



# 2025 Board of Supervisors Member Priorities



# Questions

1. What are the top 3 Priorities for your Supervisorial District?
2. What are your top three priorities for Mendocino County?
3. What is needed for you to be an effective Supervisor?
4. In your opinion, what key elements are needed for an effective and productive meeting?



# 1. What are the top 3 Priorities for your Supervisorial District?

- Housing expansion related to water availability and failing septics (3)
- Infrastructure in Leggett, Water and Sewer (4)
- Development of the North side of the Harbor (3)
- Economic Development (3)
- Safe Communities (especially fire, crime, dogs) (2)
- Community Wellness (addiction recovery, homelessness, mental health, physical) (2)
- Long term water sustainability and storage infrastructure (2)
- Improve road maintenance and transportation infrastructure(4)
- Proactive emergency preparedness and response (4)
- Active Transportation safety (2)



## 2. What are your top three priorities for Mendocino County?

- Housing & Economic Development (cannabis, new technology, recreation tourism) (3)
- Budget stability and Fiscal responsibility (1)
- Quality of life and environment in the County (2,3)
- Homeless, mental health and substance abuse services (2)
- Improved County Roads Funding and a sustainable Fire Service Funding Model (4)
- Gaining back the trust and support of both constituents and Staff as it relates to the Board (1)
- Improve government operations, fiscal strength, and transparency (1,3)
- Invest in economic development and empower local businesses (3)
- Increase coordination and oversight of homelessness and behavioral health services (2)



### 3. What is needed for you to be an effective Supervisor?

- A willingness amongst colleagues to hear and support the needs of each others' Districts.
- Communication that is clear and concise (Internally with departments and with the public)  
Information provided in advance of the decision to be made honesty from colleagues
- Accessibility of information both internal and external to the county
- Collaboration of leadership, staff, and stakeholders Research and analysis
- Basic support services
- Transparency: Clearly articulate how tax dollars are spent (e.g., Measure O, P, and Measure B) and explain changes within departments to the Board, employees and public as necessary



## 4. In your opinion, what key elements are needed for an effective productive meeting?

- Clear structure
- Participants following the rules
- Respect for others
- Respectful communication
- Meetings may go off track; the chair should refocus discussions
- Supervisors should prepare thoroughly to avoid revisiting items
- Being Prepared
- Eight-hour meetings are fine if productivity matches the time
- FULL Participation
- Full preparation by BOS members, including consultation
- Full preparation by staff
- Decorum on dais
- Respectful and cordial conversations
- Being Professional

## Attachment A

1. What are the top three priorities for your Supervisorial District?
2. What are your top three priorities for Mendocino County?

The priorities of my district align directly with my recommended priorities for Mendocino County. Rather than listing three token issues like roads, law enforcement, and social services, I would summarize our shared goal as good governance. The most resounding message I receive from constituents is a lack of trust in the county's ability to deliver on promises. I believe the core issue has three components:

### **1. Misalignment with Public Priorities**

The county often prioritizes mandates that are out of step with what matters most to our residents. While we've maintained that mandates are non-negotiable due to potential state penalties, the public—and I—believe we have more flexibility than we're currently exercising. Given the county's limited funding, we need to prioritize what aligns with the will of the people, even if it means reallocating resources to address their immediate concerns over less impactful mandates.

### **2. Challenges in Execution**

The public cares deeply about outcomes. When we undertake a project or initiative that has public support, it's critical to deliver results on time and in alignment with expectations. In reality, unforeseen circumstances can impede timeliness and attenuate results. The public can accept these realities, so long as we actively engage in communication. Silent surprises relative to the public good are costly to trust. When discussing these challenges in open session, we must be mindful not to undermine the morale of our dedicated public servants, whose commitment remains strong. I believe structural inefficiencies—not individual performance—are at the root of execution issues.

