

Comments on Proposed RMBF By-Laws

Members of the Rotary Means Business Fellowship,

Rotary International has informed us that all Fellowships are required to adopt new By-Laws which conform to RI's standard Fellowship By-Laws. The updated By-Laws were approved by the Board of Directors on May 6, 2024. They also require approval by the general membership. This message is to outline the key changes.

Section 2.2:

Not required by Rotary. Added to clarify our tax status in the USA.

Section 2.3:

Required by Rotary. Moved from Article VIII of the old By-Laws. No structural change.

Section 3.1:

RI now requires all Fellowships to accept non-Rotarians as members. After explaining that the core principle of RMB is that Rotarians can trust other Rotarians while doing business, we received two concessions:

- (1) A new category of membership: Associate Member, and
- (2) Associate Members must agree in writing to always do business in accordance with the 4-Way Test.

Section 3.2:

This section says that Associate Members can not become Lifetime Members, only Annual Members.

Section 4.1:

Term limits of six years are now required for all Rotary Fellowships. In addition, many members have called for term limits. These term limits bring us into compliance with Rotary International Codes and Policies.

Section 4.2:

This gives a key outline of election procedure, but to retain flexibility, the details are maintained in our Policies.

Section 8.3:

This section allows chapters to set their own membership criteria. The main purpose of this section is so that we don't force chapters to accept non-Rotarians. Only the Fellowship is required to accept non-Rotarians.

Section 9.1:

We have been operating with a fiscal year the same as the calendar year. Rotary wants all Fellowships on the same fiscal year as Rotary. We'll make that change on the effective date of the new By-Laws.

Articles X and XI:

These are boilerplate sections required by Rotary International. We already had most of these in our Policies, but RI wanted them moved to our By-Laws. No significant changes to the wording, just a new location.

Section 13.1:

RI requires that the updated By-Laws be in effect by 1 January, 2027. We follow this rule.

Summary:

The new By-Laws contain some rule changes that we do not favor, especially regarding membership by non-Rotarians, but that we have no choice to adopt. We were able to keep some flexibility by retaining certain elements in our Policies, rather than moving them to the By-Laws. I strongly recommend adoption by the general membership.

Mark Burchill

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Chair Emeritus and Chief Negotiator