



WEEKLY MEETING Minutes
Wednesday, September 9, 2026

Collins Acheampong, Paul Allen, Angela Carter, Bob Eamer, Hugh Graham, Don Haber, Ann Harrison, Annie Holtby, Karen Rush, Paul Snack, Mike Taylor, Lily Laffinuer, Michael Hrycusko, Guest Speaker, John Braithwait, CEO, Niagara Hope Centre.

- 1. Welcome John Braithwaite, CEO, Hope Centre and Michael Hrycusko, Board Member, Hope Centre**

- 2. Land Acknowledgement – Ann**

We begin this gathering by acknowledging the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis and Inuit people and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people

- 3. National Anthems– ALL**

- 4. 4-WAY TEST – Don**

Of the things we think, say, or do
 Is it the truth?
 Is it fair to all concerned?
 Will it build good will and better friendships?
 Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

- 5.**

Invocation – Paul

As we gather today for our weekly fellowship, we turn our thoughts toward the beginning of a new academic year. We reflect on the students, teachers, and administrators in our community who are returning to the classroom.

May we, as Rotarians, remain steadfast in our dedication to supporting education, literacy, and youth development. Let us work together to ensure that every child has the resources, safety, and encouragement they need to succeed. Inspire us today to strengthen our commitment to 'Service Above Self' so that our efforts may lift the burdens of others and create a brighter future for the next generation.

6. Announcements.

Purse Bingo. 120 tickets sold. Bit more of a blitz needed. Luxury Basket is getting sold. \$250 sponsors get a free ticket. \$600 for a table.

Last week re Bingo. If we send out information on our Facebook page re Welland Delta Bingo, we'll get **\$250** every quarter!

Youth Exchange. Welcome to Lilly today! Orientation for in bound Youth Exchange in Niagara – a getting to know the others!

Bocce Tournament, Welland Club. Next week, Mike and Lilly are playing. If another two want to play we'd have a Fonthill Team!

Collins. There's a lot of emphasis on Human Trafficking by DC Joanne. We need a Membership Chair. Fall Pelham article – need it to be impactful!

Presentation. Welcome Niagara Hope Centre! John Braithwait, CEO, has spent 3 decades in Nonprofit work. He is 23 years married. Almost as long!

Presentation. John Braithwait – I appreciate speaking about the Niagara Hope Centre. I want to show its path of crisis to resolution. The Centre was established in 1974 with its base in Niagara Falls. **Food Security/Housing Help/Housing Focused**

Shelters/Counselling/Warm Handoffs. I talked to someone at that point and he felt a sense of belonging, trust. Food insecurity could be related to loss of job, income. Food Security, Housing – find and keep, **Housing – focused shelters. All interconnected. Food Security is one of the things we're known for.** Food Bank – we hold that 3-4 days in a row every 30 days. We have a **Take Out Window, served 40,000 lunches last year, 21,700 visit to those struggling to get by. Unique individuals.** In Welland, 20% are under 18, 35% of those served are under 18. **259 seniors are 15% higher since end of covid. Seniors are 16% higher than last year.**

Prevention. Only way you know you are successful. Really difficult challenges – significant lack of affordable housing. Baker House in Welland – 2 homes in one building. 399 – if not for non profits helping, it wouldn't happen. It's well grown into a regional role – NF & SC.

It's a great organization! Counselling and warm handouts. **Return to Hope -> Warm Handoffs.** Our counsellors know about other services, we've purchased buildings and housing other helping organisations.

REACH has two days/week for food security and home security. Our Annual Food Costs are **\$50,670.** \$60,304 will pay for over 60,000 meals!

Rotary brings people together. Stronger together. Stronger core services, **Consistent** client exposure, **Proactive:** Community Leadership, Responsibility to advocate for folks. **How Rotary can help. Learn** homelessness. **Connect** introduce partners, volunteers, and community champions. **Invest in and support practical programs.**

RAFT Lot of family reconnections. All shelters are funded by the Region. Gateway Mainstream provide supplementary housing, work at YWCA and Land Trust.

John. I'm sensing some stability – over 10% of Welland is accessing our services, It's challenging to find housing for seniors. **It's not a rosy picture.**

Paul S. What's government doing? John. Strong thoughts. We're a safety net. We're feeding our community. The # 1 thing is income assistance. We've built one home.

There's a program called Building Canadian Homes. The short answer is **We need help!** Kingston has Tiny Homes. Here, we use trailers from the North.

Hope Centre Power Point

<https://portal.clubrunner.ca/289/Documents/en-ca/2e5b3165-9acd-4df5-9dc7-fe2b7ef43a15/1/>

Ann. Thanks, John, for coming and sharing. For speakers, we make a donation to one of our communities. **This year the donation is going to B'N'R Horse Sense for Kids.**

7. No Rotary Moment today

8.

Happy Thoughts

Collins. Happy to be here. It hits home. Hope the Welland and Fonthill Clubs can do an annual fundraising.

Bob. I enjoyed the presentation but it left me thinking. I get an increment every year. Why doesn't the government put \$\$\$\$ here?

Paul S. Thanks, John, for what you do. Presentation was fantastic. Good news -I can read your presentation without need for glasses like the rest of my life! Keep up the great work, John.

Lilly. Happy to meet you.

Karen. Thanks, John, heading to east coast next week!

Ann. Really appreciate you coming. I've heard a lot about Hope – it reflects my experience with Raft.

Hugh. Lilly, I hope you enjoy us this year. John, I appreciate what you do. Lots of problems – great Hope Centre there. Hope makes us appreciate what we do.

Thank you, John, for the presentation. Summer humidity is receding. Yay! Grandkids came down.

Angela. Reflecting on the mental health aspect. Week at the cottage with kids. Altogether. Loved seeing the interactions!

Mike. Happy to be back. Night and Day sense of community in this last 10 years.

Hugh. Tomorrow is the last Bandshell concert this year. We're sponsoring, doing the wine and beer – if you can make it, dress Rotary!

Next Meetings/Events

September 16. Weekly Meeting. Rotary Speaker Don Haber, Classification Talk

September 23. No Weekly Meeting. Breakfast at Dominics. Please sign up.

September 30. Board Meeting. MCC Concession, First Floor. All welcome.

October 7. Weekly Meeting. Rotary Speaker Collins Acheampong.