

Hopkinton Rotary Library Trustee Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate: Jim O'Rourke

Tell us about yourself.

I grew up in upstate NY. Went to Hamilton College in Clinton, NY, then moved to DC worked in sales and went to the evening program at the George Washington University School of Law. After passing the NH Bar Exam, my wife, Emily, and I moved to NH in 2003. We have lived in Concord, Henniker and for the last four years, Contoocook. We have a 15 year old and 12 year old who both are in the Hopkinton Schools. I am a partner of Greenblott & O'Rourke, PLLC, a five-attorney firm with offices in Contoocook, Concord, and Milford. We provide estate planning, corporate counsel and civil litigation. I practice criminal defense and family law. I have coached youth baseball and high school football for many years, most recently with the HD-Hopkinton Redhawks. I enjoy cycling, Nordic and alpine skiing, kayaking and boating and reading.

Please explain why you want to be a Library Trustee.

I believe that every great town has a great library. The Hopkinton Town Library is a great library, providing excellent resources, programming, and serving as an important public space that builds community.

I believe in service to one's community, that by serving our neighbors we build relationships that strengthen our commitments to one another and make life enjoyable!

I love reading! I prefer fiction and the occasional well-written historical biography.

What skills and/or experiences do you bring to this role?

I think that working as an attorney for the last 17 years has helped me to develop certain types of skills in terms of issue spotting and anticipating issues that arise for any entity, public or private, profit or non-profit. While I would not be providing legal counsel to the Library or the Trustees, attorneys are always aware of ethical rules, obligations and responsibilities that apply to a variety of situations.

As a small business owner, I try to understand and listen to our attorneys and staff. I try to engage in a team approach to solve legal and business challenges.

In addition to the youth and high school coaching mentioned above, I served in Henniker for several years as the Henniker Community School and John Stark Regional High School Moderator, I was a member of the Youth Athletic Committee, and was on the White Birch Board of Directors in various roles, including a year as President of the Board.

What do you see as the biggest issue and opportunity facing the library trustees and how would you respond?

At the moment, there are certainly short-term challenges associated with Covid-19, and, it seems the Library is doing a very good job serving the community as circumstances change. Keeping quality staff is almost always a challenge at this type of facility, both in the short and long term. Good service can only be achieved by quality people.

Technological and social changes are always afoot. Libraries must meet the needs of their cardholders and I certainly would become educated about what these are, the costs to meet them and if, and when, we should choose to adopt them.

Some challenges to libraries have arisen in other places concerning intellectual freedom, censorship and inclusivity. I err on the side of progressive values and would encourage a broad range of materials. I do not believe in “cancel culture” and have a preference that opposing viewpoints be aired publicly, so long as it is not hateful or a call to violence. Most issues should not be quite that dramatic. I hope to employ careful, sound judgement and a curiosity about what challenges facing the Library and work with the other Trustees, Director and staff to develop strategies to help it to perform at its very best.

