



**RURITAN  
POLICIES  
AND  
GUIDELINES FOR  
CANDIDATES**

**RURITAN NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Revised Edition  
January 2024**

You will receive a copy of the policies and guidelines from the home office staff, they can also be found on the website.

Please follow the instructions to avoid having to be challenged for possible violations.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Every office in the Ruritan organization carries with it the requirement of service by an individual and each office lends itself to being a steppingstone to achieve the next level of service. At some point in one's Ruritan career they may have a desire to seek a position on the National Board of Directors (**NBOD**), and discover they need some guidance on how to achieve this goal. This guideline has been prepared to provide information which may be helpful in assisting with that decision and in providing additional steppingstones to reach that goal.

The NBOD recognize that in order for our organization to survive we must have competent leaders; leaders who understand the principles and functions of Ruritan. For some years now candidate leadership training has been conducted in workshops at the National Convention and most recently at the Summer Leadership Conference. It was recognized, however, that some aspiring to serve were not aware of the training opportunities or were unable to attend. The intent of this guideline is to enhance the training being provided.

## **PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

The below guidelines for potential candidates for the NBOD have been prepared in order to provide all candidates and future candidates a more detailed account of what is expected of them. If you have already served on the NBOD you are probably familiar with most of the procedures. However, change is a vital part of our world today and change also occurs in our Ruritan environment. Be sure that you have reviewed procedures and stayed current with reference to the status of Ruritan National. Although roles of National Officer positions are documented, it would be prudent for you to discuss the position you seek with a past or current officer to understand the full scope of the position.

Keep in mind our organization has a very dedicated and knowledgeable National Office Staff. If you are unable to find the answer you seek in these guidelines, feel free to contact a member of staff and they will be very willing to assist you and/or get you in touch with a staff member or volunteer who can help.

## **DECISION TO SEEK NATIONAL OFFICE**

Some questions to ask when considering seeking National Office:

### ***Why do I want to serve at the National level?***

Perspective candidates should understand that serving at the national level is not an honorary position but a job in which you will be expected to perform with no compensation except for reimbursement of pertinent expenses.

### ***Do I understand the role of the NBOD and the responsibilities of the position I seek?***

Many have found, after obtaining office, they were not fully prepared for the various duties associated with the office and did not comprehend how the NBOD actually functions.

**A list of roles and expectations for each position on the NBOD may be found in the Handbook for National Officers, Directors and Committees (HNODC).** Study the roles and understand the role which you seek. This will help you in making your decision to run.

### ***What do I have to offer Ruritan National?***

Are you up to date on the problems and issues facing Ruritan National? Have you thought about how your abilities and knowledge could be utilized to benefit the organization?

### ***Am I qualified for the office for which I seek?***

The Ruritan National Bylaws states, **“To be eligible for an office in Ruritan National a person shall be an active member in good standing of an adult club for at least five (5) years and have served one (1) term as a member of a district cabinet or one (1) term as an area zone governor.”**

Delegates of our organization are expecting potential NBOD candidates to be knowledgeable, to have served within the organization at various levels, and to have obtained the necessary experience to be a competent leader.

### ***Do I have the time, energy, and resources necessary to commit to doing the job?***

Serving on the NBOD will be very time consuming. NBOD members are expected to put in hours not only at the NBOD meetings but at committee meetings, assigned district cabinet meetings and functions, Ruritan events, and at Ruritan National Conventions. There will also be committee work assignments that must be completed before returning to the NBOD meetings.

It will take endurance and some personal funds to be a vital part of the team.

### ***Do I have the support of my family and employer?***

A most important and necessary requirement is to have support from your family in serving at the national level because it will definitely take time away from them. Also, your employer needs to be considered.

***RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATION OF DESIRED NATIONAL POSITION***

Most likely you have attended Ruritan National Conventions, National Board Meetings, Summer Leadership conferences, Youth Camps, and District Conventions and have observed the work being performed by the NBOD. You say to yourself this is my goal—to achieve a position on the NBOD. Ask yourself, do I really know what the roles and responsibilities are of the NBOD?

***KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE REGARDING THE CLUB AND DISTRICT LEVELS AND HOW THEY RELATE TO RURITAN NATIONAL***

With reference to your knowledge and experience regarding the club and district levels, ask yourself the following questions:

Do I understand the basic history of Ruritan, its mission, values, and functions?

At the National level you will be expected to answer questions from the membership and general public about the Ruritan organization. You may be the first contact a person has with Ruritan. Are you prepared? Will you set a good example of promoting our organization?

***Do I have a good working knowledge of club functions and activities and how they relate to the District and National level?***

From your experience and training you will be familiar with the “Ruritan Club and District Officers’ Handbook,” the Ruritan National Bylaws, and procedures which make a club and district work well.

