

Mt. Lebanon Public Library Policy No. 13
Meeting Room Policy

MT. LEBANON PUBLIC LIBRARY

POLICY NUMBER:

13

TITLE:

Meeting Room Policy

DATE ISSUED:

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REPLACES:

Previous Policy No. 13, issued August 8, 1991;
Revised May 13, 1993; July 11, 1997; July 24, 2003

PURPOSE: To set forth the terms governing the use of all Library meeting rooms and study rooms. The terms “meeting room” and “room” refer to both types of spaces.

REFERENCES: American Library Association, Library Bill of Rights and Interpretations: Meeting rooms, 7/2/91; Mt. Lebanon Public Library Policies 1 (mission), 14 (Library programs), 8 (use of equipment), 12 (no smoking), 22 (solicitations and sales), 23 (unattended children); Sunshine Act, 65 P.S. 271 et seq. (including all amendments)

STATEMENT OF POLICY:

The Mt. Lebanon Public Library provides meeting and study room space for Library programs and for other meetings and programs of an informational, educational, cultural, or civic nature. The library meeting room spaces are available to the community consistent with the Library’s mission of disseminating information to the community and encouraging free and open expression and exchange of ideas. Use of the facilities by other groups is allowed when not needed by Library or Library-related activities, programs, and meetings, and when such use does not interfere with or disrupt the programs, activities, and normal operations of the Library, or causes a security risk or safety hazard to Library staff, property or patrons.

1. PURPOSE AND USE

- 1.1 The use of meeting rooms is free of charge to non-profit civic, social, cultural, educational, and government organizations, as long as the meetings or programs they hold are open to the public, are free of charge, and are not held with the intention of generating revenue. The Library will assess a fee for use beyond hours of Library opening, excepting meetings that are Library, Library-related or municipal.
- 1.2 Meetings rooms cannot serve as a permanent or regular public meeting location for any non-Library or non-Library-related group. To allow all members of the community the opportunity to use the Library’s meeting room facilities, repeated use of meeting rooms other than for meetings or programs that are Library or Library-related or municipal, may occur only on a semi-annual basis. A group or individual that wishes to use the facilities with greater frequency or for

a number of consecutive days shall request written permission from the Library Director.

- 1.3 All meetings, programs, and other uses of the meeting rooms are considered public meetings and shall be open to the public, subject to local and state health and safety requirements for public gatherings. All meetings shall be publicly noticed in the Library and on its calendar of events in advance of the meeting. Exceptions are closed meetings of legislative and policy bodies authorized by The Sunshine Law (65 P.S. 271 et. seq.) and certain Library or Library-related meetings or activities. Attendance in the meeting room is limited to that number which is permitted under Fire Code regulations noted on walls.
- 1.4 Permission for use of Library meeting rooms does not imply Library endorsement of the views, opinions, policies or activities of groups or organizations using the Library's facilities. Any announcement or publicity implying such endorsement is prohibited. The Library Board, Library Director, and staff are not responsible for the accuracy, use or consequences of statements made during such meetings.
- 1.5 Meeting rooms may not be used for commercial purposes, for purely social purposes by non-Library groups, for private social functions, for the furthering of business interests of private individuals, companies, or for-profit associations, or in violation of the constitutional provisions regarding the separation of church and state. Outside groups or organizations using the meeting rooms shall not charge an admission fee or sell materials, goods, or services for private profit or gain. Exceptions are Library and Library-related activities as described in Policies 14 and 22. Organizations may collect dues at a meeting but cannot make payment of dues a requirement for attendance at a meeting.
- 1.6 Permission to use meeting rooms is revocable and does not constitute a lease. The Library reserves the right to cancel and/or reschedule any meeting by giving two weeks advance notice before the meeting. Permission previously granted to a group or organization to use the meeting room may be canceled at any time by the Library Board or the Library Director, if it is determined that the meeting scheduled does not comply with the policy set forth.
- 1.7 Groups must notify the library if they need to cancel a room reservation so that the space is made available to others. If a group fails to notify the Library of the need or intent to cancel use of meeting room within 24 hours of scheduled use, the group may not be accorded use in the future for a period of 6 months. If the group fails to notify the library of a cancellation a second time, the group loses the privilege to use meeting rooms for a period of two years.

- 1.8 If the Library must cancel the use of a meeting room, the Library staff will notify the group or individual as soon as possible. In the event of inclement weather when the Library may have to close, groups or individuals should call the Library for the recorded message about the Library closings.
- 1.9 All users of the Library facility must comply with all applicable state and federal laws and local ordinances. Unlawful activity shall not be permitted in meeting rooms and such activity shall be a basis to deny use of the Library meeting rooms by groups or individual violating this policy.

1 ELIGIBILITY AND ALLOCATIONS FOR USE

- 2.1 Library sponsored activities take precedence in scheduling the use of the room.
- 2.2 If the meeting room is not scheduled for use for Library activities or Library-sponsored activities, it may be used by organizations or groups holding meetings or programs of a civic, cultural, or educational nature which advance or complement the Library's mission.
- 2.3 The Library reserves the right to schedule and make room assignments according to the Library's needs. The Library also reserves the right to change space assignments to accommodate greater or lesser attendance or specific equipment needs at programs or meetings on any given occasion. Additionally, the Library reserves the right to alter the meeting room schedules according to the Library's needs. In general, the Library allows groups to reserve meeting rooms on a first-come, first-served basis or (in case of conflict) according to the following order of priority:
 - 2.3.1 Any purpose that involves efforts of Library staff, Library Board or Friends of the Mt. Lebanon Public Library.
 - 2.3.2 Local Government Meetings/Program - official meetings or programs of the Municipality of Mt. Lebanon, Allegheny County, or Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agencies or departments.
 - 2.3.3 Meetings or Programs of Non-profit Educational, Cultural, Civic, or Community Organizations, all of which will be open to the public. Priority will be given to Mt. Lebanon organizations. A Mt. Lebanon

organization has 60% or greater of its members residing in the municipality.

3. RESERVATION REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 Library facilities may be reserved only by card-holding users of any public library in Allegheny County following submission of a written application, which shall be reviewed and approved or denied by the Library's Director or other authorized Library staff member. An authorized member of the group must sign the meeting room request form. By signing the request form applicants agree that:
 - 3.1.1 They have read the rules and regulations for the Library meeting room and understand them.
 - 3.1.2 They understand that any failure to abide by these regulations will cause a forfeiture of rights to use the room for six (6) months.
 - 3.1.3 They accept the financial responsibility for any and all damage caused to the building or equipment beyond normal wear.
- 3.2 All programs presented in meetings at the Library must comply with all provisions of the Mt. Lebanon Public Library's Policy 14 (Library Program Policy.) [See also section 1.1.4 of this policy.] No admission fees, free will offerings or dues may be collected on the Library premises, except by the Friends of the Mt. Lebanon Public Library.
- 3.3 Programs involving the sale, advertising, promotion of commercial products or services, or programs sponsored by a business firm, regardless of purpose, are prohibited except for those covered by the Library Policy 22, which allows performers and speakers at Mt. Lebanon Public Library sponsored programs with pre-approval to sell sound recordings, videos and books related to their performance.
- 3.4 Registering participants for a non-Library or non-Library-related program will be the responsibility of the sponsoring group and not the Library.
- 3.5 The Library will not provide porter service to carry supplies and custodial help is not available for other than maintenance of the room. Library staff is not available to assist with meetings or to operate equipment.
- 3.6 Organizations meeting in the Library may not use the Library as a mailing address.

4. EQUIPMENT

- 4.1 Library equipment may, at the sole discretion of the Library Director, be made available to groups using the meeting room. [see policy 8,] [See also list of library equipment attached to reservation form.]
- 4.2 The Library assumes no responsibility for any equipment, supplies or materials brought to the Library by any group or individual attending the meeting; nor does it assume any liability for groups or individuals attending a meeting in the Library.
- 4.3 For, and in consideration of the use of the meeting room, any person or group using a meeting room shall agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Mt. Lebanon Public Library and its representatives from and against any and all claims, demands, judgments, settlements, damages, actions, causes of actions, injuries, administrative orders, consent agreements and orders, liabilities, penalties, costs and expenses of any kind whatsoever, which may arise or be asserted, directly or indirectly, with regard to the use of the room.
- 4.4 The Library assumes no responsibility for damage to, or theft of, any item displayed or exhibited in the meeting room. All items are placed in the meeting room at the owner's risk.
- 4.5 If audio or visual equipment is used, the user shall set it up in advance of the meeting hour. The user shall have knowledge of how to operate the equipment. It is not the responsibility of the Library staff to operate the equipment. Any audio-visual presentations require proof that a public showing is not in conflict with current copyright laws.
- 4.6 Unauthorized use of data, fax, and voice jacks is prohibited.

