

## ***XVII. Public Use of Meeting Rooms Policy***

### ***Statement of Purpose***

The Mercer Public Library provides meeting room space for the community as a part of its mission to serve as a gathering place for children, young people, and adults. The Friends of the Library Room, Memory Lab, and meeting pods are available to reserve for use by individuals or organized groups in the library service area. Meeting rooms are not intended for the financial benefit of private individuals or organizations.

Use of the meeting rooms will not be denied because of the topic, group, individual, or speakers' race, nationality, origin, background, or political or social views, or to avoid controversy or public disapproval. The Mercer Public Library Board of Trustees has endorsed the *Library Bill of Rights* (Appendix D) and should be considered an integral part of this policy.

### ***Overview of Available Rooms and Equipment***

Meeting Rooms:

- Friends of the Library Room: Seats between 12 to 32 depending on arrangement; 6 moveable tables, 12 chairs, lectern, TV screen with HDMI capability, and Logitech virtual meeting system.
- Memory Lab: Seats up to 2; screen, virtual meeting equipment, and various digitizing equipment.
- Meeting Pods:
  - Pods A-C have a single-occupancy capacity; tall stool and small workstation.
  - Pod D has a maximum capacity of 4; bench seating, table, screen, and virtual meeting system.

Equipment (available on request):

- Whiteboard easel and markers, laser pointer and slide advancer, laptop, projector, Blu-ray/DVD player, and microphone.

### ***Reservation Eligibility and Fees***

All Mercer residents, visitors, community organizations, nonprofits, and businesses are welcome to use meeting rooms. Fees for room use will be assessed as follows:

- Meetings, presentations, workshops, or other activities that are free and open to the public: No fees required for room use.
- Meetings, presentations, workshops, or other activities that serve an educational, informational, or cultural purpose where admission or registration is charged: \$25 per day fee required.
- Meetings, presentations, workshops, or other activities that serve commercial or social functions, result in financial gains for an individual or group, or act as charitable fundraisers for neither the Library nor the Friends of the Library are strictly prohibited.

Failure to accurately represent the purpose of the meeting to avoid fees will result in the assessment of the appropriate fees and immediate loss of meeting room use privileges according to the *Patron Responsibilities and Conduct* policy.

Fees may be waived or reduced at the discretion of the Library Director for non-profit or community organizations only.

### ***Permissible and Prohibited Uses***

Meeting rooms identified above may be used for:

- Free presentations, group discussions, workshops, and similar functions open to the public.
- Educational, information, or cultural classes, workshops, and presentations including those that charge a fee for admission.
- Organizations engaged in educational, informational, cultural, or governmental activities.
- Meetings, workshops, or presentations to facilitate remote work and remote learning.
- Telehealth appointments or other appointments with medical professionals.

Meeting rooms identified above may not be used for:

- Any purpose that interferes with the normal operation of the library, disturbs library patrons, impedes library staff, or endangers the library facilities.
- Commercial functions which include, but are not limited to, sales presentations, the sale of merchandise or services, or solicitations.
- Programs or meetings that do not adhere to the provisions of the *Fundraising* policy addressing fundraising activities not permitted on Library property.
- For-profit businesses or individuals to conduct regularly scheduled office hours.
- Purely social functions (receptions, birthday parties, showers, etc).
- Activities which include gambling, games of chance, bingo, casinos, or wagering of any kind; the sale or consumption of alcohol, without the express written permission of the Library Director.
- Activities or behaviors which violate federal or state laws, or local ordinances, or the *Patron Responsibilities and Conduct* policy.

### ***Making a reservation***

- Meeting rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Advanced room reservations for any meeting space may be submitted through the online reservation system. While walk-in bookings are welcome, priority will be given to existing reservations regardless of who arrives first.
- Library programming and Friends of the Library activities will have priority for use of the meeting rooms. The Library reserves the right to cancel and/or reschedule reservations when operationally necessary, including but not limited to programs and events sponsored by the Library or the Friends of the Library or closure of the Library. Any room reservation fees for cancelled events will be refunded, except when the program is able to be accommodated in another Library meeting room or at another date or time.
- Meeting spaces may only be used during the Library's hours of operation. No one will be admitted to the building outside of operating hours without the express written permission of the Library Director. Any group or individual found to have violated this will immediately face the loss of meeting room use according to those outlined in the *Patron Responsibilities and Conduct* policy.
- Reservations may be made up to one hundred eighty (180) days in advance through the online reservation system. Annual meetings may be scheduled up to one year in advance by contacting the Library Director.

- A group or individual denied a reservation or restricted in meeting room use by the Library Director may appeal that decision to the Library Board within 21 days from the date indicated on the written notification. Appeals shall be heard at the next regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees and a final decision will be made by a majority vote of the Library Board.

### ***Guidelines***

#### Food and Drink:

- Light refreshments and drinks may be served in meeting spaces. Larger meals and catering services are not able to be accommodated. The Library is not responsible for the safety of any food or drink brought into and consumed on the premises. The Library will not accept delivery of food, drink, or other supplies and equipment on behalf of the reserving patron or organization. The Library will not provide storage prior to or after the scheduled meeting room use.
- The use or consumption of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, alcohol, or any other controlled substance on Library property is strictly prohibited. Groups, members of a group, or individuals believed to be under the influence of alcohol or controlled substance will be asked to leave Library property immediately.
- The Library does not provide dishes, utensils, or paper products. The Friends of the Library meeting room has a single cup coffee maker available, but selection is not guaranteed.
- Cooking is strictly prohibited. The kitchen located behind the main desk is not available for public use.

#### Technology:

- There is no charge for the use of available equipment. However, Library staff cannot provide operators and may not be available for technical assistance or troubleshooting. Those reserving the meeting room spaces are strongly encouraged to arrange a training appointment in advanced if they are unfamiliar with the technology. Equipment must be properly shut down and stowed prior to vacating the room.
- The Library is not responsible for equipment or materials owned by another organization or individual.

#### General:

- Meeting rooms must be cleaned and vacated at the scheduled time. If the room requires cleaning, rearranging, or repair after use, the reserving patron may be charged \$50 plus the actual cost of damages.
- Library staff will not be responsible for setting up tables or chairs. If additional time is needed to do so, the reserving patron must account for this when booking their reservation.
- Equipment and materials may not be stored at the Library before or after room use.
- A reserved space may be released if check-in does not occur within 15 minutes of the reservation start time. Repeated failures to appear for reservations may result in the loss of meeting room privileges as outlined in the *Patron Responsibilities and Conduct* policy.
- The library does not assume any liability for groups or individuals attending an activity in the library. The library is also not responsible for any equipment, clothing, or other items brought to the library by any group or individual.

- Meeting rooms are available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- The Library reserves the right to transfer or move individuals or groups to another meeting room in the Library.
- Permission to use a space is revocable and does not constitute a lease of the Library space. Use of the meeting rooms may be terminated at any time if the behavior of the group, any member of the group, or an individual constitutes a violation of the *Patron Responsibilities and Conduct* policy.

### ***Marketing, Publicity, and Signage***

Publicity for activities held in a reservable space must clearly and prominently identify the name of the individual, associated organization, or group as the event host. Publicity may include the Library name, address, and the appropriate room designation as location information only.

All publicity utilizing the name and address of the Mercer Public Library shall include a disclaimer that the use of Library facilities does not constitute an endorsement of the statements, topic, or presentation by library staff, the Mercer Public Library, or the Town of Mercer. Use of the Library logo is strictly prohibited.

Only library and library co-sponsored events may appear on the Library's event calendar. The Library will not promote non-library events/programs on the website, events calendar, newsletter, or social media.

No signage or other publicity materials promoting an event may be placed within the Library or on its premises without prior permission from the Library Director. Posters and/or flyers may be displayed in the community information shelving unit and/or on the community bulletin board in the vestibule if space allows. Materials must be approved by the Library Director and comply with the Library's *Public Notice Bulletin Board* policy. Any materials placed within the library, on Library property, or on the public notice bulletin board that does not comply with the relevant policies will be removed immediately by Library staff and the cost to repair any damage caused by the unauthorized placement will be assessed to the reserving patron.

### ***Expectation of Privacy***

Reservation of a library meeting room does not convey an expectation of privacy. The Library retains the right to monitor all meetings, programs, and events to ensure compliance with Library policies. Library staff may not be prevented from accessing meeting rooms. In the event of telehealth appointments, Library staff will make every effort to preserve the patron's privacy during their appointment, but absolute privacy cannot be guaranteed either from staff or other patrons.

### ***Disclaimer***

*The fact that a group is permitted to meet at the library does not in any way constitute an endorsement of the group's policies or beliefs by the library staff, the Mercer Public Library Board of Trustees, or the Town of Mercer.*

*Related Policies:*

III. Patron Responsibilities and Conduct

XIX. Public Notice Bulletin Board

XX. Fundraising

Appendix D: Library Bill of Rights

*Public Use of Meeting Rooms Policy revised and amended by the Library Board of Trustees –  
December 11, 2017, June 8, 2026.*