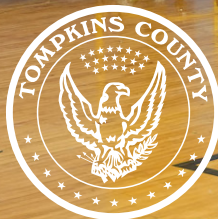


Portraits from Election Day in Tompkins County New York





These are portraits of Tompkins County residents who worked the November 5, 2024 General Election. This is a bi-partisan group of the more than 230 people who manage elections in Tompkins County.

Poll workers and Board of Elections staff were asked about the importance of their work on election day, what it means to them, and why people should consider becoming poll workers.

Published November, 2024

Photos by Robert Henry | Design by Dominick Recchio

“It’s the cornerstone of democracy. This allows each of us to have equal say in who our leaders will be, and that’s a pretty great thing. Its fundamental to a functioning democracy.”

Elizabeth Livesay
Board of Elections



“I do what I can every year to get students involved in elections. We have had a lot of success inviting students to work the polls. Getting young people to understand what we do, the importance of elections, how we keep elections secure, that’s all important.

We make sure everybody has an opportunity to vote. In our office it’s never ‘them against us,’ our Board of Elections is a great example of working across differences to get important work done together.”

Diane Orlovski
Board of Elections

“We make sure the ballots are ready, machines are ready, techs are on call, everything is ready to go. Essentially we prepare everything to make election day happen.

We are responsible for election security. We use chain of custody forms now for everything that leaves the building. We have a secure room that has bipartisan locks on it, so anything that’s in there has to be opened with the team, we always have one from each party.

The work of our staff is unbelievable. Our staff coordinate poll site workers, make sure everything is done on time, work with voters who have questions, support people holding voter registration drives leading up to the election, coordinate with the state Board of Elections, and give required reports at certain times. We have great people doing incredibly important work, and they do it with integrity.

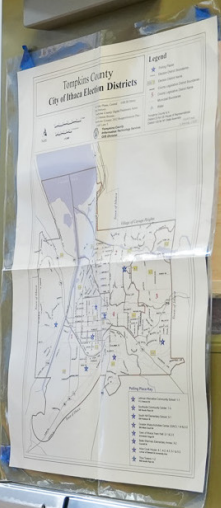
This is my first presidential election as commissioner. I’m so impressed with how much work gets done, and how well it all comes together.”

Alanna Congdon
Republican Commissioner
Board of Elections



TOMPKINS COUNTY
BOARD OF ELECTIONS
**POLLING
PLACE**

PLEASE
NO
POLITICAL
DISCUSSIONS
OR
LOITERING



“When I was 13, I was a boy scout in Albany... it was 1968 and our job was to get the results from this precinct in Albany NY and call it in collect to the news elections service, which then shared all these tabulated results with ABC, NBC and CBS. And that’s why... it always interested me. And then when 18 year old me could vote, I voted in every election. That was a long time ago.”

Dwight Mengel

“We started in 2008 was the first year we did it. Something for my wife and I to do in retirement. We see our neighborhood frineds, camaraderie, things like that...”

“I’m just here to do my part to ensure free and secure elections. Get out and vote, get pollworking and get involved, because we have a country to save.”

John Apossos



“...we’re always looking for more inspectors, I think we had one person sign up today. Its harder to get up at 4 in the morning as you get older for a 16 hour day, but I highly recommend it, its very satisfying.”

Gary Thomas

“I do it as a service to the community and it’s something I enjoy doing. And it’s my way of giving back.”

Wanda Clements



“I like it because I feel like I should be involved in politics but I don’t necessarily want to be involved in partisan politics, so I’ve chosen to just get involved in keeping the wheels of democracy moving.”

Andy Horbal





“It’s civics, it’s just basic civics. It’s a great thing to do in retirement, and it helps the community.”

“I think if you like the community, if you feel that you like to be empowered doing things in the community, you should do it.”

