

Tioga County Department of Human Services
Advisory Board
Jun 10, 2026
9:30 a.m.

Attendance: Samantha Brion, Roger Bunn, Jenny Farrer, Kristin Hamilton, Brett Kennedy, Nikki Luckovich, Trisha McIlwain, Melissa Parsons, Shelby Rush, Sue Sticklin, Trisha Tanner, Brett Weiskopff

Remote Attendance: Amy Coots, Terri Salata, Jonathan Shaeffer, Renee Smith

Call to Order: Kristin called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Secretary's Report: Melissa asked the Advisory Board to review the meeting minutes from the March and May meetings. No questions, comments or concerns. Trisha made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Sue seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: The balance for the Advisory Board account is \$6,643.91. Since the last meeting, we used money to pay for rent for a youth in care, however that money was reimbursed through children and youth. Brett made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, Sue seconded. Motion passed.

Business:

Brett Weiskopff, Jenny Farrer and Trisha Tanner presented to the Advisory Board regarding the Children and Youth department. A PowerPoint presentation is attached to these minutes. The department recently had our 2025/26 licensing audit. The audit was the best review the department has had in over ten years. We were commended for our documentation and intake/response times. Tioga County has had a 27% decrease in cases from 2025/26 since 2019/20. There have been 579 General Protective Services reports, 14 Child Protective Service reports, 138 Truancy reports and 34 Courtesy reports with 49 screen outs. There are 74 total children in Out-of-Home Care: 18 youth in foster care, 44 youth in kinship care, 10 youth in residential facilities, 2 youth are in independent living program, and 9 youth are in trial home. Trends that the department has had in the last year: infants born to parents with limitations or intellectual disabilities, increased drug and alcohol concerns in youth, home conditions to include bed bugs, cockroaches, and rats, teenage extreme behavioral problems with parents wanting them out of the home. Challenges that the department faces are complex caseloads, lack of resource homes for foster care, provider choice due to long waitlists, third generational poverty, and long-term staff that are invested to stay. Majority of staff that have left the agency say the reason for leaving is due to job stress and pay rates. 17% of total staff have exited the agency this year with an average length of tenure to be 2.6 years. The department has had success with staff support, working with the school districts, the mental health workgroup, and permanency. Foster Care has had 10 youth who have achieved permanency through adoptions. The foster care department hosts multiple events throughout the year that include the Sheriff's Trunk or Treat, Rotary Christmas Event, Easter Egg Hunt, Movie Day, and a Roller-Skating Party. Upcoming events include a Block Party, Mansfield Fourth of July Parade, a Back-to-School Party, and a Thanksgiving Dinner.

Shelby Rush gave an overview of Specialized Services: Youth Diversion Services, Adventure Challenge Experience(ACE), Independent Living Program, and Visitation. The Youth Diversion Services, formerly STAR uses an evidence-based curriculum mentoring program where staff meet with youth weekly. Each youth gets a service plan that has 1-2 behavioral goals. 60% of the referrals received from this program are from school districts and 30% are from the children and youth department. We have implemented an evidence-based drug and alcohol program called "Life Skills" that was purchased through the Single County Authority. This curriculum is a remediation for youth who have been caught with substances in schools, instead of getting fines, youth will do this intervention program. The ACE program accepts community referrals. This program offers tutoring support during the school year along with a summer program. This program has been running at full capacity with 27 youth. The Independent Living Program is currently serving 60 youth. We are coming out with a new plan to improve implementation for our Visitation program in July. All staff are trained in visitation coaching.

Terri Salata from the Administrative Entity Service Line at SAM, Inc. informed the Advisory Board that their service line performs administrative functions for the waiver programs that include program eligibility and intake, authorizations, plan development and implementation, oversight of supports coordination, incident and risk

management on behalf of Tioga County. We are engaged with the Office of Developmental Programs and their effort to help the adult waiting list and we were successful in getting four new waiver spots.

Nikki Luckovich, Director of Program Operations with SAM, Inc., informed the board that there are currently 75 individuals that are open for mental health case management services. The Base Service Unit receives on average 25 cases per month. Tioga County currently has 12 individuals in state hospitals: 11 civil and 1 forensic. A challenge with these individuals is that Tioga County does not have any specialized housing or support services.

There are new owners for the St. James complex in Mansfield, PA. In the month of May the Bridge Housing numbers were down to 56% occupancy, and the Residential Support Housing was down 59% occupancy. We are seeing a slower turnaround time due to the new landlords wanting to do maintenance on the apartments in between tenants. The Housing program has PHARE funding and BHARP contingency funds for Tioga County residents struggling with rent, utilities, and security deposits.

Samantha Brion informed the Advisory Board that the Drug and Alcohol department has had staffing changes to include the assistant administrator and a caseworker. For 2025/26 we have had 140 new admissions with 65 currently on-going. Of the new admissions, 14 of them were adolescents. Our individuals mostly consisted of males at 109 and 31 females. We currently have 14 individuals in treatment court. The number one primary drug of choice this past year has been methamphetamine and then alcohol.

Renee, Fiscal Director for the Human Services Agency had a difficult year due to the budget impasse. It was unknown if there were going to be any federal cuts and payments were delayed. The County Commissioners were able to support us until we received the funds, which we are grateful for because most counties didn't have that support. Due to the budget impasse, the Drug and Alcohol department only contracted with providers for 6 months due to budget impasse, then had to be renewed in January. The fiscal department staff focused on moving to a different location and cross training.

Brett made a motion to close the meeting, Trisha seconded. Meeting adjourned at 1:06 p.m.

Holly Lamonski
Secretary