

330. MEETING ROOM USE POLICY**Purpose**

The Seekonk Public Library exists for the purpose of providing library services for residents of Seekonk, Massachusetts. The Library's meeting rooms are used primarily for Library programs but may be used by non-profit and non-commercial groups engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, or civic activities. The meeting rooms shall be made available to such groups on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting use. The Library shall not discriminate on the basis of any constitutionally or statutorily-prohibited basis. However, the provision of meeting room space is not the primary mission of the Library, and must always be secondary to the paramount need to provide a safe, peaceful, respectful environment. No use of the meeting rooms will be allowed that is likely to disturb library patrons in their customary use of library facilities, impede Library staff in the performance of their duties, or endanger the Library building or collection.

The Board of Library of the Trustees Seekonk Public Library welcomes use of its meeting rooms by local residents and non-commercial community groups for civic, educational, philanthropic, and recreational purposes consistent with the Library's mission. Meeting rooms are available free of charge to the public, and may also be reserved for private events subject to a fee. The Board of Library Trustees is solely responsible for determining if the use of the meeting room proposed by an applicant satisfies the above criteria.

General Policy

When the Library meeting rooms are not being used for Library programs, the Library staff welcomes the use of the meeting rooms by non-profit and non-commercial groups on a first-come, first-serve basis, subject to the following requirements.

- Meeting rooms are not available for commercial or entrepreneurial purposes, the solicitation of business, fundraising efforts (other than Library fundraising), religious ceremonies or worship services, or for any form of political activity. No group may consider the Library its permanent meeting place or use the Library as its mailing address. Recurring meetings (daily, weekly, monthly) will not be permitted. Commercial activity is defined here as promoting or selling or exchanging any good or service of real value. Commercial activity also includes the active or passive solicitation of memberships, subscriptions, enrollments, or financial investments of any type.
- All events must be free and open to the public unless a private reservation with fee is made o the provisions of this Policy.
- Meeting room use does not imply Library, Board, or Town endorsement. Publicity must clearly state: "This is not a library-sponsored event." A private group's use of the Library's meeting rooms does not imply endorsement of the group's policies, opinions, beliefs, or programs by the Seekonk Public Library.

Priorities for Use

Reservations are scheduled based on the following priorities:

1. Library programs
2. Library-affiliated non-profits
3. Town of Seekonk meetings
4. Local non-profit or non-commercial groups, on a first-come, first-serve basis
5. Non-Town run non-profit or non-commercial groups, on a first-come, first-serve basis
6. Other non-profits
7. Private social events (with applicable fees*)

**Please refer to Policy #12 Schedule of Fees and Fines for information on fees assessed to for-profit groups*

Rules and Limitations

Meeting room space at the Library is limited and subject to availability. The Library reserves the right to impose limits on the number and frequency of reservations depending on scheduled Library programming.

Library programs take precedence over other meeting room use. Reservations may be rescheduled or canceled if the space is needed for official Library use.

Meeting rooms may not be used for commercial activities, religious services, or fundraising unless explicitly permitted under the policy.

The meeting rooms at the Library shall not be used for fundraising unless proceeds are to benefit the Seekonk Public Library, or with the permission of the Board of Library Trustees, another tax-exempt, non-profit organization located in Seekonk. Artists, writers, performers and craftspeople may sell their creative works on the day they appear at an event or performance sponsored by the Library. No other goods or services shall be promoted, offered, sold, or exchanged on the premises without prior approval by the Library Director.

All public events must be free and open to the public; private events require prior approval and are subject to applicable fees.

Use of meeting rooms for political activity as defined by State Ethics and Campaign Finance laws, including but not limited to campaign fundraising or signature campaigns is prohibited. Meeting rooms

may be used for political debates in the interests of civic discourse or voter education at the Library's sole discretion.

Private events shall not charge an admission fee or impose other charges on those attending, nor shall private events limit admission based on any constitutionally or statutorily prohibited basis. When assigning use of the meeting rooms, those willing to pay a fee shall not receive special consideration over those requesting to use the rooms at no charge.

Groups may not imply library sponsorship or endorsement of their event. Publicity must include the statement: *"This is not a library-sponsored event."*

Groups using Library meeting rooms must not use advertising and publicity which imply that their programs are sponsored, co-sponsored, endorsed or approved by the Library, unless written permission to do so has been previously given by the Library.

No banners, signs or other materials related to the meeting may be displayed inside or outside the Library or meeting space without prior approval from the Library. Said approved material may be displayed within the reserved space and is restricted from public access areas. All signage must be freestanding and nothing may be affixed to any surface (i.e. walls, windows, floors, furniture, or fixtures). As a public building, violations of this policy may result in assessment of damages, conservation fees and revoking of meeting room privileges.

Groups are responsible for setup, cleanup, and any damage to the facility.

All events in the room must occur during open hours of Library, and the room must be vacated and cleaned 15 minutes before the Library's closing time.

The Library will not be used as a mailing address for any non-library affiliated group or organization.

Smoking/vaping and alcoholic beverages are not permitted. Light refreshments may be served.

Failure to follow this Policy may result in loss of use of the meeting rooms. The Board reserves the right to reject or revoke a reservation request if the anticipated meeting is likely to be unreasonable disruptive to regular library functions, too large for the applicable room capacity, disorderly, dangerous to persons or property, or in any other way inconsistent with or in contravention of any of the terms and conditions of this or any Library Policy.

Application and Approval

- Applications must be submitted by an adult town resident authorized to represent the group. Minors may not reserve the meeting rooms.

- First-time users must be approved by the Board of Library Trustees (allow 45 days). Subsequent approvals may be made by the Library Director.

- The Library may cancel a reservation in its sole discretion if the space is needed for an official Library program.

Liability and Indemnification

All organizations or groups shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless the Library and the Town of Seekonk, the Board of Library Trustees, as well as its officers, agents and employees from and against any and all claims, suits, actions of any kind, arising and resulting and accruing from any negligent or wrongful act, omission or error of the organization or group resulting in or relating to personal injuries or property damage arising from the organization/group’s use of a Library meeting room. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide necessary equipment if it is not available at the Library. The Town of Seekonk, the Trustees and Library employees assume no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any property of any group, individual or organization using Library facilities.

Rooms will be reserved in an individual's name and this person will be held responsible for any damages to the room or to Library property due to their event.

Public Safety

Attendance must not exceed the posted capacity of the meeting room.

The Trustees of the Seekonk Public Library and/or Library staff reserves the right to determine, in their reasonable discretion, whether any proposed use of a meeting room will require a police detail or other extraordinary police protection, and, if so, the anticipated cost thereof. In making this determination, the Trustees may take into consideration the contents of the application form, the history of the group’s meeting room use in the Library, the history of the group’s use of meeting facilities elsewhere, and such other information as such the Library may deem appropriate to consider public safety matters and library operations, and may consult with members of the Seekonk Police regarding this inquiry. If the Trustees and/or Library staff determines that such police protection will be reasonably necessary, the group seeking to reserve the use of a meeting room shall be required, as a condition of such reservation, to pay to the Trustees by such date in advance of the meeting as Library staff reasonably sets, the anticipated cost of such police protection, and such sum applied thereto, with any surplus being returned to the group after the meeting. The group shall be liable to the Library for any deficiency.

Appeals

In the event that a room request is denied and the applicant is not satisfied with the reason why, the applicant may appeal to the Board Chairperson by contacting trustees@seekonkpl.org or calling 508-336-8230.

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on 2/18/26

This policy replaces the original Meeting Room Policy that was approved in July 1989, and significantly revised in 2017.