Michel Louge



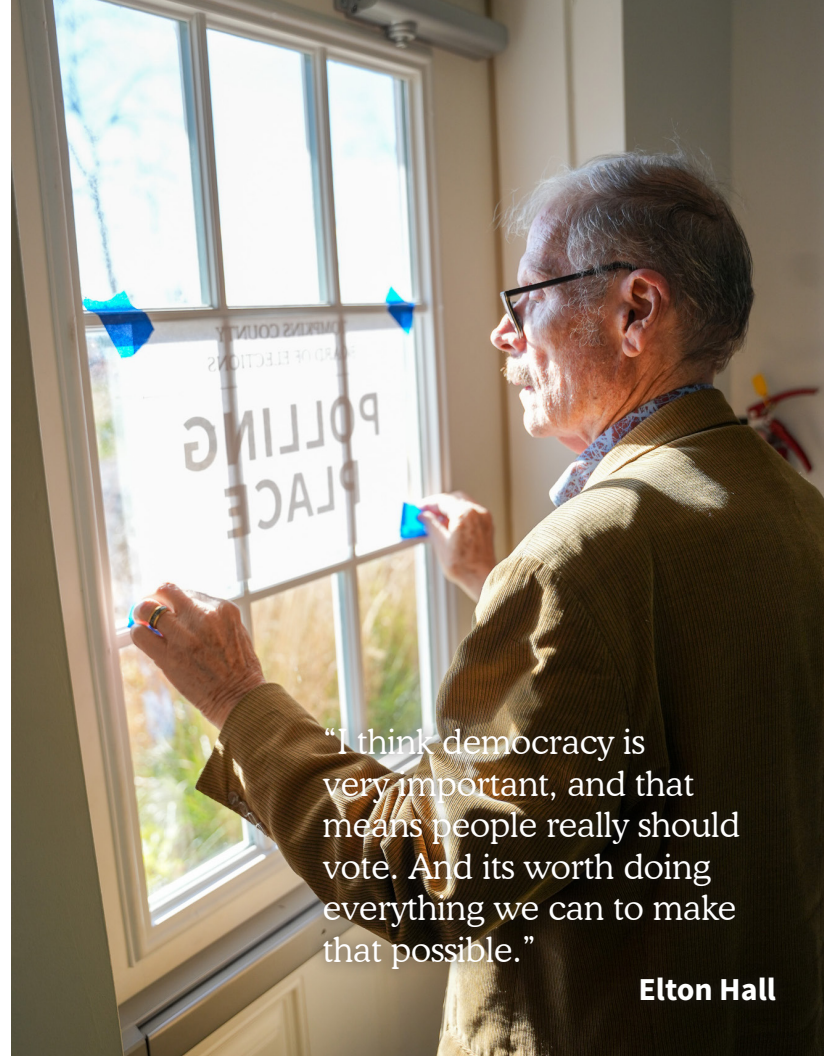
“I signed up to be a poll site worker, then became a manager after... I’ve been doing it for four years. I really enjoy it because it gets me involved with the community, and I love seeing people vote.”