5. CONDITIONS OF USE

5.1 Arrangements

- 5.1.1 Organizations wishing to use the meeting room must contact the Library for a reservation form and list of rules and regulations.
- 5.1.2 Room arrangement: Chairs and tables are available for groups to set up to meet their special needs. The Library cannot assume responsibility for setting up the rooms for non-Library or Library-related meetings. Each group handles its own room setup and may arrange the furnishings, as the group would like to use them, as long as the furnishings are not at risk of damage. Walls may not be used for mounting or hanging signs, working papers, pictures, displays, posters, and the like. When the meeting is completed, the room must be cleaned up and all furniture must be returned to the setup specified and pictured in the meeting room application.

5.2 Schedule

5.2.1 Meetings must be held during regular Library hours unless written approval has been secured by the Library Director at least 3 days in advance of the meeting.

5.2.2 Meetings must end on time so that the room can be cleared or prepared for other meetings. The meeting room must be vacated at least 10 minutes before Library closing time. Exceptions may be made for programs that are directly related to the Library (i.e., Friends of Mt. Lebanon Public Library meetings, Library committee meetings). Library staff must be in the building for such exceptions.

5.3 Equipment and Media

- 5.3.1 Subject to availability, the following library equipment may be used in the Library meeting rooms: computer, projector, projection screen, sound system, audio and video players, and phonic ear for persons with hearing disabilities.
- 5.3.2 There is no charge for the use of equipment. Equipment should be reserved at least a week in advance. It is recommended that the equipment be reserved at the time the room is reserved. The Library cannot provide operators for this equipment. If instruction is required for equipment operation, it is suggested that a representative of the group set up an appointment with the appropriate staff member in advance.
- 5.3.3 Organizations or individuals are responsible for returning equipment in the condition they received it. Any damage will be charged to that organization.
- 5.3.4 Equipment, materials, or furniture belonging to any group shall not be stored in the Library without the written permission of the Library Director. Space, staff, and activities of the Library will determine whether storage is permitted. The Library shall not assume responsibility when materials, digital files, and equipment are left on the premises.

5.4 Food and Drink

- 5.4.1 Food and drink may not be served in the meeting room by any group unless written approval has been secured from the Library Director at least 3 days in advance of the scheduled meeting.
- 5.4.2 Groups who use the Library rooms may serve light refreshments when their plan to do so has been pre-approved by the Library.

5.5 Clean-up and Damage

- 5.5.1 The sponsoring group or individual making application for use of facilities assumes all responsibility for damage to Library property and

for leaving the premises in the condition in which it was found, including the arrangement of furnishings and the cleanup of trash. Charges will be accessed for removal of debris or excessive cleanup.

- 5.5.2 Damage to the facility will be billed to the group or individual responsible for the room and could result in restriction from further use.
- 5.5.3 Smoking and the use of tobacco products or illegal drugs are prohibited.
- 5.6 Accidents and/or injuries must be reported to Library staff and a Public Injury Report completed.
- 5.7 Babysitting service for children of persons attending meetings is not provided by the Library. Meeting attendees may not leave children under 8 years of age unattended in the Library or in the temporary care of a child age 10 or younger in accordance with Library policy #23.

6. APPEAL AND REVIEW

- 6.1 The Board of Trustees of the Mt. Lebanon Public Library will review the meeting room policy and regulations periodically, and reserves the right to amend them at any time. The Board authorizes the Library Director to interpret the policy.
- 6.2 Appeals for changes in or exceptions to any portion of the meeting room policy will be considered. An individual or organization wishing to file an appeal shall submit it to the Library Director in writing. Appeals and/or comments may also be made to the Library Board in writing. Address such communications to: Mt. Lebanon Public Library Board of Trustees, 16 Castle Shannon Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15228.