Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting
Del Norte Healthcare District
May 26, 2026 @ 5:30 p.m.

Regular Meeting

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. **ROLL CALL :**
Present: Directors Sperling, Pearcey, Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich and Chair Caldwell.
Present but late: Director Mason

Chair Caldwell introduced Monica Sperling who is taking the place of Mike Young who passed away March 21, 2026. He also announced that Mike's memorial service will be Saturday the 30th of May at 12:00 p.m. at the Four Square Church.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None at this time

4. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**

   a. Ratification of invoices paid from 4/23/2026 – 5/20/2026.
   b. Approval of financial report for April 2026.

   Vice-Chair Babich made a motion to approve the consent calendar. Director Pearcey seconded the motion.
   Motion passed 4 – 0.

5. **REVIEW/POSSIBLE REVISION AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 27, 2026, MEETING.**

   Director Sperling made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Director Pearcey seconded the motion.
   Motion passed 4 – 0.

6. **COMMUNICATIONS:**

   a. Open Door: Shauna Burdick informed the board that the shower program has moved to the new location (Cornerstone Church).

Chair Caldwell stated that he noticed that Anna Dominques was not present.

Shauna Burdick: Correct, there has been a leadership change, and I will be the interim site director and there will be a posting soon for the position. Things seem to be going well. We do have some provider openings at this time.

b. Sutter Coast Hospital: Mike Lane, June 9th at 1:00 p.m. will be the opening and ribbon cutting for the empath unit and sometime in July we will have a new Pulmonologist starting.

7. **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

A. **BUDGET/FINANCE COMMITTEE:** (Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich & Chair Caldwell)

1. Discussion/possible action on the 2026 – 2027 preliminary budget.

   Discussed through out the meeting.

2. Discussion/possible action on the request from Gateway Education for $55,370 for continued support in the 2026 – 2027 budget year. (Ron Cole to present).

   Ron Cole gave an update on the Gateway Education program. Ron also requested that the remainder of the funds that were allocated for the 2025-2026 budget year (approximately $20,000) be used to purchase a truck for the purpose of transporting equipment and camp supplies.

   Dave Mason had a question for legal counsel regarding the left over funds being used to purchase a vehicle.

   Dohn Henion: depends on what the vehicle is being used for. Perhaps you can have a discussion about that.

   Ron Cole: It would actually save money in the long run. It will be to transport equipment and supplies to the camps and the cider press operation.

   Dave Mason: It we can make this work financially I have no opposition to support the program with a vehicle or to off-set vehicle cost.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich made a motion to approve the request of $55,370 and pending legal research on the $20,000 carry over for a vehicle. Director Mason seconded the motion pending legal counsel follow up.
Motion passed 5 – 0.

3. Discussion/possible approval of the request by Eric Wier of $91,500 for the continued support of the Fred Endert Municipal Pool programs.

Director Mason would like to have information in the future on how many graduates have been able to pass the deep end test.

Vice Chair Babich made a motion to approve the request of $91,500 for the swim programs. Director Sperling seconded the motion.
Motion passed 5 – 0.

4. Discussion/possible approval of the presentation by Eric Wier for the Beach Front Park improvements that exist for $400.000.00 with an additional $100,000.00 request.

Eric Wier: Front street will be closing in the second week of June for further construction. Kid Town will include improvements for all children, including wheelchairs. The Healthcare District has committed $300,000 towards the resurfacing. The cost for the resurfacing will cost more than we thought. This is in the coastal zone, and they require a solid rubber surface. The Healthcare district has funded an exercise station and has funds available for a couple of more. We would like to discuss with the board tonight is to take some of those available funds which are $100,000 remaining and put that towards making all of Kid Town accessible. That would give us a total of $400,000 towards surfacing. Our estimate is about $575,000. We are asking for an additional $100,000. We would like to make this a fully accessible park.

Chair Caldwell: Now that we have been funding these things for a few years, it has been our method that we don't fund it all. Like the money we funded last year has not been used yet. We were spacing it out, so this year doing a new $100,000 seems like a reasonable thing to do.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: Unless you're the Treasurer.

Director Pearcey: So, where in the contributions is the money that has already been earmarked?

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: It's on the second page at the bottom of the preliminary budget. Under the LAIF reserve committed items. So, Mike told me that he recommended that we always maintain at least a million dollars in our reserves and we have overspent on that. So, it is up to the board whether we want to take that into consideration.

Eric Wier: We have $400,000 and need about $575,000 and we understand that is a really big ask of the district. Can we do another $100,000 and then that will get us the majority of the way there. If not, we can look at leaving a portion that is not accessible. The is a swing set towards Play street, on the south side of the playground. That would be the logical area that we would try to carve out and only do about 75% of Kid Town. The money is not quite there but the timing is there. The projects are not going to get cheaper, so the timing is now. I realize this is a tough decision for the board.

