

The board of directors approved this policy on April 2, 2014 to guide candidates for office about appearance opportunities at our club later this year.

Policy on programs involving political candidates during 2014.

New Hampshire has three high-profile statewide races this year (U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, and N.H. Governor), and Rotary is a non-political organization. We offer a forum to our members for discussion and education about community issues. We are issuing the following guidance to the club members, the club program committee and to candidates.

We will not schedule programs involving candidates for those offices at our regular meetings between this date and the state primary date (Tuesday September 9, 2014).

We will reserve three program dates between September 18 and October 30, 2014 (one for each of the three races) for candidate forums during our lunch meeting.

Those dates (which may be changed by the program committee except as noted below) will be:

September 18: U.S. congressional candidates.

October 2: N.H. gubernatorial candidates

October 16: U.S. senate candidates.

For each forum, we will invite the certified candidates of the Democratic and Republican Parties for the given office, along with any third-party candidate who has garnered greater than fifteen percent of the statewide electorate (or, for the congressional seat, the district electorate) in the UNH poll closest to the primary date.

Our program committee will make every effort to schedule the dates so that both (all) the candidates can participate. In the event accommodation can not be reached, these board-determined "default dates" will be the program dates, and the program will take place without regard to any candidate's availability and scheduling issues.

The program committee will establish guidelines for the forum that in Rotary tradition will be "fair to all concerned." In general, the candidates will appear together on a dais for a half hour between 12:45 PM and 1:15 PM, each responding to the same question from the floor (but in different order at random) within time constraints. The questions will come from the Rotary Club members: media may cover the event but not ask questions during the program, which is not a press

conference. Club members will be encouraged to be brief, sincere and non-partisan in their questions, and speeches from the floor are not allowed.

Only the candidates themselves may participate. No surrogates will be allowed, and there will be no other “political programs” scheduled during the timeframe except, at the discretion of the program committee, if there are local races or issues sufficiently urgent to suggest programs outside these guidelines.

The candidates themselves will be our guest for lunch as speakers, at the club’s expense. Any other individuals traveling with them, including media representatives, will pay for their own lunch at our normal meal rate. Media attendees will review the “information for media” tab on our website www.portsmouthrotary.org. Any media representative not complying with those guidelines may be excused from the room at the discretion of a club officer.

Members of the public who attend must be invited guests of a Rotary Club member, who will pay for the lunch of the guest.

This policy will be posted on our website, and given to any candidates interested in participating. It is subject to revision by the board of directors, the club executive committee and the program committee.

For further information please contact:
Dave Underhill, president (2013-2014)
Tricia Cummings, president-elect
Jim Rini, program chair and board member

April 2, 2014