Consider the library solar-battery report discussed at the last board meeting. Key questions went unanswered, and the proposal appeared contrary to public expectations. While the public supports the concept, they believe the original goals are unachievable without adjustments to the project. In the meeting, I shared my on-the-spot arithmetic of approximately a third of a million dollars for a 4-hour battery with ten year lifetime — probably not appropriate given competing infrastructure needs and certainly not an expenditure capable

## Attachment A

of yielding a return on investment (one of the two foundational goals). Offline, several project advocates raised concerns about its execution. Below, I've included a public response as an example.

This recurring issue highlights the need for more thorough vetting of proposals. Could we implement a process where the CEO or a peer group reviews and approves proposals before they are presented?

### **3. Performance Tracking**

The public expects performance tracking grounded in rigorous research methods. Too often, our county is unable to demonstrate dollar-for-dollar performance compared to other counties, the state, or the nation. As a result, success is perceived as a subjective belief rather than an objective fact.

Taxpayers expect every program to be evaluated rigorously, similar to metrics like prosecution win rates, Pavement Condition Index, or dollars collected versus billed amounts. While some of our programs and departments provide objective outcome data, many do not. The concern extends to our third-party contractors, where public demand for transparency is even more pronounced due to the profit-seeking motive of business. The performance tracking gap erodes credibility and trust. When the media critiques us, we lack the hard facts necessary to rebut. Reputation matters. Perhaps our partnership with University of California could be leveraged toward defining appropriate data collection, analysis and reporting methodologies? The public's expectation is on par with the methods used in academia.

I hope we can collaboratively address these structural concerns, focusing on solutions rather than culpability, and work together to restore public trust.

### **3. What is needed for you to be an effective Supervisor?**

Supervisors require access to reliable information and adequate staff support. It's difficult to drive progress when obtaining basic information requires extensive time and effort.

One potential solution would be to create a centralized electronic archive for all relevant documents, with redactions applied as necessary. This would streamline access and empower Supervisors to make informed decisions and prepare action items more efficiently.

Today, a simple question such as jail staffing level over the past fifty years relative to



## Attachment A

population is a lengthy research project. With an archive of categorized data, the effort might take minutes. I brought related action on March 19, 2019 item 6a (which passed unanimously). Included in the text: "(a) digitize all paper documents to reduce staff time and increase public access;" I remain ready to support and assist with this effort.

Closely related is the careful balance of staff influence on public policy. It is vital that our staff, particularly those with domain expertise, provide recommendations supported by citations. At the same time, policymakers must have access to all relevant information. Providing a selective subset of information to steer decisions may "lead a horse to water," but this undermines public expectations of transparency and accountability (the legislative intent of the Brown Act). For example, my responses in this writing should be provided verbatim to the board and public as opposed to a summary. Summaries are useful, but not appropriate as exclusive material in this type of process.

2. In your opinion, what key elements are needed for an effective and productive meeting?

### **1) Transparency and Open Debate**

Deliberations about public policies and expenditures should be conducted in front of the public. The overarching goal of the Brown Act is to ensure transparency, accountability, and public participation in local government decision-making processes. Healthy debate, grounded in differing principles and priorities, is what the public expects and deserves. Efforts to streamline meetings by curtailing discussion can undermine trust and prevent the airing of valuable perspectives. Even when my colleagues are on the losing end of a vote, their minority opinion still matters and carries potential to influence future action. Freedom of speech and a lack of censorship are essential for fostering trust and accountability.

### **Availability of Pertinent Information**

Relevant information should be included with the agenda or at least accessible during meetings. Too often, the board asks basic but important questions, and answers are unavailable, leading to delays, frustration and lack of continuity.

### **Tracking and Accountability**

Every request for additional information or action should be tracked in a transparent system. A tracking queue could include columns for the date requested, date of last progress, assigned

## Attachment A

party, blockers, and expected completion date. This queue could be appended to the meeting agenda when it is published 72 hours in advance.