***Do I understand the levels of communication?***

The district level is the bridge of communication between the club and Ruritan National. Serving on the District Cabinet is vital to having a sound working knowledge of the district and its responsibilities.

As a member of the NBOD, you will be assigned to a district(s) as an advisor and all of your previous district knowledge will be an advantage.

***Have I proven to my club and District members and to myself that I have the ability to lead?***

In serving at the club and district level was I able to form and direct a team, plan and conduct meetings, communicate and follow-up, prepare and understand budgets, develop growth initiatives, mediate difficult situations, coordinate and conduct training opportunities, and plan for the future?

### ***PRIOR TO DECIDING TO RUN***

Many former successful leaders started their advancement in Ruritan because someone recognized their potential and advised them to run for office. It is important to seek advice from others to get a well-rounded opinion. This will assist you in making your decision.

- Discuss your desire to serve with family and friends.
- If you have a special mentor that is knowledgeable about Ruritan and the art of campaigning, you should seek his/her guidance and counsel.

Discuss your desire to serve at the national level with fellow club and district members.

Seek out former national leaders and discuss your desire to serve and your vision for the future of Ruritan.

### ***YOU HAVE DECIDED TO RUN - CONGRATULATIONS***

You have made the important decision – you know you are qualified, prepared, and committed to serve. What do I do next?

- Inform your family, employer, and mentors.
- Inform your club(s), district, and State Associations (if applicable)
- Send a letter of intent to the Ruritan Executive Director announcing your intention of becoming a candidate for office in the following year. It is very important to send your letter of intent in early.
- The Executive Director will send a letter of acknowledgment.
- You will need to fill out the Candidate Background and Qualifications data form and send it back to Ruritan National.

### ***ANNOUNCEMENT OF CANDIDACY***

Once your letter of intent is received you will be placed on the “List of Candidates” which will be distributed at various times during the year along with other Ruritan information.

Executive Director will list you as a candidate based on your primary club indicated in the Ruritan membership database at the time of notification.

Many candidates prefer to announce their candidacy at the previous National Convention which would occur prior to the mailing of their letter of intent to the National Office. (NCG)

### ***PLANNING & PRIORITIZING***

After your decision is made and announced, you should recognize the importance of prioritizing your campaign strategy and taking advantage of the limited time available in the coming year. With careful planning you should be able to reach many Ruritans with your message and personal appearance.

### ***BROCHURE AND INTRODUCTORY LETTER***

Your brochure will be the most informative piece of literature you will distribute. You may want to review past candidate brochures to get an idea of size, format, and style. Suggested

information to include:

- Picture of yourself
- Ruritan and community qualifications
- Educational attainments and employment
- Family information
- Your club(s) and district endorsements
  - Endorsement from club(s) and district(s) are extremely helpful in letting other Ruritans know that you are recognized as a leader. Seek endorsement early because you will need your fellow club and district members to help spread the word of your quest to seek office.
  - Be sure to recognize your endorsees on your campaign brochure. State Associations should also be notified of your intent and need of support. Be aware that each may have different guidelines on endorsement of candidates.
- Your slogan and platform
  - Extra time and care should be given to establishing your campaign platform and slogan because this will be your “short version” of recognition. Members will be able to remember and identify you with this slogan. Be creative and original.
  - Also, remember you are a role model for Ruritan and whatever you do, say, and write should be appropriate.
- Brief statements about your concerns and visions for Ruritan and why you think you will be able to make a difference if elected

Your introductory letter is very important. It introduces you to the Ruritan membership. The letter should give more details about your desire to serve, your concerns, and your visions for Ruritan National.

## **BUDGET**

It is important to plan up front how much money you will be able to expend during your campaign and then to plan activities accordingly to stay within your budget. Here is a list of items to consider:

- Handouts (brochures, business cards, letters, etc) and postage
- Giveaways (optional) (buttons, key rings, pencils, candy, etc)
  - Convention goers love the various campaign giveaways. Decide early if you want to give away and order items in time for distribution. Many find several items work best. Have a plan and volunteers to help with distribution.
- Travel, lodging, registrations, meals (Ruritan meetings and events, district and National Conventions)

Realize that the level of spending does not always spell success. The perception which delegates and key leaders have of a candidate’s leadership ability is far more important.