Ed Gilbert



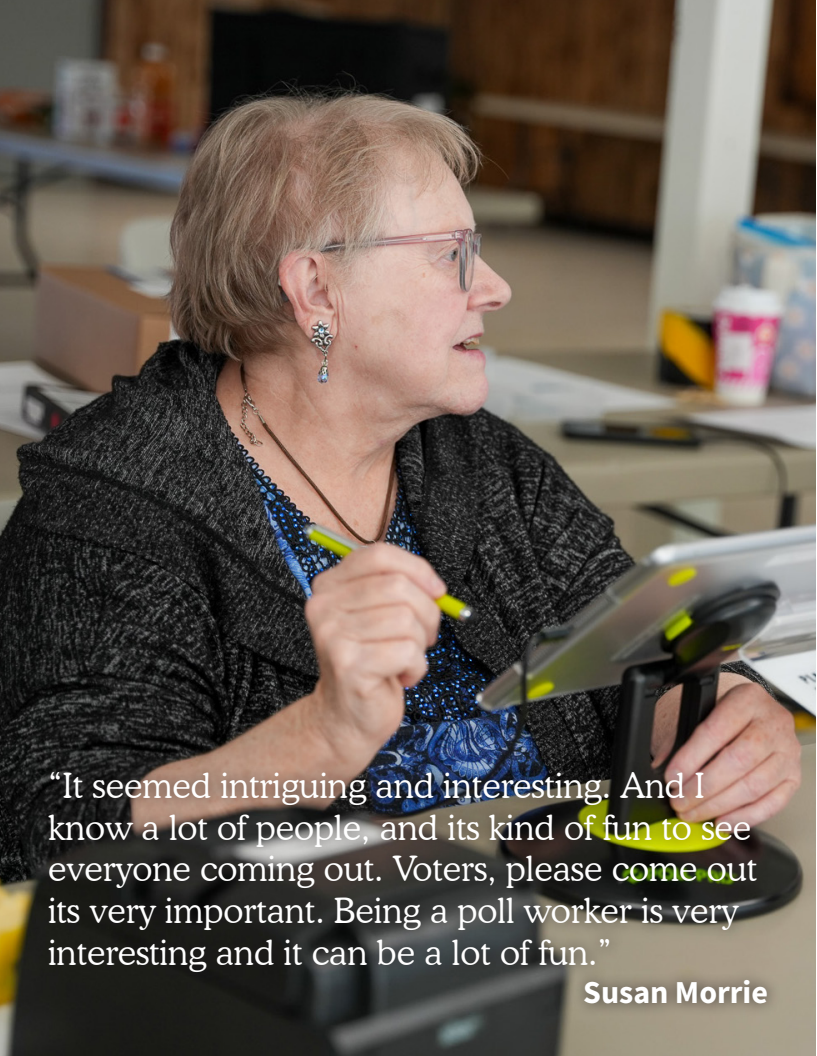
“Well I was curious about how it worked and volunteered. And I’ve been doing it ever since. Four years.”

Brian Wendel



“I think democracy is very important, and that means people really should vote. And its worth doing everything we can to make that possible.”

Elton Hall



“It seemed intriguing and interesting. And I know a lot of people, and its kind of fun to see everyone coming out. Voters, please come out its very important. Being a poll worker is very interesting and it can be a lot of fun.”

Susan Morrie



“Its such an important thing, voting. And everybody should make a choice. I’m retired, so it helps fill the time.”

Jean Simmons




“I like the camaraderie of being around all the people here. Its fun, it’s a fun group. I also like doing the service of helping through the elections, but I do really like the people here.”

Terry McIver

“Its something to do. Actually, when I went to change my address, I asked “what do you have to do?’ and they said “sign this form”, I said okay, they said ‘we’ll call you when we’re doing our class” and I’ve been doing it ever since. When my husband died two years ago, he died on a Monday and on a Tuesday was a primary, two months later, I called and I let them know my son passed away. They called and asked what I’d be doing, and I said “What am I going to do, sit at home? Cry?” I said no, its something to do. It keeps me busy.”