Chair Caldwell: Things that are already under contributions like the $350,000 for recruitment and retention that haven't been voted on.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: That is in the budget currently, it is not part of the reserve. That is not counted against this reserve.

Chair Caldwell: But you can't take a $100,000 out of that?

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: Nope, I can't.

Chair Caldwell: You can't or won't?

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: It's up to the board.

Chair Caldwell: Well, If this $350,000 never gets approved.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: Maybe we should jump ahead to that and see if it gets approved, if you want.

Chair Caldwell: So for beachfront we don't have to, were just waiting to approve the extra $100,000, so the other money is already done.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: They have $400,000 coming out of our reserve for there project. $400,000.

Chair Caldwell: That is what we put in a year ago. So let's put that on the back burner. Because I think the final budget item is 7c2a. So maybe Shellie or Tonya can give a quick update as to what this Million Dollar Mission is and what this is all about.

Resuming discussion:

Chair Caldwell: So, If we go back to beachfront park is there anyway, we can fund that additional $100,000?

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: Yes, there is, but we would not be going by Mike's recommendation. I'm not a real accountant so I think it is up to the board now.

Director Monica Sperling: I have never worked with Mike, but it seems like he was respected for his financial expertise. I would like to follow it and not get over our heads.

B. COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE: (Director Pearcey & Vice Chair Babich
Nothing to report at this time.

C. HEALTHCARE EXPANSION:

1. Community Food Council: (Chair Caldwell & Vice Chair Babich)

   a. Discussion/possible action on the request to install fence and electric vehicle charging station.

   b. Discussion/possible action on the request to install a backup generator.

   c. Discussion/possible action to install a radio antenna.

   Director Mason made a motion to approve items 7C1 a, b & c.
   Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich seconded the motion.
   Motion passed 5 – 0

   The DNTAL (Drea) has two requests: The first one is KFUG moving into the building is requesting that there office rent be donated.

They would like to get free rent in exchange for putting in the generator and providing free advertising for the Del Norte Healthcare District and the Food Hub Council. The total donation would be $7560.00 for one year.

Director Mason made a motion to approve this included in the lease. Director Pearcey seconded the motion.
Motion passed 5 – 0.

DNTAL is requesting $10,000 for nutrition incentives for the Farmers Market and Harvest Box.

This item was already included in the upcoming budget.

2. Recruitment and Retention: (Director Pearcey & Chair Caldwell)

a. Follow up discussion/possible action from the Million Dollar Mission's request of $350,000.00 be considered in the 2026 – 2027 budget and the request for the MOU from the April 2026 meeting.

Director Tonya Pearcey: The Million Dollar Mission is a large group of community members that are coming together and have put together this mission and if approved would allocate $350,000 for physician recruitment and retention from the Del Norte Healthcare District, $350,000 from the Humboldt Area Foundation and $350,000 from Sutter Coast Hospital. What the group is asking is approval for the $350,000 commitment to fund physician recruitment and retention incentives from Del Norte Healthcare District and also authorization for the Healthcare District to apply for the Humboldt Area Foundation monies of $350,000 to support that same mission. Those monies that have been set aside for retention. The third ask was an agreement with the Healthcare District to be the central coordinating entity for the program administration.(An updated overview was handed out.)

Ellie Popadic from Sutter Coast Hospital: The MOU draft was sent this afternoon. It was between Sutter Coast and the Healthcare District, not with the Humboldt Area Foundation. The Healthcare District will be applying for those funds.

Director Sperling: After service on the committee and working together with everyone and just becoming a new member of this board I did feel it met the mission statement of the Healthcare District. I know there are qualms and questions that I feel can be worked out. We can talk to our attorney, but I felt that the work that has been done after all these years could be useful and fruitful because of that money, particularly the HAF money that has been sitting for 20 years not being used.

Direct Tonya Pearcey: So Dohn (Special Counsel Henion) one of the questions that has come up is whether or not the Healthcare District could write a check to a physician in agreement with this program. Is there any problem with writing checks to individual people?

Special Counsel Dohn Henion: I don't know of any prohibition on that.

Ellie Popadic: I would actually add, and Dohn please correct me if I'm wrong but health and safety code 32121.3 A4 actually authorizes specifically healthcare and hospital districts to provide funding incentives to physicians to serve the community.

