

# Policies

## **PUBLIC USE OF MEETING ROOMS**

**Approved: 2/9/83;**

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**Review Date: 2026**

The library maintains meeting rooms for library-sponsored or co-sponsored programs that support the library's mission. Meeting rooms may also be made available to individuals and organizations, subject to rules and regulations established by the library Board of Trustees.

### **A. General Conditions**

1. Available Meeting Rooms and Features:
  - a. Church Mutual Community Room (lower level)
    - Capacity: approximately 75
    - Kitchen with sink, refrigerator, & microwave is available.
  - b. Hermien Livingston Board Room (Adult Department, third floor)
    - Capacity: 20 people
    - Sink and small refrigerator are available.
  - c. Story Hour Room (Youth Services Department, second floor)
    - Capacity: 20 people
    - Sink is available.
  - d. Semling-Menke (Large) Study Room (Adult Department, third floor)
    - Capacity: 4 people.
  - e. Small Study Rooms #1 and #2 (Adult Department, third floor)
    - Capacity: 2-3 people each.
2. Priorities for library meeting room use:
  - a. Library-sponsored meetings or programs.
  - b. Library-related meetings or programs.
  - c. Meetings sponsored by City of Merrill or Lincoln County agencies.
  - d. Educational, cultural, or civic meetings or programs.
  - e. Other meetings and activity appropriate to the library.
  - f. Purely social functions (e.g. birthday parties, showers, company parties, mixers) are not allowed.

The library Director reserves the right to determine justifiable use of library facilities and/or to cancel room reservations.

3. Conditions for library meeting room use:
  - a. No admission or other fees are charged (see C1-C3 below).
  - b. No sales or other commercial transactions occur (see C4-C5 below).
  - c. Meetings or other uses are always open to the public.
  - d. Meetings or other uses do not interfere with regular library operations.

Organizations conducting business meetings or presenting programs may wish to restrict or limit public comments during all or part of their meetings or programs. Any such restrictions should be announced at the beginning of a meeting or other room use and should in no way interfere with the

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public's ability to attend, observe or otherwise experience the program.

4. Meeting room availability:
  - a. Meeting rooms are generally available for use when the library is open.
  - b. Meeting room use when the library is closed must be approved by the Director and is subject to staff availability (see After-Hours Policy).
  - c. Meeting room use, including clean-up, must end before the library's closing time, unless arrangements are made at least one week in advance for staff to remain after regular hours of operation.
5. In an emergency, such as inclement weather or a loss of electricity, the library reserves the right to close the library and cancel all meeting room use.
6. Use of illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco products is prohibited on library premises.
7. No non-library program held in the meeting room may be broadcast or televised without permission of the library Director.
8. No individual, group, or organization using meeting rooms will discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, handicapped status or age in the provision of services. Meeting room users are responsible for providing qualified interpreters and/or auxiliary aids as requested.

## **B. Meeting Room Reservations and Usage Charges**

1. Reservations Generally:
  - a. The Community Room, Board Room, and Story Hour Room may be reserved on a first come, first served basis. Reservations and changes to reservations may be made online, by phone or in person.
  - b. Prompt notification to the library of a room reservation cancellation is requested, so others may have an opportunity to use the room.
  - c. The large (Semling-Menke) and small third floor study rooms are available on a first come, first served basis. Library staff have discretion to reserve study rooms in special circumstances.
2. The person reserving a meeting room must be eighteen years of age or older. Groups whose members are under the age of eighteen must be accompanied by one adult chaperone for each ten participants.
3. Reservations for regular meetings by the same group will be accepted no more than three (3) months in advance. Conditional reservations may be accepted farther in advance with the understanding that library needs may result in rescheduling or canceling of the tentative booking.
4. Fees for frequent meeting room use:
  - a. No fee is charged for "one-time" use of meeting rooms by library-related or governmental organizations.
  - b. When a person or entity uses meeting rooms on a frequent basis (more than twice in a six-month period), \$10.00 per session for every additional meeting in that period is charged to defray utility and maintenance costs. Meeting room use without reservations does not count toward frequent meeting room use charges.

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- c. Exceptions to the room charge may only be made by vote of the library Board of Trustees.
5. General standards and fees for meeting room setup and condition:
  - a. Meeting room users are responsible for any advance preparations, setting up and putting away furnishings used for their meeting, and clearing away their own materials and any trash.
  - b. Meeting room users assume responsibility for any damage to the room or its contents. The library reserves the right to charge a fee for any needed repairs, replacements, or cleaning.
  - c. If refreshments are being served, food service areas are also expected to be left in satisfactory condition.
  - d. If library staff determines that meeting room and food service areas have not been left in satisfactory condition, a cleanup charge of at least \$25 may be assessed.
6. Serving food and beverages:
  - a. The kitchen in the lower level and food preparation spaces in the Board Room and Story Hour room are available to prepare and serve beverages and other light refreshments.
  - b. It is recommended to obtain permission to serve food or beverages so library staff can make necessary arrangements.
  - c. The meeting room user is responsible for providing food, beverages, and all supplies needed to prepare and serve them.
  - d. Library consumables, e.g., paper products, food, table cloths, may not be used. Library coffee pots, dishes, and microwaves may be used, provided they are cleaned (and dishes & equipment dried) after use.
7. Audio-visual and other equipment:
  - a. Library audio-visual equipment is available for use if requested as part of a room reservation. There is no fee for the use of AV equipment. The library does not provide AV equipment operators.
  - b. The piano in the Community Room may be used for recitals or similar events. Music teachers or performers may schedule rehearsals and performances.

## **C. Admission/Sales/Solicitation**

1. Admission may be charged for programs sponsored by the library and its affiliated organizations.
2. Non-library organizations using meeting rooms may not charge an admission fee.
3. Educational courses conducted by non-profit agencies may charge fees for learning materials or course credits, but the program must be open for observation to members of the public who don't pay fees.
4. Fund raising and sales are not permitted. However, selling goods that directly or indirectly benefit the library is permitted in the meeting room and other areas of the library. When an author/artist takes part in a library-sponsored program, the library may arrange for the sale of the

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author's/artist's works at the program.

5. Solicitation of library patrons or staff is not permitted on library grounds.

## **D. Publicity**

1. Groups using meeting rooms must produce and provide their own publicity.
2. The name, address, or phone number of the library may not be used as the official address or headquarters of any organization except those affiliated with the library.
3. The use of meeting rooms by a non-library group shall not be publicized in such a way as to imply library sponsorship of the group's activities.

## **E. Damages and Liability**

1. The library is not responsible for the loss of or damage to any equipment or materials owned or rented by an individual, group or organization using its meeting rooms.
2. The library is not responsible for personal injury to any member, affiliated person, guest of an organization or program attendee using a library meeting room.
3. Any group using library meeting rooms and its members shall be held responsible for loss of library equipment, furnishings or materials, or for willful or accidental damage to the library building, grounds, collections or equipment caused by the individual, group or organization, its members, or those attending its program.

## **F. Denial of Meeting Room Privileges**

1. Disruptive behavior is not permitted. Individuals exhibiting disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the library.
2. Failure to abide by the library's meeting room policy and by its rules of conduct may result in the cancellation of existing reservations and/or refusal to honor future reservation requests.

## **G. Exceptions:**

1. Exceptions to the meeting room policy and fee waivers must be approved by the library Board of Trustees.
2. However, the library Director is granted authority to waive rules and fees, if in his/her judgment, emergency or other conditions warrant such action. The Director will report all such waivers to the Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting.