



## **Meeting Room & Conference Room Policy**

The Trustees of the Billerica Public Library make library meeting rooms available to groups for civic, cultural, intellectual, charitable, and educational purposes, and have set forth the following policy to ensure fair and equitable access for those who wish to use the meeting room facilities of the library, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of the individuals or groups requesting use of the meeting rooms.

Use of library's Meeting Rooms by any group and/or organization constitutes acceptance of the terms of this Policy. Individuals, groups, and/or organizations using the Meeting Rooms are responsible for compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and this Policy, including without limitation the Americans with Disabilities Act and for providing qualified interpreters or auxiliary aids, upon request, for their meetings.

Providing use of the Meeting Rooms does not in any way constitute an endorsement of an individual, group, or organization's statements, presentations, policies, or beliefs by the Board of Trustees, the library, or its staff. The library shall not be identified or implied as a sponsor of the event or group.

### **Which rooms does this policy apply to?**

This policy applies to the following meeting room facilities:

- The large **Meeting Room** on the lower level of the library. This room holds a maximum of 125 people and can be separated into two smaller rooms, which will hold roughly 50 people each. Please note that with chairs, the full room can accommodate no more than 75 people. At any time, 42 chairs are available in the room. Additional chairs can be provided if needed.
- The **Conference Room**, located on the second floor. This room has seating for 12 people.

These rooms are collectively referred to as the "Meeting Rooms" for purposes of this Policy.

### **When are the rooms generally available?**

Meeting Rooms are available for use during the regular service hours on days the library is open with the exception of Sundays and summer Saturdays. On Sundays and summer Saturdays, due to limited staffing, both the Meeting Room and Conference Room will be unavailable to the public for booking or use. NO ONE may enter the library

prior to the library's posted opening time, including with respect to use of the Meeting Rooms. All meetings must conclude at least 15 minutes prior to closing of the library.

In the event of an unplanned library closing due to weather, public health emergencies, staff shortages, or any other purpose identified by the library, all scheduled meetings and reservations of the Meeting Rooms will be cancelled by the library. Under such circumstances, the library will notify the individual, group, and/or organization who initiated the booking using the contact information provided during the booking. The individual, group, and/or organization may request to reschedule their meeting on another available date and time, subject to availability and other limitations contained in this Policy.

### **How can the rooms be used?**

Library Meeting Rooms are used primarily for library-sponsored activities; therefore, the library retains the right to give priority to library-sponsored meetings, events, and programs in scheduling Meeting Room use. The library also reserves the right to decline bookings and/or uses that duplicate programs and services already offered by or sponsored by the library. Such use of the Meeting Rooms shall be subject to availability and subject to determination made by the Library Director, who may consult with staff and/or the Library Trustees, based upon the following factors:

- Whether the individual, group, and/or organization making the reservation request meets the requirements of this Policy;
- Whether a library-sponsored event and/or activity should take first priority;
- Whether the individual, group, and/or organization making the reservation request is the first in line to request the Meeting Room for a particular time;
- Whether the request is duplicative of a service, program, and/or activity already offered by the library;
- Whether the proposed use complies with or interferes with the primary function of the library;
- Whether the individual, group, and/or organization has a prior history of violating the Meeting Room policy;
- Whether the individual, group, and/or organization making the reservation request is receiving a commercial benefit, or rather, is a not-for-profit group receiving no commercial benefit;
- Whether the event or activity is open to the general public and free of charge;
- Whether the individual, group, and/or organization making the reservation request meets the remainder of the criteria set forth in this section governing how rooms may (and may not) be used.

No Meeting Room shall be used without prior permission for access to the Meeting Room by the Library Director or their designee.

Meeting Rooms at the Billerica Public Library are designed for individuals, groups, and/or organizations that engage in civic, educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable purposes and activities. All meetings must be free of charge and open to the public. The applicant must submit a "request for booking" which identifies the applicant as a point-of-contact, as well as the purpose of the meeting, so that the Library Director may evaluate whether the request complies with the requirements set forth in this Policy. Failure to comply with this Meeting Room policy will result in the suspension of current and/or future Meeting Room use.