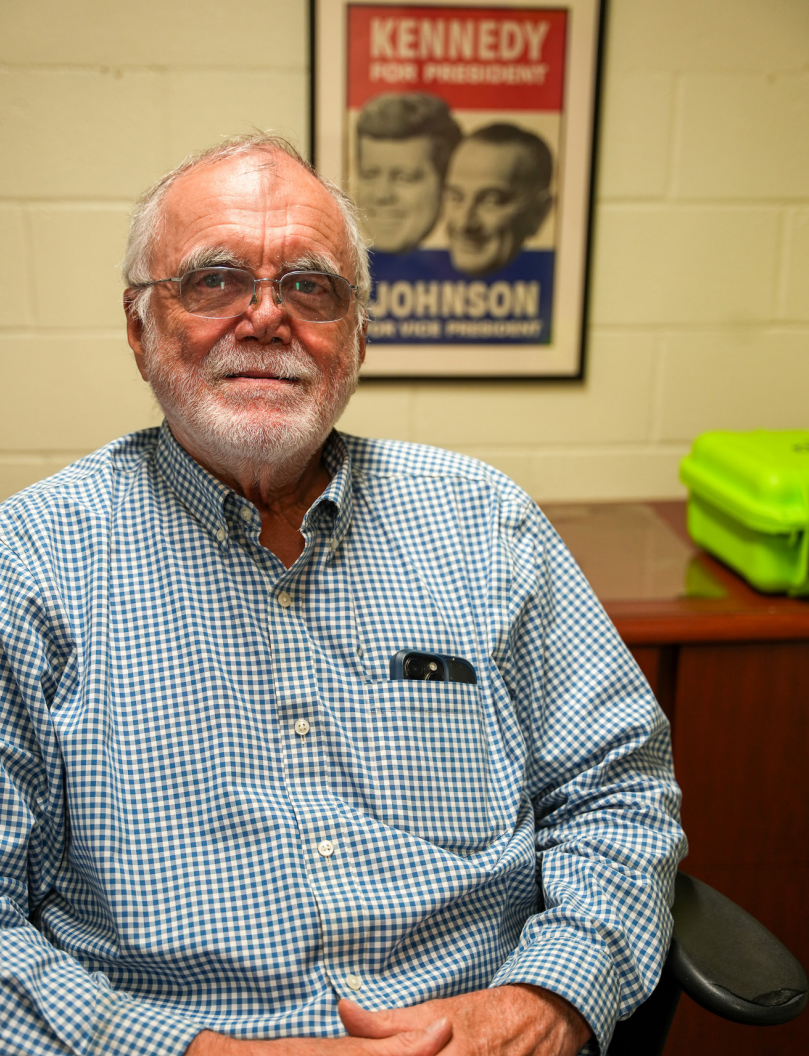
Frances Sincerbeaux





“For me, the work that I do is upholding the election integrity. I can’t imagine a more sacred thing to do, especially on election day of a presidential election, right? But my whole job here is making sure that rules are preserved, laws are maintained, and order is as orderly as it can be.”

Anita Williams



“There’s a lot of work that goes into setting up an election and managing election day.

As far as polling places, we work real hard to make them safe, and train our poll workers that if they do have a situation, like today where we have a car ran into a polling place. Fortunately, they were all prepared, they knew what they needed to do, we trained them on that, the county responded quickly, so that’s important. But we have to make sure, you know, there’s a chain of custody for all the ballots and ballot bags that come to our office at night, making sure they’re secure. We have a chain of custody for the machines when they get shipped to polling places.

Everything’s done in a bipartisan manner. Democrats and Republicans working together to get the job done. When we are going through the process of tabulating the votes, democrats and republicans are working together. The whole process is pretty open and transparent, and that’s what we strive for. That only adds to the feelings of the public where, if they can see what’s going on when they go to the polling places, everything’s transparent, it doesn’t look like someone’s standing behind the curtain. I think they feel a lot better about the process.”

Stephen DeWitt
Democratic Commissioner
Board of Elections

Consider Becoming a Poll Worker in Tompkins County

In Tompkins County more than 300 people are needed to work as election inspectors and operate the polls on Election Day. You must be 17 or older, a registered voter in Tompkins County (or pre-registered if under 18), represent either the Republican or Democratic Party, and enjoy people and service to others.

You're needed just a few days a year, and you're trained by knowledgeable staff on the tasks you complete on election days.

Poll workers are paid for your time.

Contact the Board of Elections if you are interested:

TOMPKINS COUNTY
BOARD OF ELECTIONS
128 East Buffalo Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 274-5522

<https://tcgov.co/contactboe>
Or scan the QR Code



Board of Elections