

Town of Orange First Selectman Election Debate
Tuesday, October 7, 2025
Door Open 6:30 pm
Debate: 7:00 - 8:30 pm
University of New Haven Orange Campus
584 Derby Milford Road, Orange, CT

6:30 pm: Doors Open

7:00 pm – Welcome & Format

- Democratic Candidate, Daniel Fitzmaurice, standing to Moderator's right
- Republican Candidate, First Selectman James Zeoli, standing to Moderator's left
- Moderator, Chamber of Commerce CEO, Barry Lee Cohen, standing at podium.

Sponsors

- Amity Chamber of Commerce
- Host Sponsor and Chamber Member: University of New Haven

Format

- Welcome
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Introduction of Candidates by Moderator

Coin Toss: The incumbent, First Selectman Zeoli, will call "heads or tails." The candidate who wins the coin toss will have the choice of:

- Make Opening Statement First/Closing Statement Last, or
- Make Opening Statement Second/ Closing Statement First

- Opening Statements
- Questions, Response, Rebuttal, Redirect
- Questions from Town of Orange residents, businesses, and Amity Chamber of Commerce members will be solicited and selected by the Amity Chamber via Chamber newsletter, news release, social media outreach, email.
- Closing comments

APPROXIMATE TIMELINE

7:02 pm – Pledge of Allegiance

7:03 pm – Introduction of Candidates by Moderator (**please submit a one sentence introduction to be read by the Moderator by October 1st**) – James Zeoli, Daniel Fitzmaurice

7:05 pm – Rules. The general debate rules are as follows:

- Candidates should be allowed to answer questions posed to them by the moderator in their entirety without interruption (verbal or non-verbal) until their time has elapsed.

- Candidates should also refrain from asking questions to the other candidate. The moderator will ask all the questions.
- Candidates should remain within a 4 feet radius of their table.
- Candidates should be respectful to each other, the moderator, and the audience.
- Candidates should not make unsubstantiated or misleading claims or allegations.
- Candidates should be truthful and not introduce misinformation or untruths.
- Candidates should remain seated when the other candidate is addressing the initial Question. Candidates can return to their seats or remain standing during Rebuttals and Redirects.
- Audience members are asked to please be respectful and not interrupt the proceedings and to please turn their phones off or to silent mode.
- The moderator will reserve the right to remove or sanction anyone who is not complying with these rules.
- Candidates will be given the choice to bring pre-prepared remarks or answer questions off-the-cuff.
- Candidate will have a table and chair to use for the debate. They may stand when addressing a question, as well as during rebuttals and responses.
- The moderator will stand behind a podium in between the two candidates. There will be a microphone on each podium/table.

7:08 pm - Introductions (4-minute opening statement)

- Please make short opening comments in 4 minutes or less to introduce yourself, your Vision for Orange and your sense of the challenges and opportunities for the town over the next two-year term.
- Candidate A will go first, then Candidate B will go second. (TBD by coin flip prior to debate at 6:30 pm)

7:16 pm - Questions

- Approach: pose question to Candidate A for up to a 3-minute response followed by up to a 3-minute rebuttal from the other candidates (please raise your hand if you would like to provide a rebuttal).
- After the rebuttal, the original speaker will have the opportunity to respond for up to 1 minute. The moderator has the discretion to include an additional rebuttal or to follow up with a candidate.
- The next question will flip Candidate A and B.
- The order will be Candidate A first then Candidate B then A then B until the final question.
- Candidates should not ask the other candidate questions. Question will come from the moderator only.

Topics

1. Top Priority, Including Plan for Success
2. Economic Development
3. Town Finances, Spending, and Taxes
4. Business Friendliness and Readiness
5. Public Engagement, Quality of Life

8:00 pm –Submitted Questions

- All Questions will be edited for expletives, inappropriate language, unsubstantiated claims, hyperbole, and slander and then read by the moderator and both candidates will have the opportunity to respond for up to 2 minutes with up to a 1-minute rebuttal.
- Similar questions will be merged to avoid redundancy
- Candidates should not ask the other candidate questions.

8:15 pm - Closing Comments: 4 minutes each – Why should Orange vote for you?

- Candidate A will go first, then Candidate B will go second. (TBD by coin flip prior to debate at 5:30 pm)

8:25 pm – Final Statement by Moderator**8:30 pm Departure**