members and included in the package. 2022 LSP work needing more attention was transferred to the 2023 LSP documented in the email by Ms. Ayers-Friedlander.

Workforce Recruitment and Retention, Crisis Services, Housing, Cross System Services and Non-Clinical Supports Development are need areas for the 2023 Local Services Plan. The goal, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) was moved to the 2023 LSP year as well.

The Alcohol and Drug Council's Open Access Detox Program opening was delayed. CARS' 25-bed Inpatient Women's long-term program is experiencing delays as well. The Legislature is identifying strategies that have shown to be effective in reducing opioid addiction and deaths with the help of their established Opioid Taskforce in the distribution of the Opioid

Settlement dollars. She said that Mr. Kruppa, Ms. Grinnell-Crosby, Ms. Lincoln, and herself met with the Opioid Taskforce to provide requested information helpful to their decision making.

Mr. Roberts thanked Ms. Ayers-Friedlander for her guidance, support, and leadership of the subcommittee in the achievements of the 2022 Local Services Plans.

Ms. Switzer anticipates the new Workforce Development Board Director and an Opioid Taskforce representative to present at a CSB meeting. Ms. Switzer shared that the open meeting law has few exceptions to the requirement to be present and asked members to be present in order to conduct business. Members voiced their concerns of the requirement.

Adjourned at 6:57 pm.

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**The Next Community Mental Health Services Board Meeting is  
Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 5:30 pm.**

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