

## **MT. LEBANON PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**POLICY NUMBER:** 13  
**TITLE:** Meeting Room Policy  
**DATE ISSUED:** July 18, 2023

**REPLACES:** Previous Policy No. 13, issued August 8, 1991; Revised May 13, 1993; July 11, 1997; July 24, 2003, September 15, 2015

**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:**

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 community nonprofit organizations consistent with the Library’s mission to “provide for all patrons an inclusive, welcoming environment of intellectual enrichment, creativity, and enjoyment, and a forum to exchange ideas by providing top-tier programs, materials, services, and community support.”

Use of the facilities is permitted with permission when not needed by Library or Library-sponsored 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.
- 1.2 Meetings rooms cannot serve as a permanent or regular public meeting location for any non-Library or non-Library-sponsored-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-sponsored, or municipal, may occur only twice per calendar year. A group or individual that wishes to use the facilities with greater frequency or for a number of consecutive days shall request 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-sponsored 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-sponsored 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. 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.
- 1.10 All users of the Library facility must comply with all applicable Mt. Lebanon Public Library Policies. Violation of library policies shall be a basis to deny use of the Library meeting rooms by groups or individual violating this policy.
- 1.11 Hate speech is any form of expression through which speakers intend to vilify, humiliate, or incite hatred against a group or a class of persons. Hate speech directed at library users, visitors, or staff, in library meeting spaces is considered a violation of the Library's Patron Behavior Policy (Policy 28, Section 2.1.4-2.1.6).

## **2. ELIGIBILITY AND ALLOCATIONS FOR USE**

- 2.1 Library and Library-sponsored activities take precedence in scheduling the use of the room.
- 2.2 If the meeting room is available and not scheduled for use for Library activities or Library-sponsored activities, it may be used—with permission--by non-profit organizations or groups for 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 without prior notification to accommodate greater or lesser attendance or specific equipment needs at programs or meetings on any given occasion.

Groups cannot request a specific meeting room; room assignments will be based on availability and on projected/anticipated attendance. 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.

### **3. RESERVATION REQUIREMENTS**

- 3.1 Library facilities may be reserved following submission of a written application, which shall be reviewed and approved or denied by the Library's Director and/or authorized staff members. 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 1.4 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-sponsored 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 personal 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 personal (non-library) audio or visual equipment is used, the user shall set it up in advance of the meeting. The user shall have knowledge of how to operate the equipment. It is not the responsibility of the Library staff to operate personal 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 download a reservation form and list of rules and regulations from the Library's website or contact the library to request these documents.
- 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 non-Library-sponsored meetings. Each group will handle 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 its original positions unless given instructions otherwise from a staff member.

## 5.2 Schedule

- 5.2.1 Meetings must be held during regular Library hours unless 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. Meeting rooms 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 The following library equipment is available 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. 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 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 Light refreshments are allowed in meeting rooms, but must be pre-approved by the Library. Groups should supply their own plates, silverware, napkins, cups, etc. No alcoholic beverages permitted.

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 assessed 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 and staff is not responsible for any unattended minor. No child under the age of 12 years old or below the sixth grade may be left unattended in the library. Children attending Library programs are, for the duration of the program only, considered to be supervised by Library staff and thus are not unattended. Please refer to Policy No. 23, "Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults."

## **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. The Director supervises all library operations and implements policies on behalf of the Library Board of Trustees; however, the Board may be addressed for further appeal.