## **CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE**

**Current NOBD; Foundation Trustees and their families are not eligible as they should remain impartial.**

It is never too early to include others on your campaign team. You will find they will provide

great ideas and advice. Time will be an important factor and your campaign committee can help you get things done and free you to meet and talk with the membership. Here are some suggestions:

- Set up an early meeting and advise your supporters of your slogan, platform, and vision.
- Ask them to share your qualifications and Ruritan vision with others
- Set up a calendar of events.
- Set up work schedules.
- Go over all instructions and guidelines for the event attending. Contact the leader in charge of the event for campaign guidelines.
- Discuss having a hospitality room (optional) at the National Convention. Rooms must be reserved early. Your home district may be willing to assist.
  - Discuss the workflow of the room and how to make it work. There will be many Ruritans visiting.
  - Identify helpers and finalize work schedule.
  - Discuss plans for food, beverages, and supplies for serving, etc.
  - Have brochures and giveaways available.
  - Allow time to greet your fellow Ruritans in the hospitality room and make time to visit other hospitality rooms.
- Do not try to do it all yourself. Let others help. There is power in numbers.
- Make sure your helpers understand all the rules of campaigning.
- Finalize campaign schedule for helpers: point of contact, times, and locations.
- Encourage campaign helpers to be friendly and considerate of those with whom they come in contact.
- Be sure to acknowledge all the efforts of your campaign helpers.

## **CAMPAIGN SUPPORT BASE**

**Current NOBD; Foundation Trustees and their families are not eligible as they should remain impartial.**

Make a list of key Ruritan leaders and members whom you will seek support from during your campaign. You may have specific roles for which you need their assistance. Early contact and inclusion will be invaluable later in the year

- Obtain the current year National Spring Newsletter which includes names, addresses, phone numbers, and Email information for all important and significant Ruritan leaders.
- You may also obtain from Ruritan National addresses and phone numbers for former National Presidents.
- Contact Ruritan friends outside your district and ask for their support. The earlier you get your calls and letters out the more opportunity is available for you to campaign.

## **CAMPAIGN SCHEDULING**

Establish dates and your travel schedule early.

- Obtain a calendar of posted Ruritan National events from the website.
- Obtain a list of District Conventions as soon as possible. Once you are listed as a candidate with Ruritan National, you will receive this by mail/email after the Summer Leadership Conference.) Many of the conventions will be scheduled on the same date.

Request from the National Office a list of delegate attendee statistics for the past National Convention. This list will help you recognize which districts have the most delegates. It is important during your campaign to be visible and available to the membership. Use your time and expendable funds wisely in order to reach as many members as possible.

## **CAMPAIGNING - PRE-NATIONAL CONVENTION**

It is now time for you to put your campaign plan in motion. Timing will depend on how early you have made your decision, announced your intent to the membership and the home office, and begun to campaign. What follows is a list of some of the things you could do:

- Mail/Email letters and brochures to key leaders and members (review Email and Ethics Policies prior to sending out this information).
- Mail/Email BIO information back by posted deadline to Ruritan National for publication in the fall Edition of the Ruritan National Magazine. (You will receive the BIO form from the Home Office after you have sent your letter of intent.)
- Call key leaders and members seeking support
- Communications from the National Office will also help.
- It is also very important to begin personally knowing the National Staff. Remember they are few in number so be considerate of their time. Please do not make unreasonable requests.
- Having computer skills is required when serving on the NBOD. Email is an essential way to communicate and is vital when working on committee assignments when the NBOD is not in session.
- Be aware of Parliamentary Procedures. You will need it.

Budgetary requirements and time constraints may limit your ability to attend all of the events listed. Be sure to be prepared. Take handouts and brochures with you. Dress appropriately. Be on time. Try to speak to as many Ruritans as you can. Have fun.

- Attend District Cabinet meetings or important events. Be sure to contact the District Governor for information and permission to attend.
- Attend State/District Spring Rallies.
- Attend Founder's Day Celebration. Contact the Holland Club President for information and campaign instructions for the parade, dinner, and other events.
- Attend the Summer Leadership Conference and take part in the Future Candidates' Training.
- Attend a NBOD meeting in the spring or summer. Notify the Home Office and National President that you will be attending.
- Attend the Foundation Fellowship Weekend. Contact the President of the Ruritan National Foundation for campaign guidelines at the event. Registration form and information are published in the Ruritan National Magazine.
- Attend District Conventions. Contact the District Governor for registration and campaign information.
- With reference to District Conventions that you are unable to attend, it is recommended that you ask someone to speak on your behalf and/or send a letter of regret and campaign material to the District Governor to be distributed as appropriate. **Current NOBD; Foundation Trustees and their families are not eligible as they should remain impartial.**

Once the District Conventions are over, shortly thereafter the Ruritan National Convention begins. So now is the time to take inventory. Meet with your committee.

### **CAMPAIGNING - NATIONAL CONVENTION**

The time for the Ruritan National Convention has finally arrived and you along with your committee are prepared.

### ***POLICY/STANDING RULES OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION***

Campaigning by future candidates for Ruritan National Office (i.e., handing out literature/brochures) will not occur until after the election results are announced at the current National Convention.

