



*Donovan Richards*  
*Queens Borough President*

# Community Board No. 2

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*Anatole Ashraf*  
*Chairperson*

*Debra Markell Kleinert*  
*District Manager*

**February 9, 2026**

## **Health & Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee** **Meeting Minutes**

***This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom***

### **Committee Member Attendees:**

Lauren Springer, Chair  
Amparo Abel-Bey, Vice Chair  
Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos

### **Committee Member Absentees:**

Nellie Afshar  
John Bahia  
Warren Davis  
Benjamin Lucas  
Alyssa Sawicki  
Phugelzen Sherpa  
Leticia Vasquez

### **Health and Human Services Public Member Attendees:**

Andrea Thomas

### **Health and Human Services Public Members Absentees:**

Olivia Jackson Lewis  
Robert Wohner  
Judy Zangwill

### **Community Board Member Attendees:**

Eric Narburgh

### **Community Board 2 Staff:**

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager

### **Guests:**

Jordyn Rosenthal, Director of Advocacy

*“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”*

Lauren Springer, Chair of the Health & Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee, welcomed everyone to the committee meeting.

### **Ideas to Increase Outreach in CB2**

There was a discussion about how to amplify presenters' voices beyond the newsletter and how the community board can increase outreach in CB2. The following points were shared:

- Building on what a presenter shared, the community board can do targeted outreach to specific community groups or organizations.
- Links to Committee meeting recordings have provided access to presenters' riveting lived experiences. Several of these stories offer insights more powerful than statistics.
- The community board's office signage could be more visible, making it easier for passersby to identify the office's location. This could lead to increased community engagement through constituent walk-ins.

### **B-Heard Pilot Program**

Although none of the scheduled presenters were able to attend the committee meeting, Jordyn Rosenthal provided a preview of her upcoming April 2026 Health and Human Services Committee meeting presentation. She spoke about the Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division (B-Heard) pilot program and shared the following:

- B-Heard is a non-police crisis response pilot program in New York City, but it does not operate in CB2's district.
- The pilot program is operated by several agencies. Administratively, it is overseen by the Office of Community Mental Health, while daily operations are carried out by agencies including FDNY, NYPD, and NYC Health + Hospitals. Mayor Adams signed a policy change that will see FDNY transition out of the program, with NYC Health + Hospitals assuming increased responsibility.
- In B-Heard, EMTs and social workers respond to nonviolent mental health calls. The program does not include peers, individuals who have a mental health diagnosis.
- Ms. Rosenthal is a social worker and was candid about her own mental health diagnosis. She said that it is important for providers with lived experience related to mental health, homelessness, or difficulties accessing systems to conduct outreach to individuals in need of these services.
- Ms. Rosenthal shared that an early career experience shaped her view on the importance of peers in these types of programs. She recalled working with an unsheltered woman who had recently been released from prison and did not want

to take a shower despite having access. The woman explained that by not showering, she believed she was less likely to be assaulted, as it served as a means of defense, stating, “I think the smellier I am, the less likely I’ll be assaulted as I sleep.”

- The pilot program currently operates from 9:00 AM to 1:00 AM and serves specific areas of New York City. Ms. Rosenthal would like B-Heard to expand to all neighborhoods in New York City, operate 24 hours a day, and include peers.
- She stated that she is considering requesting a community board resolution and would like Council Member Julie Won to advocate more for expanding B-Heard into CB2.

### **System Challenges**

Ms. Rosenthal spoke about shortcomings that have made it more challenging for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis or seeking assistance, and ways to address them. She shared the following:

- Ms. Rosenthal is the director of advocacy at a supportive housing non-profit. While the organization she works for provides supportive housing, it does not offer those services in Queens because ULURP and zoning changes make it difficult to provide them.
- Ms. Rosenthal stated that the presence of a police officer can exacerbate a nonviolent situation, such as when an individual picks up what may be perceived as a weapon. She added that a lot of individuals killed by police during mental health crises are on the spectrum or have developmental disabilities, which may affect their ability to communicate or understand instructions. She wants to know how the community can better respond to individuals with different communication needs.
- She expressed the need for respite centers throughout New York City.
- A bill was passed in the early 2020s to expand respite centers in each borough; however, no funding was attached to it.

Amparo Abel-Bey wished everyone a Happy Black History Month.

A motion to adjourn was made by Amparo Abel-Bey, and it was seconded by Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava