

Rotary Club of Mendocino

Minutes of Emergency Meeting of September 18, 2025

Quick Recap

The meeting began with a recognition that in the light of our President's resignation from office, we are in a state of emergency and need to work out a way to sustain our club and its services. In a word: discuss our weaknesses and strengths, move on to what we could do to make the club stronger and nominate a new President. Each member of the group was asked to describe what he/she saw as our strengths and weaknesses. The group identified strengths like a dedicated and hard working membership but noted challenges with member engagement, leadership succession, and communication effectiveness. The conversation ended with planning for upcoming events, fundraising initiatives, and improvements to the club's digital presence and organizational processes. LaDonna McDonald volunteered to become President for the rest of 2025/26. The group decided that an election could be held at the next meeting. Persons present: Matt Davis, Matt O'Halloran, Leona, LaDonna, Rick, John Cottle, Toby, Margaret, Jeff (9 members plus a quorum of 5).

Opening Discussion

The meeting opened with a discussion of our strengths and weaknesses, summarized as follows:

- Our strength is that we have a group of persons who like each other and work well together, good projects and good relationships with others in the areas of community service, international service and youth. However, a few of our members are doing most of the work and we need to bring more of our new members into the work flow. We need to recruit and bring up to speed more than a few additional members .
- We need to look for members who can get things done, avoid leader burnout, be realistic, reach out into our community.
- We need to elect not only a President but also a President-elect, some clubs meet less frequently than ours (Gualala, which only meets once a month) and some more frequently (Fort Bragg, which meets each Thursday). There were many opportunities for fundraisers (a Chili and ribs dinner?).

- All members should be on one or more committees which need to be more proactive (could there be a Rotary hour on KZYX?)
- Over the years our club has grown and shrunken several times. There was a time when we only had 7 or 8 active members. A year later we had almost 30. We should focus on rebuilding and especially new membership.
- We need to be sure our meetings are fun. There may be some controversy, because our members are individually strong, but together we can build the club. LaDonna volunteered to be President for the rest of the year, if approved by the membership.
- There were many opportunities for us to work together as a club, and several opportunities for fundraising.
- We need to commit to deliver the services for which the club is responsible: Community, international, youth, the park.
- We in present day Mendocino are not a meeting culture. We need to reach out to and involve others, more in the line of actions rather than meetings.

Future Activities, Events and Other Actions

Following the above, we moved on to identify and discuss specific things we could do to develop club activities, membership and mechanics:

Future Activities:

- We discussed an update of our brochure, last produced a few years ago. Margaret will lead, working with Leona.

Upcoming Events:

- Friends of Rotary Meeting in the Park: October 23: all pitch in to help Margaret with this.
- Winter Tree Lighting in December: ask merchants to purchase, sponsor and decorate trees in the park.
- New fund raisers: Big River duck paddle, winter tree lighting, bingo night, merchant coupon book, spring walk/run festival in the park, Soldiers Song event in the theater.

- Possible speakers: Dr. Miller, health in the County; Ted Williams, Board of Supervisors; Chris Rogers, State Assembly, Sue McKinney, Women's suffrage and health.

Other Needs:

- Decide upon badly needed additional fundraising events.
- Consider implementing a "Gentle Touch" program for food bank donations.
- Explore showing "Soldiers of Song" and "Shift" films as potential fundraisers.
- Consider reaching out to Lions Club and Kiwanis for potential joint service projects.
- Improve our website and social media presence.

Mechanics:

- Develop a year-long calendar of club and related events.
- Ensure we review our e-mails.
- Margaret to firm up our thoughts on the October 23 Friends of the Park meeting.

More Detail

Club Strengths and Improvement Strategies

The club discussed its strengths, including a strong core of dedicated members, history, and community projects, while identifying weaknesses such as member fatigue, lack of clear succession planning, and ineffective communication. They explored ideas to improve membership, including combining with other service clubs, hosting joint events, and implementing programs like "3x3" to bring in new members. The group also considered using movies from Pro Cinema to raise awareness and funds, and discussed the need for a new president and president-elect to stabilize leadership.

Club Leadership and Growth

LaDonna discussed the challenges and future of the Rotary Club, emphasizing the need for new members, community engagement, and innovative fundraising ideas. She volunteered to take on the presidency for the remainder of the year and suggested formalizing this decision at the next general meeting. She also highlighted the importance of making meetings and activities enjoyable and suggested reaching out to inactive members for support. The group discussed

past successful events and the potential for collaboration with other local organizations to boost membership and fundraising efforts.

Youth-Focused Fundraising Event Ideas

The group discussed ideas for fundraising events, with Jeff proposing an 8-hour walk-run marathon centered on the park combined with community activities, where teams would run/walk 15-20 minutes at a time and raise money through sponsorships. In the park there would be music, games, food and drink for sale. Margaret emphasized that future events should be easy to participate in, directly connected to the mission, and appeal to younger generations, suggesting that movie nights and youth-focused activities could be more effective than traditional membership-based events. She also noted that the current \$260 membership fee and meeting-centric culture pose challenges for attracting new members, particularly in Mendocino's non-institutional environment.

Email and Website Overhaul

The meeting focused on email and website management issues for the Mendocino Rotary Club. Jeffry explained that their email address was hacked in May, leading to miscommunication. A new password was now in use. In addition a new email address had been established by Trevor but some of us did not have Google. The group discussed the need for better organization of our online presence, including social media and website management. They agreed that a dedicated person should be responsible for these tasks, potentially someone from outside the current club membership, and explored the use of Rotary-provided templates and tools like DACDB for website development.

Rotary Park Event Planning Meeting

The meeting focused on planning upcoming events and improving organizational processes. Margaret discussed scheduling a Friends of Rotary Park ceremony for Wednesday October 23rd and proposed several speaker ideas for future meetings, including Dr. Miller, Ted Williams, and Chris Rogers. The group explored potential fundraising ideas such as a tree lighting event, a duck derby, and selling coupon books, with a suggestion to involve youth groups in sales. They also addressed the need to improve their website and social media presence, and considered reducing the frequency of board meetings to four times a year.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday Sept 25. The agenda will include the election of a new President followed by a general discussion with space for all to speak about issues such as those above. All members please come with their suggestions as to what could be done to sustain and develop our club during the rest of this year.

Prepared by

Jeffry Stubbs, Executive Secretary
Monday Sept 23, 2025