

# Summary of Rotary Club Budget & Fundraising Strategies

*Created on February 5, 2026 at 12:13 PM by Notee: AI Note Taker — <https://notee.onelink.me/E2m8/04kb04rp>*

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## Rotary Board Meeting 2/5/26 Preston Hall, Mendocino, CA 12:00pm

### Budget & Fundraising Strategies

Attending: LaDonna McDonald, President; Toby Wade, Assistant Governor; John Cottle, DO, Programs Chair; Jeff Stubbs, Executive Secretary; Pete Rose; Gary Hopper, President Elect; Donna Schuler, Youth Coordinator, Leona Walden, Recording Secretary

### 1. Administrative Account Deficit & Budget Review

- The admin account is facing a budgeted loss of over \$5,000; revenue sources and spending were analyzed in detail.
- Income from July 4th event was less than expected; it was intended to support the admin account, not as a fundraiser.
- Comparison made to Fort Bragg Rotary's revenue model: \$35 per meeting, meals included, with higher attendance.
- Proposed changes: Increase meeting fee from \$5 to \$10, potentially doubling revenue; add more creative fundraising at events (e.g., silent auctions, barbecues).
- Decision: Meeting fee raised to \$10, members bring their own lunch to save costs.

- Action Plan: Explore moving meetings to a restaurant (Hill House) to reduce rental costs and improve meeting appeal.

## 2. Membership & Meeting Venue

- Membership numbers are low; attracting new members is a priority.
- Discussion of past successful venues (Hill House, Mendo Cafe) and their pros/cons.
- Hill House likely to re-open soon, offering a potential no-rent meeting space if members buy lunch.
- Decision: Pursue discussions with Hill House and consider restaurant locations to improve member experience and recruitment.
- Action Plan: Attend Hill House open house, continue venue exploration, and report back.

## 3. Fundraising Events & Revenue Strategies

- Past fundraisers (Oktoberfest, murder mystery dinner, waiter's race) were budgeted but didn't occur, resulting in a revenue shortfall.
- Golf tournament and dinner raffle are the most reliable events; July 4th profits were lower due to high expenses and overestimated sales.
- New fundraising ideas discussed:
  - Bingo Bash in a barn (requires significant raffle prizes and planning)
  - Dine Out partnerships with local restaurants for admin revenue
  - Dance party with DJ/band
  - Decision: Move forward with Dine Out event (Leona to organize); begin planning for Bingo Bash in October; focus on a few large events rather than many small ones.
  - Action Plan: Organize Dine Out event soon, start prize solicitation early for Bingo Bash, prioritize events for member capacity

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## 4. Expense Controls & Budget Adjustments

- High admin expenses flagged: marketing (\$2,500) and supplies.
- Decision: Freeze admin expenses, reduce marketing budget (allowing \$500 for a new membership brochure), and review supply needs.
- Action Plan: Print membership brochures, shift funds where possible, monitor ongoing expenses closely.

## 5. Activities Account & Club Reserves

- Club reserves have dropped from \$43,255 (Nov 2024) to \$21,637 (Jan 2026), due to over-budgeting and unfulfilled fundraisers.
- Emphasis on budgeting only for confirmed income, not speculative events.
- Suggestion: Prioritize allocation of funds to essential activities; avoid spending/budgeting money not yet secured.
- Decision: Rebuild reserves by focusing on successful fundraisers and cutting non-essential expenses.
- Action Plan: Continue proven events (golf, dinner raffle), plan Bingo Bash, and reassess Oktoberfest viability.

## 6. Membership Dues & Payment Status

- Most members have paid dues, with only two outstanding (expected to pay soon).
- Dues are not the main deficit cause; focus remains on admin revenue and event fundraising.
- Prepay meeting options discussed as potential incentive.

## 7. Community Projects & Volunteer Coordination

- Picket painting project for the community center discussed; volunteers needed to prime and paint pickets by end of month.
- Action Plan: Recruit five Rotarians to help with project; coordinate delivery and deadlines.

## **8. Club History, Retention, and Rebuilding**

- Club split in past over park project and loan forgiveness; many older members left due to internal conflict and changing club culture.
- Current focus: Rebuild enthusiasm, foster fun and community, and attract new/returning members.

### **Key Questions Raised**

- How to attract and retain new members with improved venues and meeting formats?
- What is the most effective mix of fundraising events given current capacity?
- How to ensure budget discipline and avoid speculative income projections?

### **Decisions Made**

- Raise meeting fee to \$10, with members bringing their own lunch.
- Freeze and reduce admin expenses, especially marketing.
- Move ahead with Dine Out event and plan Bingo Bash for October.
- Begin planning for venue change (potentially Hill House).

### **Action Items**

- Contact Hill House and attend open house for venue evaluation.
- Organize Dine Out fundraising event (Leona to lead).
- Begin prize solicitation and detailed planning for Bingo Bash.

- Recruit Rotarians for community picket painting project.
- Print new membership brochures.
- Monitor and control expenses, especially in marketing and supplies.