

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

September 16, 2025

Present: Jessica Moser, Chair; Thomas Kalamas, Vice-Chair; Josh Leviker; Vincent Nortz and Barry Lyndaker.

Legislator Moser called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

Legislator Moser moved to approve August 19th committee meeting minutes as submitted, seconded by Legislator Kalamas, and carried.

EVA System at Department of Social Services – Greg & Andrea Tipping, founders of Tipco

Andrea and Greg Tipping, co-founders of TIPCO Automated, presented their AI-powered assistant, EVA, which launched in late 2023 and is currently operational in five states. Andrea highlighted her extensive experience in local government and health services, while Greg emphasized his desire to work closely with agencies to address challenges faced post-pandemic. They both expressed a commitment to supporting vulnerable communities through their technology.

The EVA Phone was introduced, highlighting its capabilities in answering calls and capturing data through interviews. The AI also assists with reading rights and responsibilities for applicants, significantly reducing the time workers spend on these tasks. This initiative aims to alleviate budget constraints and improve processing efficiency in the Department of Social Services.

An example of a customer reaching out and expressing a need for food assistance after losing their job was given. Eva, the AI assistant, informs the customer about the SNAP program and offers guidance on applying for it. She also provides details about local food pantries and resources available.

The meeting included an explanation of how Eva, the AI customer service assistant, enhances call handling by providing quick responses and multilingual support. It was noted that a high volume of calls can be managed by Eva, which minimizes dropped calls and long hold times. The discussion featured a demonstration of Eva's interaction with a caller needing assistance with an air conditioner, showcasing her ability to gather necessary information efficiently.

The process of monitoring calls for signs of distress and the ability to direct urgent cases to emergency services was explained. The discussion included the importance of confidentiality, with assurances that data is encrypted and stored securely in compliance with AWS standards. It was also mentioned that the system can handle a high volume of calls without wait times, and any system failures would revert to human operators.

The Companion, an AI tool that functions as an answer bot, was presented, emphasizing its ability to utilize Retrieval Augmented Generation to reduce inaccuracies. Users can input policy documents, training materials, and other relevant data, allowing the tool to effectively address a wide range of worker questions. This model is particularly beneficial in highly regulated environments where accurate information is crucial.

Traumatic Loss Team – Anna Platz & Carla Hellinger, Team Members

The Lewis County Traumatic Loss Team was presented on, highlighting its role in providing support after suicide and other traumatic losses. It was explained that the team was established in 2017 with funding from the New York State Office of Mental Health and has evolved to respond to community needs. The team aims to facilitate healing and prevent further loss by connecting individuals with necessary resources.

The team's volunteer structure was described, highlighting that members are available 24/7 to respond to community needs following traumatic events. It was elaborated on how the transition from formal debriefings to active on-scene responses has taken place, emphasizing the importance of reaching out to individuals in distress without waiting for them to ask for help.

The contents of two resource bags used by the team were detailed, highlighting the adult bag's focus on grief support and the new gizmo for children. The gizmo, which is being introduced in third-grade classes across Lewis County, serves as a comforting tool for children who have witnessed traumatic events. Additionally, follow-up visits have been conducted by the team to provide further support.

The team's focus on responding to sudden or traumatic losses, such as suicides and fatal accidents, was highlighted, while also serving various community groups like schools and first responders. The funding challenges faced by the team were elaborated upon, along with their creative solutions, which include providing materials for children and professional development for volunteers. Efforts are being made to ensure equitable access to support through dispatch collaboration.

The following draft resolutions were read:

1. Appointing Lyndsey Allen of Glenfield, New York as a member of the Alcohol & Substance Abuse Subcommittee to fulfill the unexpired term of Cassie Robbins Forbus effective October 8, 2025 through December 31, 2028.
AYE 5 NAY 0
2. Reappointing Ashley Waite of Brantingham, New York as a member of the Alcohol & Substance Abuse Subcommittee for a four-year term effective January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2029.
AYE 5 NAY 0

3. Reappointing Rebecca Kelly of Lowville, New York as a member of the Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee for a four-year term effective January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2029.
AYE 5 NAY 0
4. Appropriating additional State Aid funds in the amount of \$54,296.00 resulting from a modification in disbursement within the Community Services accounts and authorizing the Treasurer to make all necessary budgetary adjustments to account for the increased funding.
AYE 5 NAY 0
5. Amending the Compensation Plan with reference to the Public Health Department to abolish one (1) full-time Deputy Public Health Director and one (1) full-time Public Health Specialist and create one (1) full-time Supervising Public Health Nurse effective immediately.
AYE 5 NAY 0
6. Appointing Eric Baker of Lowville, NY as a member of the Mental Health Subcommittee to fulfill the unexpired term of Ashley Wilson, effective October 8, 2025 through December 31, 2028.
AYE 5 NAY 0

There being no other business to come before the committee, Legislator Moser moved to adjourn at 2:25 p.m., seconded by Legislator Kalamas, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board