Distribution of these materials must occur outside the business session convention area. **(NCG and BDM Aug 2001, motion no. 8)**

### **CAMPAIGNING - RESTRICTIONS**

Ruritan National directs its officers to discourage campaigning for a National Office at Ruritan National Board meetings, Summer Leadership Conferences, and other training meetings. **(See BDM Aug 1974)**

Make sure all your volunteers understand that no campaigning can take place once voting begins. No one should wear campaign paraphernalia to the polls.

National Policy states “there be no electioneering while polls are open at National Convention.” **(BDM Apr 1987)**

### **CAMPAIGNING - NATIONAL CONVENTION – CAUCUSES - ATTENDANCE AT**

Many candidates find this to be a challenging task. Try to focus on the questions being asked, be direct, and honest. Try to retain questions and information for future reference because these are questions being voiced by concerned members.

### **CERTIFICATION AND CREDENTIALS**

You will be receiving a letter from the Chair of Credentials and Certification Committee with instructions on procedures for certification, time, date, and location of meeting.

### **CAMPAIGNING - NATIONAL CONVENTION - SPEECH**

Probably the most important part of your campaign will be the two minute speech you will deliver at the appropriate time during the National Convention. You must decide the content of your message but keep in mind it has to be delivered in two minutes or you will be gonged. You will be addressing the voting delegates, members, and guests.

#### ***Speech Suggestions***

- Write out your speech preferably in large, bold, type, and double space each line.
- Practice your delivery. Have someone else observe and critique your delivery.
- Practice without reading. Speak loudly and clearly.
- Visualize your audience making eye contact (left, middle, right).

- It is most important to have your speech completed and practiced before you get to the National Convention. You will be glad you did.

### ***Delivering of Speech***

You will be assigned a special place to sit and the time to be there. Be prompt.

If you go over two minutes and get gonged, finish your last sentence, and leave the stage.

### **ELECTION INSTRUCTIONS**

Attend the business session to obtain election results. Be prepared to congratulate winners and offer encouragement to those who were not elected.

If elected, immediately following the business session at which you were elected, you will be given instructions on what to do. Official NBOD pictures will be taken during the convention. Wear business attire and do not be late.

You will also be provided with instructions concerning the installation ceremony to be held at the Installation Banquet

Enjoy and savor this moment. You have worked hard for this goal.

You will attend a breakfast meeting along with the entire NBOD. It will be chaired by the incoming National President, who will welcome you and announce their slogan, goals, and proposed calendar for the year. You also will receive your district(s) and committee assignments, who you will meet with briefly, and various pertinent publications and documents.

**A list of the NBOD committees and their duties may be found in the Handbook for National Officers, Directors and Committees (HNODC).**

### **NBOD - NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS**

This will be a very special time and you will do well if you believe in the importance of your role and in the organization that you now serve. Below are some pearls of wisdom from past officers:

- As a NBOD member you represent the membership of Ruritan National.
- You now have a job not a position (expect to work and produce results). Do your homework.
- Make time to listen. Think independently. Be impartial and avoid cliques.
- Do not act in haste and communicate your thoughts clearly.
- Support the Ruritan National Home Office Staff.
- Always support the actions of the NBOD.
- Remember you represent Ruritan National. Be a role model at all times.
- Be aware of the need for future leaders. Assist in identifying and encouraging those with leadership skills to seek higher office.

### **NBOD - NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS - What to Expect**

You will receive an orientation as an incoming NBOD member, meet the National Staff, and have the opportunity to learn more about the NBOD and how it functions. Listed are some other actions that can take place before the meeting.

- You have received your assignment(s), and when you return home there will be a brief time to catch up.

- You may or may not have received a district follow-up report from the previously assigned Director. If so, read and get familiar with any problems that may have occurred within the district the previous year. You may have to call the previous Director to get district information.
- Contact the current District Governor and inform them of your assignment. Request copies of the district calendar and District Directory. You may find that the first cabinet meeting has already been held or is coming up very soon.
- Give the District Governor your contact information. Begin to establish a line of communication. This will prove very valuable in serving the district.
- You may also want to use this time to get familiar with the clubs and their locations.
- The chair of your assigned committee will call upon you early to assist with an assignment. Be sure to be familiar with the role of your committee. Be prepared to offer you input and recommendations at committee meetings.
- As a NBOD member you will be receiving lots of communication from the Ruritan National Office. Read it and act upon it!
- If you have questions do not hesitate to ask current NBOD members and the Home Office staff.

### **NBOD - SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

The Ruritan year includes many types of activities and functions as you discovered while campaigning. Once you have received your District Directory and Ruritan National Calendar of Events, it would be wise to plan your schedule for the year. Keep in mind that as a NBOD member you may be called upon unexpectedly to attend a special Ruritan function or club meeting. Be prepared.