Individuals, groups, and/or organizations that are affiliated with a business or commercial organization, enterprise, or any other type of entity that exists primarily for-profit may not use the meeting facilities without express permission for a specific event. This prohibition includes selling products or services, active solicitation of donations, fundraising activities, charging admission fees, offering money-making activities, holding sales, training or staff meetings for a for-profit organization, or promoting a commercial business. On occasion, such use of a Meeting Room may be permitted for a meeting of civic, educational, intellectual, charitable, and/or cultural value as determined by the Library Director in consultation with the Board of Trustees, who, in making such determination, may consider whether the proposed use: promotes the activities of the library and/or the general community; promotes or encourages a local event, activity, or group of civic, educational, intellectual, charitable, and/or cultural value; directly or indirectly benefits the business or commercial purpose of the organization alone, or, if it does have a direct or indirect benefit on the business or commercial purpose of the organization as a whole, whether that benefit is substantially outweighed by the civic, educational, intellectual, charitable, and/or cultural value to the community; and/or is open to all members of the general public.

Non-profit organizations may collect donations to cover incidental expenses only, but may not solicit donations for fundraising purposes or make sales, except for the sole benefit of the library. For-profit organizations may not charge fees or make sales. The collection of attendees' names or other personal information in order to promote or solicit business is strictly forbidden.

Study groups of four or more are permitted to use the Meeting Rooms upon availability, but may not make advanced reservations. Prior to using a Meeting Room, a study group must agree to follow all rules and regulations of this Policy, with the exception of those rooms being open to the public. Schools, however, may not use the Meeting Rooms for instructional purposes as an ordinary part of their curriculum.

### **How can the rooms NOT be used?**

Meeting Rooms may not be used by outside individuals, groups, and/or organizations for social gatherings such as showers, birthday parties, dances, or any other closed meeting.

Meeting Rooms may not be used by outside individuals, groups, and/or organizations for rehearsals or performances of dance or music programs, or any other type of program that involves music, dance, or any other activity that disrupts the normal operations or primary functions of the library.

Meeting Rooms may not be used by outside individuals, groups, and/or organizations for the purpose of conducting religious worship services, where the services involve activities that disrupt the normal operations or primary functions of the library.

Meeting Rooms may not be used by outside individuals, groups, and/or organizations in any manner that undermines the library's primary function of providing a venue for readings, writing, knowledge, and quiet contemplation. The Library Director, in accordance with discretion granted by the Board of Library Trustees and in consultation with any other Library staff working at the relevant time, may disapprove or terminate any use of the Meeting Rooms if the direct or indirect use of the Meeting Room interferes with these primary functions of the Library.

#### **What is the reservation procedure?**

1. Requests for use of a Meeting Room may be made in person, by telephone, or online. Online reservations are only available for meetings of four hours or less. Online bookings can be made up to one day prior to the scheduled meeting. Bookings for same-day meetings must be made by telephone or in-person.
2. Rooms may be booked no more than 60 days in advance.
3. When making a request, the individual, group, and/or organization must provide a distinguishing name for their group and/or organization and a descriptive summary of the meeting's topic and purpose. Reservations will not be approved unless both are provided, and providing such information does not guarantee that the reservation will be approved.
4. The individual making the reservation must check in with a library staff person at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor reference desk prior to beginning the meeting and must be present at the meeting for its duration. If the individual making the reservation cannot attend the meeting, they must notify the library in advance and assign an alternative individual, who must meet all Policy requirements and will assume all responsibilities assigned in this Policy to the individual making the reservation. If the individual making the reservation is not present and previous arrangements have not been made, the meeting will be cancelled.
5. The individual making the reservation is responsible for ensuring that each member of their group and/or organization is aware of and abides by this Policy. Further, the individual making the reservation as well as the membership of the group and/or organization as a whole, will be held responsible for any and all damages that occur as a result of the use of the library's facilities. By making a reservation request, the individual, group, and/or organization accepts responsibility for any such damage and the costs of any necessary repairs.

6. Each time a booking is made, individuals, groups, and/or organizations who wish to use the library's Meeting Rooms must agree to this Policy by either completing the online booking form and checking the acceptance box when making the booking online, or by signing and submitting a policy agreement form when making the booking in-person or by telephone. Decisions as to whether a reservation is approved or not will be provided in writing.
7. Arrangements for use of audiovisual, digital, or other equipment are the responsibility of the individual, group, and/or organization and must be made when reserving the room. If arrangements have not been made in advance, equipment and assistance in its use may be unavailable at the time of the event.
8. Requests will be honored on a first-come, first-served basis, with the exception of library-sponsored events and activities, which shall take first priority. Effective January 2020, meeting room reservations may only be placed by Billerica residents, who can provide proof of residency with a valid Billerica library card or photo ID. In the case of Condo Associations or similar organizations, a resident (or member) of the association residing in Billerica must make the booking if the property management company is not located in town.
9. In the interest of fair access to all, the Meeting Rooms are not intended to be used as a regular meeting location for any particular individual, group, and/or organization, and may not be advertised as such. No more than three time slots may be reserved for an individual, group, and/or organization at any given time. Additionally, individuals, groups, and/or organizations may only book the rooms a combined total of 4 times per calendar year. Individuals, groups, and/or organizations partnering with the library to deliver auxiliary services and programs will be exempt from this limit, at the discretion of the Library Director.
10. Library staff may follow up with questions before the reservation is approved. If the individual making a reservation does not reply to a follow-up inquiry from the library with 48 hours, the reservation will be cancelled.
11. Notice of cancellation should be provided to the library as soon as possible. After 30 minutes of delay or failure to appear as scheduled for a Meeting Room reservation, an individual, group, and/or organization may forfeit its reservation.
12. If an individual, group, and/or organization fails to show for two meetings in a row and does not call to cancel, all future reservations are forfeited until the individual, group, and/or organization calls to reschedule.
13. Any scheduled meetings in which an individual, group, and/or organization does not show and does not call to cancel will be counted toward the 4 bookings per calendar year limit. Additionally, any meetings that have to be cancelled due to non-compliance with this policy will also be counted toward the 4 bookings per calendar year limit.

### **How can I promote my reserved meeting?**

While the library will post reservations on its public calendar, individuals, groups, and/or organizations are solely responsible for promoting their meetings. Any posters,

press releases, social media postings, or other publicity issued by a group and/or organization must make clear that meetings held in the library's Meeting Rooms are not sponsored, co-sponsored, or approved by the library and that the meeting is open to the public. Failure to follow this Policy will result in cancellation of the meeting.

Please note that the following language will be added to meetings listed in the library's public calendar that are not sponsored or affiliated with the library: "This meeting has not been sponsored by Billerica Public Library."

### **What is the policy on food and beverages?**

Smoking and alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the meeting rooms.

Simple refreshments may be served. The library may provide a coffeepot, but coffee, cups, utensils, cream, sugar, or other equipment and supplies will be the responsibility of the individual, group, and/or organization.

There will be no cooking or food preparation on site.

Please clean the kitchen facilities thoroughly if used; trash must be bagged.

### **What services are provided by the library for reserved meetings?**

Room set-up is not provided by the library, and individuals, groups, and/or organizations are responsible for having their own supplies. Time for setting up and cleaning up afterwards should be included in the meeting time requested.

The library assumes no responsibility for private property brought into the building.

Library staff will not take or deliver messages for meeting participants except in an emergency.

### **What are the other requirements for room use?**

Please leave meeting rooms as they are found.

If the furniture is rearranged, it should be returned to the original arrangement at the end of the meeting.

Furniture and/or equipment from the main area of the library may not be brought into meeting rooms.

Equipment, supplies, or personal effects cannot be stored or left in library meeting rooms before or after use.

Attendance at meetings will be limited to the capacity of the individual meeting rooms.

Seating and/or supplementary furniture are not allowed in corridors outside the meeting rooms.

Users of the Meeting Rooms may be asked to leave if the use is deemed disruptive, contrary to the primary functions of the library, or in any way contrary to this Policy.

Individuals, groups, and/or organizations failing to comply with any part of this Policy or the established procedures will be denied further use of the Meeting Rooms.

Any questions regarding the appropriate interpretation of this Policy will be referred to the Library Director, who will make their recommendations on an interpretation of the Policy. The final determination rests with the Board of Trustees.

Any individual subject to disciplinary action by the Library Director, including but not limited to the rejection of a reservation, the revocation or suspension of Meeting Room use, or the revocation or suspension of library privileges, may appeal the decision of the Director to the Library Trustees within 30 days of such decision. The Library Trustees require that all appeals be in writing. The Trustees may hold a public hearing on the decision, and shall issue a decision, in writing, either affirming or reversing the Library Director's decision, within 60 days of receiving the written notice of appeal.

*Revised and adopted by vote of the Board of Library Trustees February 2020, as amended on March 13, 2023*