



Community Room Policy

The Cynthia B. Fox Community Room and the small meeting room on the upper floor at the Sharon Public Library are general-purpose meeting rooms that are available for educational, recreational, and civic purposes provided that such use does not interfere with Library services or programs. Please be aware that these rooms do not offer complete privacy.

Sharon Public Library supports and endorses the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, which states: "Libraries which maintain meeting spaces, exhibit space or other facilities open to the public should make them available on equal terms to all persons, regardless of their beliefs or affiliations."

The fact that an organization is permitted to meet at the library does not constitute an endorsement of the organization's beliefs by the library, its staff, its advisory board, or the Sharon Public Library.

Any group or individual reserving these rooms must conform to the following rules:

Use Requirements:

1. All programs shall be open and free of charge to the public with no expectation of Privacy, and background noise should be expected throughout the Library. The Library shall not discriminate based on the political or religious beliefs of applicant groups.
2. Use of meeting rooms and external space/grounds for Library purposes shall take precedence over all other uses.
3. Reservations for meetings of organizations, clubs, and similar groups may be made two (2) months in advance. Due to the high demand for meeting room space, no **outside** group (non-library associated groups) may consider the Library its permanent meeting place or use the library as its mailing address. To promote the accessibility of the meeting rooms to a wide variety of community groups, the Library may limit the number or frequency of meetings for any particular organization.
4. Requests may be made more than two months in advance with the approval of the Director for organizations wishing to host larger events that include speakers and/or presentations and that are open to the public.

5. There is no charge for the use of the Community Room by nonprofit organizations during Library open hours. Proof of nonprofit status may be required. Individuals should contact the Library Director for approval.
6. All for-profit groups are required to pay a \$50.00 fee per usage made payable to the Sharon Public Library.
7. Outside groups (non-library associated groups) reserving the room cannot charge admission fees. No donations of money or other property may be solicited or collected from the audience. Groups may not promote sales of services, products, merchandise, materials, or other items.

A commercial entity or professional practitioner may use a Library meeting room to provide an educational program open to the general public related to his or her field of expertise. During such a program, no attempt may be made to sell (at the time of the program or in the future) a product or service offered by the entity or practitioner or any other commercial interest. Therefore, the individual or entity offering the program may not hand out business cards or brochures promoting any business, product, or service and may not solicit personal information (names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) from the attendees, either as part of a pre-registration process or during the program itself.

*This policy does not apply to artwork exhibited in the Community Room.

8. Outside groups reserving the Community Room may not proselytize, recruit or promote within the Library or on library grounds.
9. The Library reserves the right of refusal to use the Community Room or cancel any reservation when it deems the action to be in the best interest of the Library and/or the Town.
10. The Friends of the Library or Library Foundation are authorized, upon approval from the Library Director, to fundraise for Library-related needs.
11. An adult age 18 or older must sign the Community Room Reservation Form, and at least one adult age 18 or older must be present when youth groups use the meeting rooms.
12. For meeting room use during Library open hours, meetings must adjourn 15 minutes before closing. Meetings that are reserved back-to-back must include a 10-minute clean-up and set-up period.
13. For meeting room use after Library hours, approval and pre-arrangement must be made with the Library Director. A custodial fee shall apply in accordance with the current contract at a rate of time and a half for a three (3)-hour minimum. The custodian has the right to accept or deny the request. If the custodian is not available, the DPW will try to find coverage, but it is not guaranteed.
14. Light refreshments may be served, but groups may not prepare food on Library property. Groups are responsible for cleanup. Outside groups, (non-library associated groups) may not serve alcoholic beverages. **No kitchen facilities are available.**

15. Tables and chairs and some other equipment are available. The group is responsible for setting up, rearranging, and taking down tables and chairs. Meeting rooms must be left clean, in good repair, and in the same condition as found. Any group that damages Library property will be liable for costs incurred in connection with such damage and may lose the privilege of using the meeting room in the future.
16. In publicizing a meeting to be held in a Library meeting room, the sponsoring group must be clearly identified. Groups must not imply Library sponsorship or endorsement of their program or organization in their publicity. With prior approval, groups may post signs in Library-approved locations.
17. The Library is not responsible for theft of or damage to property.
18. Each group is responsible for ensuring attendance at its meeting does not exceed the maximum occupancy for the meeting room as set by the Sharon Fire Department.
Community Room Reservations:
 - a. Cynthia B. Fox Community Room - 75 patrons
 - b. Small Meeting Room (upper floor) - 14 patrons (two tables are provided)
19. The Community Room will not be available for use in the event that the building is closed due to emergency conditions or inclement weather. Library closings are posted on the Library website. **Please check the Library website at: www.sharonpubliclibrary.org for all Library closings before you notify your group.**
20. Individuals interested in reserving a meeting room for Zoom and conference calls must be able to conduct their own meetings using their own Zoom accounts. Permission may be granted on a limited basis with an understanding that Library and group reservations will take precedence. Contact the Library Director or her designee for information.
21. Please contact the Director with any questions regarding this policy.

Solicitation of Signatures in Public Places - Municipal Property

- In the case of *Batchelder V. Allied Stores International, Inc.*, the Supreme Judicial Court held that Article 9 of the Massachusetts Constitution protects the right to solicit signatures and to distribute related printed material in the common areas of privately owned shopping centers, subject to reasonable regulations. At least the same amount of protection must apply to municipal property that is regularly open to the general public for municipal business. Therefore, ballot access and nomination paper signature solicitation must be allowed on municipal property that is regularly open to the general public for municipal business, subject only to reasonable time, place, and manner regulations. ***The Library Community Room on the lower floor is an allowable space to solicit signatures in the Library and to distribute related printed material.***

How to Reserve a Meeting Room

All groups/individuals must complete the Community Room Reservation Form, after reading this policy.

Application forms are available through the Sharon Public Library website. Call the Library if you need assistance.

Once your reservation is approved by the Library Director or designee, it will appear on the Library website calendar of events.

No reservation shall be approved until payment is received if required by the above policy. For-profit groups are required to pay a \$50.00 fee per usage, made payable to the Sharon Public Library. As required by the above policy, after-hours reservation payments for custodial coverage should be made out to the "Town of Sharon-DPW."

The Library Director or designee reserves the right to reschedule meeting room reservations in an emergency with a 24-hour notice.

Reservations of meeting rooms may be made two months in advance, or more with the approval of the Library Director. Use is granted on a first-come, first-served basis. Use of meeting room space may be limited to once per month for each group or individual due to limited meeting room space.