Chair Caldwell: I think my biggest concerns are that your asking the Healthcare District to manage a program and we have never managed a program. What we have done is like this. We have worked with the city, the city manages the program, and we fund the program or with the transportation people or with Gateway Education or with the Food Hub. They're running a program and they're asking us for money to assist in the program. Where this is asking to actually run the program and have the responsibility for all the things that are in that program. To keep track of it, not just the money but the compliance with all the rules of the program.

My point is we have never done that before; it's a really big job and before we approve it, we should spend a lot more time working out exactly how that's going to get done. The same with we have never taken $350,000 and taken out of the account where we personally write the check to an individual and are responsible for that individual properly using the money. There is a whole side problem here which is where the person can take the $50,000 and go and there is no way to get it back.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: Dohn was going to look into that.

Chair Caldwell: But we are not set up to run a big program like this, and we need to have much more discussion and figuring out how that would work.

Director Sperling: I don't think at this point that that was the intention. I'm not sure about the wording and you can jump in but, what the Healthcare District saw in our committee was that the Healthcare District was going to write the check and keep track of the financial dealings. The committee, Sutter, Open Door or United Indian Health would get the ground work take care of who gets the money and who they pick, then tell you and you would be the bank, you would write the check. That was it, basically, just to keep track of the money and I would be glad to help with that part of it. If you have a better explanation of that.

Ellie Popadic: No, I think I hear Dr. Caldwell. From my perspective it doesn't seem like a very challenging program to operate. It's really coordination, tracking funds on an excel spread sheet. It will be first come first serve essentially whatever physician is hired after July 1st whether it is Open Door, UHS, Sutter or private practice that individual can fill out a quick form which the form can be modified that essentially says the organization say this individual is starting employment or practice in this community. The committee looks at it and issues the check and track that.

Chair Caldwell: So, governance and administration of the Million Dollar Mission are managed by the Del Norte Healthcare District. The Healthcare District serves as the administering entity responsible for program oversight, execution of incentive agreements, payment processing, compliance with approved program parameters and reporting. The Healthcare District will provide quarterly reports to the Del Norte County recruitment and retention committee detailing use of funds, the number of providers receiving funds, and the types of providers supported for ongoing monitoring of program outcomes. That to me is quite a job and were not set up to do that job.

Dohn Henion: Just so that you know normally if we are administering a program like that, we usually get a percentage to cover our cost for the program requirements. Dr Caldwell is telling us about a number of things, including quarterly reports and whether the district itself should be absorbing those administrating costs or whether the program itself should be reimbursing or paying the district an overhead fee.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: Well luckily Tonya and Monica have agreed to do that oversight and accounting work. So it won't cost the district anything.

Chair Caldwell: It's not just money it's compliance with the parameters.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: You guys are comfortable with that, right?

Chair Caldwell: They don't even know what it is.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: oh yea, they know what the program is. It's all written up.

Chair Caldwell: Do we?

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: Yes, we do.

Ellie Popadic: The program parameters are in the packet.

Director Tonya Pearcey: Dohn, did you have a chance to look into whether or not the district itself could do a claw back. I know the hospital cannot. But these funds are being allocated to this Million Dollar Mission, can we do a claw back? Like if somebody moves in, gets a job and two months later takes the money and goes, do we have any recourse? Can the Healthcare District pull back those funds?

Dohn Henion: Yes, and I don't see a prohibition of the district to do a claw back.

Director Tonya Pearcey: Thank you. We can put it in a clause. That would help guarantee the funds are not absconded with. That would be a good thing.

Director Monica Sperling: If the committee assumes some of the work, would that help with your decision?

Chair Caldwell: That would come under the heading that this needs more work. It's not ready for a vote.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: The budgets coming up so it's time to decide. I'm going to make a motion to allocate $350,000 to the Million Dollar Mission for the upcoming year and that we work out and details that come up as a separate issue.

Director Tonya Pearcey: Can we do that Dohn?

Dohn Henion: You can direct the appropriation of the fund's defendant on whether the actual criteria's your operating by formulate within the parameters that the district feels comfortable with, sure. Basically there has been some discussion about forming an MOU. I have not seen that paperwork yet. We don't know exactly what it is going to say. Right now there are basically papers laying out the ideation of how the program would work. I would think that we would also like to have individual agreements with those that we are giving the funds to. Which would permit why they are receiving the funds and our ability to claw back the funds if they breach the agreement.

Director Tonya Pearcey: That application can be modified to add that. Put in the claw back clause. Dr. Caldwell you also had a question about the two year commitment.

Chair Caldwell: Yea, for $50,000 it's a super low bar were asking the to meet of just two years. The whole purpose of the program was to get Doctors here who become part of the community and practice here for a long time. But this program just says two years and then you're done.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: Well, we also have the retention component to the program. That's the recruitment portion.

