

Meeting - Dec. 6, 2023

Location: Nashua Public Library

Attendees: John Rowntree (President), Rabbi Jon Spira-Savett (past President), Allison Palm (board member), [Mike Apfelberg](#), Meta Vornehm (Treasurer), Kathy Boss (board member), Tom Woodward, Marina Vaz, Bobbe Knickerbocker, Kristy Besada, [Kelly Turney](#), Katy Cowen, Jane Goodman (Executive Director NSKS - speaker)

Joining on zoom: Jim Jensen, Karl Hester, Karla Tolomeo, Tonia Knisley, Nonny Egbuonu, Nancy Meyer, Blake Tyler, Leah Parsell Rumsey, Tanya Stormo Rasmussen

Topic: Homelessness in Nashua (part 1)

Conversation in small groups: What are the experiences of your congregation of homelessness in our community. AND How are we adding to the problem by our biases and actions.

Presentation: Homelessness in the Nashua Area: What's being done and how can faith communities help. A conversation with Jane Goodman the Executive Director of the Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter.

Jane is fairly new to the position. She worked at the City Dept. of Public Health working with strategic partners.

NSKS has a number of community partners. We can't handle the need alone.

Brief history: Started in the 80's as a mom & pop shop serving soup and sandwiches two days a week at facility on Chestnut St. Eight years ago under the leadership of Lisa Christie we moved into the pantry at 2 Quincy Street.

This was a big change. People did not have to wait outside. We became like a Corner Grocery Store. With our recent capital campaign we added needed infrastructure.

In 2023 - new facility at 35 Spring St. has emergency shelter housing for 18 single men, 14 single women and 12 families. More shelter beds are added for cold weather periods. The 4th floor has Section 8 apartments with NSKS as the landlord. This was delayed because PUC requires separate electric meters and there was a long wait to get them. Currently have 11 people in transitional housing for up to a year.

Currently working on developing a 5-year strategic plan, and a sustainability plan.

Serve hot meals, In 2022 – 66,667 meals served, Breakfast M-F, Dinner every day. Have a Food Pantry, families can get a box once a month and can come twice a week for fresh fruits and vegetables.

NSKS also has an in-house clinic at Lamprey Health Care.

The staff has expanded to include a director of client services, an employment specialist, a program manager (for educational offerings), outreach case manager (who sits at Quincy St). Case management includes mental health support through referrals to partner organizations.

Family Advocacy includes parenting classes, clothing vouchers, limited household items, and transitional housing assistance. Employment and Education assistance includes work attire, transportation vouchers, resume and interview skills. Financial assistance includes help preventing eviction, utility shut-off, and obtaining ID's, birth certificates and licenses.

Q - Rabbi Jon - how do your programs compare to the other traditional programs?

A - We are an emergency shelter, our goal is to get someone in and out as fast as possible. The other programs house people for much longer. But over time we are becoming more full service. Most of our guests have jobs. They need to save money, may not have cars, gas money.

What has changed? In the last year with Spring St. we have doubled our capacity. We are now 'landlords' for transition housing. We are open 24 hours/7 days a week. Staffing costs have increased with expanded services and now opening a winter overflow shelter from Dec. to April. Because of the cold people are allowed to stay in the building during the day.

Q - Kristy asked about the time they are open for intake. Can we direct someone to just show up?

A - Yes, for the overflow shelter, we ask that folks check-in between 6 & 8 at Quincy St. We check them in, verify they are in HMIS, they can take a shower and do laundry. They folks walk to Quincy St. together. After 8 you can ring the shelter doorbell. If we have a bed we accommodate people. We had 19 people last night. Capacity is 28. I am worried about the volume.

Q - Do you screen to see if someone is a registered sex offender.

A - Good question. We do not screen deeply. I will have to ask. That might be in HMIS.

With the new facility 'bed nights' of shelter have doubled from 1007 in Dec. 2022 to 2022 in June 2023. We have filled the new shelter and have no vacancies.

Children's Programs include gifts for children, backpacks and school supplies, and meals for kids (distributed through the schools).

What can we do to help?

Volunteer

Contribute food

Contribute money - the budget is growing with expanded programs and staff

Open our doors during cold weather

The faith communities really support us. We know that you have challenges with people sleeping on your property.

NAIC business:

Big thanks to Jon and Allison for the Thanksgiving service

NAIC & GSOP need volunteers to assist with the resident association election on Major Dr. Saturday between 10:30 and 5.

Treasurer's Report

Collection at Thanksgiving service is \$444.50. Will be donated to Family Promise of So. NH.

Account balances: Main - \$ 2745.13

Cropwalk - \$ 2686.20

Choir - \$ 884.27

Upcoming meetings:

Jan - First Church - Intersection of mental health, addiction and homelessness

Feb - Rivier

United Way is planning to develop technology assets to address digital equity. Looking for working laptops and tablets that can be repurposed.