

## **Augusta Rotary Minutes**

**February 2, 2026**

**President Brenda Durant** rang the bell and called the meeting to order.

**AK Gulati** gave the pledge and invocation.

**Brad Means** gave the Sunshine Report.

**Sean Kotch** introduced our guests and visiting Rotarians.

### **Announcements**

President Brenda kicked off the meeting with a video message from **Terry Atkins**, District Governor.

There will not be a club meeting on 2/9/26 as the club will be participating in the UGA Economic Symposium on Tuesday February 10. Everyone is invited to attend and there will be an email invitation coming out soon.

We will not meet on Monday February 16 in observance of Presidents Day.

The Rotary Speech Contest will take place on February 26.

### **GRSP Update**

No updates today.

### **New Members**

No new members were welcomed into the club today.

**Jerry Woods**, Membership Chair, reminded the club that membership is a key performance indicator impacting our Gold Award status with the District. He challenged everyone to look for quality membership prospects and invite them to attend. He also stressed the importance of getting new members engaged as soon as possible once they join the club in order to improve our retention rate.

### **Paul Harris Fellows**

No new recognitions this week.

**CART: Phil Wahl** was the inside challenger this week and **Security Federal**, was the outside challenger. Please continue to contribute to the blue buckets on the table or online at [mycartfund.org](http://mycartfund.org) using the same login credentials you use with DACDB. Also, please complete our club's Google form to sign up to be a Cart Challenger.

## **Signature Fundraiser**

**Dustin Young**, Chair, reported that as of today 52 of the club's 142 members had taken tickets to sell. Each member is being asked to sell, or buy, if needed, 3 tickets. We have 225 tickets unassigned that need to be sold. The drawing will take place on Thursday February 12. This fundraiser will allow us to make a \$25,000 donation to Rise Augusta and will be used to improve literacy.

## **Upcoming Meeting Speakers**

Feb 9 – no meeting, all club members invited to attend the UGA Economic Luncheon

Feb 16 – no meeting in observance of Presidents Day

## **Guest Speaker/Program**

**Dat Hoang** introduced our guest speaker, **Mr. Deke Copenhaver**, former Mayor of Augusta and current Executive Director of the Greater Augusta Long Term Recovery Committee.

The Committee is partnering with the Mennonite Disaster Services and Christian Disaster Services teams to repair homes damaged during Hurricane Helene in September 2024. Many homeowners were uninsured or underinsured which has resulted in their homes not being repaired.

Both ministries volunteer their time to repair the damaged homes for free. So far, they have provided over 33,000 volunteer hours worth over \$1.1 million. This initiative is a stand-alone program that does not have any government entanglements. The local school board is providing space for these organizations to stay in for free, including utilities. The organizations are partnering with the local Home Builders Association to assist with supplies and expertise.

The Community Foundation of the CSRA is the fiscal agent for this effort and they are housing the operating funds. Anyone wishing to make a donation can contact the Community Foundation.

The current service area is McDuffie, Richmond, and Columbia Counties. Anyone needing assistance in these areas should reach out to the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned following the Four Way Test.