Chair Caldwell: That's for two more years for $50,000 more.

Dr. Christie: Dr. Caldwell if I may. In terms of physicians coming to the county, we want them to come here because they are going to be incorporated into our local community. I had a chance to be incorporated in this community, yes, I came here without a bonus structure present at the time. But there are other prongs to this. Yet were talking about two years for this amount. Other countries are also giving up to $100,000 of reimbursement for physicians coming to there area. So the number is very reasonable. I really think it is going to cause traction. I hope physicians like yourself will be interested in mentoring new physicians coming into the area. In helping them build relationships to keep them here. The funds can only do so much. How ever there has to be something that sets us apart. The committee provided funding, especially Healthcare District funding is being used in other counties, and it has been profitable for bringing physicians to the county. I think we have a chance here to be a part of a small group of counties to trailblaze in this area to be a model of how we can bring people here. With the benefits of the claw back provision protection. The bigger picture here is how we are going to bring them here and keep them here. That is when the work really starts. And that's where the Healthcare District can help.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: I made a motion, does anyone want to second it?

Director Tonya Pearcey: Can you please repeat your motion?

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: I am making a motion that we set aside $350,000 for the Million Dollar Mission.

Director Sperling: I will second it.

Director Dave Mason: Pending all the I's dotted and T's crossed and the lumps worked out of the gravy, right. This is just to set the funding aside for the budget. I would like to see what the other communities are doing with this type of program.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: That's fine. But right now we need to vote.

Chair Caldwell called for a roll call vote:

Director Sperling – For
Director Pearcey – For

Director Mason – For
Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich – For
Chair Caldwell – No
Motion passed 4 – 1.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: I will make a motion that the Healthcare District applies to the Humboldt Are Foundation for the $350,000 that were hoping to get from them.

Director Tonya Pearcey seconded the motion.

Chair Caldwell called for a roll call vote:

Director Sperling – For
Director Pearcey – For
Director Mason – For
Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich – For
Chair Caldwell – For
Motion passed 5 – 0.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: Is the Healthcare District willing to manage the program?

Director Tonya Pearcey: I think that with what Dr. Caldwell has said that maybe we need to detail it out more. And also to correct the application and put the claw back clause in place.

Director Sperling: Can our committee work on that at the next meeting?

Ellie Popadic: Yes, we can work on this.

Dohn Henion: Also I think it is appropriate to point out that the chair in control of the committee members and I heard that Chair Caldwell was one of the original committee members. There is nothing stopping the Chair from rearranging the committee and putting himself back on to be part of the discussion.

Director Tonya Pearcey: That is true and I am perfectly willing to step back and let Dr. Caldwell take my seat at the table.

Director Monica Sperling: I would be willing also.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: Dohn was suggesting that you (Chair Caldwell) go on the committee.

Chair Caldwell: Thank you for your suggestion.

Director Dave Mason: In order for me to feel comfortable about voting on this part I need to see details. Exactly how it pans out. Who is doing what, the MOU all of that. I can't vote to approve it until it's done.

Vice Chair/Treasurer Babich: Ok, it's in the budget.

Director Tonya Pearcey: The next meeting is June 2nd at 5:30.

Chair Caldwell: Why isn't Open Door on that committee?

Director Tonya Pearcey: They are.

Shauna Burdick: I think there was a missed communication at the start of those meetings, and I have now taken over that position. Open Door is at the table.

3. Mental/Public Health Updates: (Janel Obenchain)

The C.H.I.P. is complete and can be found on the county website. This really is a community driven committee.

D. HEALTH PROMOTION:

1. Swimming Programs:

Report by Kelly Feola for April lessons had a total of 26.

2. Non-emergency Transport/Local Medical Transport:

a. Discussion/possible action on the two project proposals by Joe Rye with RCTA.

Director Mason made a motion to approve the Non-Emergency Transport request for $15,000 and the Local Medical Transport request for $10,000. Director Sperling seconded the motion.

Motion passed 5 – 0.

8. **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:** Approved as submitted. The board approved installing a Little Free Library in the garden and agreed that the large tree in the parking lot needs to be trimmed and for the Executive Secretary to get quotes.

9. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None at this time.

10. **NEW BUSINESS:** None at this time.

11. **INDIVIDUAL DIRECTORS REPORT OF ACTIVITIES:** Nothing at this time.

12. **PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ANY CLOSED SESSION ITEMS:** Nothing at this time.

13. **ADJOURNMENT TO CLOSED SESSION:** No closed session.

14. **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND REPORT OF ANY ACTION:** No action was taken.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Doris Hendricks, Executive Secretary

Minutes approved by:

Dave Mason, Board Secretary