During my first days with the County, I asked for login details to the organization's task tracking tool. To my astonishment, I learned there was not such a system. Tracking software is a project management and issue-tracking tool designed to help teams plan, track, and manage their work efficiently. It enables users to create and organize tasks, monitor progress through customizable workflows, and collaborate effectively within a centralized platform. Commonly used in Agile and other iterative development methodologies, the tool often includes features like task boards, backlog prioritization, sprint planning, and reporting dashboards. Organization is a critical ingredient to reach successful outcomes.

Referenced note from strong proponent of the solarization of Library in Willits:

Ted,

Here are my thoughts:

First of all, let's remember the 2 primary goals of the County - to reduce costs by improving efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. Not sure this project meets either one of these primary goals very well, which is not to say the project is unworthy of pursuing.

1. Without consideration of costs, I like most everything about the project except for the fact that the project does not include replacement (with Heat Pumps) of HVAC and water heater systems that are currently fossil fuel dependent. Yes, go with the metal roof and maximize rooftop PV. Try to make this project a template or example to follow for upgrading other county facilities - but to do that you should realistically include heat pumps and elimination of any dependency on fossil fuels.

2. Considering costs - the battery system proposed, as you pointed out, is WAY too expensive. The few times the backup battery system would be needed to power the facility due to a power outage do not, IMHO, justify the costs. This money, which amounts to several \$100,000, would be much better spent on rooftop solar and/or (preferably) heat pump projects elsewhere.

Battery backup just for the sake of having a non-fossil fuel backup system, regardless of the cost, does not make sense. Cost IS a factor. Battery prices will come down in the future given advances in storage technology and economies of scale as more and more batteries are

## Attachment A

produced. One option, therefore, is to skip the 122kWh BESS system but install all the equipment necessary to (relatively) easily add batteries in the future, as costs fall.

3. Possible misconception by some? - I hear some Supervisors and others state that having rooftop solar somehow reduces carbon emissions. Well, depending on the circumstances, this is not always true. Willitts, if I am not mistaken, is served by PG&E (distribution) and Sonoma Clean Power (generation). And, if I am not mistaken, the County is on SCP's Evergreen program for clean energy generation. So, the Willitts Library may already be consuming clean, electric energy. So, replacing SCP's clean energy generation with rooftop PV Solar clean energy therefore has no impact on fossil fuel emissions (except for the emissions generated by production of the PV panels and associated equipment - inverter, etc.). Yes, rooftop solar will reduce, perhaps significantly PG&E/SCP bills, but the ROI for this project appears excessively long so where are the savings?

4. What did we expect? The County hired Ameresco, an international corporate energy consulting firm, to present this project proposal. The County is already paying them many 10s of thousands of dollars to generate project proposal(s), correct? Now, I have no reason to doubt their competency in this area. But, the County should not expect to get anything resembling a "deal" from this corporation as they are in this to make a profit and given their latest financial results they appear to be quite successful at it given their recent quarterly revenue growth of 49%. And, Jeff Charneski admitted that this is a small project for them so the County ends up paying big company fees for a a small project that is, let's face it, not terribly complicated nor challenging for Ameresco. A smaller, local firm could have easily come up with this type of proposal since the remedy is so obvious in terms of the needs of the building and the efficiency and cost-savings goals of the County. And, I think I was not the only one who was rather disappointed that they did not have hard numbers to address various questions about BESS costs and energy savings if BESS was eliminated (or scaled back) from the project.

So, my recommendation:

- A. Opt for the steel roof
- B. Opt for the maximum number PV panels on the roof but try to get the price down

## Attachment A

C. Skip the ridiculously expensive BESS. Ensure that a BESS can be easily added down the road. Or, include a small capacity BESS just to keep lights on and charge devices (this could be done inexpensively using batteries from Goal Zero with an integrated transfer switch to power a select number of circuits).

D. Want to significantly reduce carbon emissions generated by the operation of this facility? Include heat pumps (HVAC & water heating) in the project.



[16 kWh Haven Home Backup](#)

[goalzero.com](http://goalzero.com)