



Newburyport Public Library Meeting Room Policy

Purpose

The Newburyport Public Library exists for the purpose of providing library services for residents of Newburyport, Massachusetts. The provision of meeting room space is not the primary mission of the library, and must always be subordinate to the paramount need to provide a safe, peaceful, and respectful environment in which to work in and use the library facilities.

Library meeting rooms are used primarily for library programs and activities. When available, the Library offers use of the spaces for public meetings of City Boards and Commissions; City, State and Federal government officials; and local non-profit organizations and community groups engaged in educational, cultural, philanthropic, or civic activities. All groups interested in using the meeting rooms must be locally based, and all meetings must be free and open to the public. 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. Meeting rooms shall not be used for entrepreneurial or commercial purposes, for the solicitation or development of business, for profit or for fundraising.

In permitting the use of the library meeting rooms, the Library does not imply endorsement of the beliefs, policies, or activities of any group or individual.

Meeting rooms are not intended for use for regularly scheduled meetings by clubs or organizations that charge membership fees; these are considered private purposes. The Library, at the sole discretion of the Head Librarian, reserves the right to re-schedule, cancel or re-assign meeting room locations and dates that conflict with Library needs or for other reasons. Inclement weather and other unforeseen circumstances may cause the Library to cancel meeting room reservations with little or no notice.

Exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of the Head Librarian and the Library Board of Directors as it deems it in the best interest of the Library and the community.

Meeting Spaces Available at the Library

Meeting Spaces Available by Reservation or on a First-Come First-Served Basis

- Conference Room: table and seating for 5 people, whiteboard.
- Study Rooms (2): small table and seating for 3 people, whiteboard.

Procedures for using the Conference Room or the Study Rooms

- Sign-in at the 2nd floor Reference Desk upon arrival; sign-out when exiting.
- Rooms may be used once a day for up to 2 hours.
- Use by two or more people constitutes room use that day for each person.
- Children must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult.
- The Conference Room and Study Rooms can be reserved up to 48 hours in advance by going online at www.newburyportpl.org or by calling 978-456-4428 x242.
- See a librarian for alternative meeting space when Study Rooms and Conference Room are unavailable.

Meeting Space Available by Reservation Only

- Large/Community Meeting Room: accommodating up to 70 people, 8 tables and chairs, large screen and AV equipment available.

Procedures for Reserving the Large Meeting Room

Applicants must complete, sign and return the “NPL Meeting Room Application” form. No group may reserve or use the Large Meeting Room unless it complies in all respects with the provisions of this policy and submits, in fully executed form, the application and indemnification agreement called for in this policy, and any insurance certificate requested pursuant hereto.

The Head Librarian and the Library Board of Directors reserve the right to reject a meeting room reservation request if the anticipated meeting is likely to be unreasonably 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 policy. In determining whether such a likelihood exists, the Head Librarian and/or the Library Board of Directors 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 they may deem appropriate. An application does not assure approval. Any false, misleading or incomplete statement on the application form shall be grounds to forbid the use of meeting rooms by the applicant group.

Application forms are available at the Library, on the library website at www.newburyportpl.org or by calling the Assistant Head Librarian at 978-465-4428 x224. Approved applications of local groups and organizations will be kept on file for one year.

The Large Meeting Room may be reserved up to one month in advance. In order to ensure equitable access for all eligible applicants, use of the Large Meeting Room is limited to twelve times per calendar year per group or organization. The Large Meeting Room may not be used without making a reservation in advance. Cancellation of Large Meeting Room use should be made as soon as possible in order to provide access by other groups and organizations.

General Guidelines for Meeting Room Use

Access: All meetings must be free and open to the Public.

Hours: Meeting rooms are available during the Library's regular scheduled hours of operation.

Conduct: The conduct of meetings and those attending meetings must not disrupt or interfere with the use of the Library by other patrons, the work of library staff, or any other aspect of library operation. The Head Librarian and the Board of Directors reserve the right to deny use of meeting rooms for purposes deemed to be disruptive to library operations. All persons attending a meeting in a meeting room shall comply with all requests by library staff and, if applicable, the Newburyport Police Department. Individuals who fail to comply will be required to leave the library building. Groups who fail to comply, or whose leaders fail to comply, will be prohibited from using the meeting rooms.

Solicitation: No solicitation of meeting attendees. No sale of items. No collection of funds.

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

Equipment and Set-up: Requests for AV equipment use in the Large Meeting Room must be made in advance in writing on the Meeting Room Application form. AV equipment set-up and functioning is by library staff only. Required seating and table set-up should be specified on the Meeting Room Application Form. All meeting rooms offer access to wireless internet through an open public network.

Each group using a meeting room shall be responsible to ensure that the meeting room is returned to the same condition after the meeting as it was prior to the meeting. Failure to restore the meeting room to such prior condition shall render the group liable for the cost of repair and clean up and may result in forfeiture of future meeting room use.

Publicity: The name, address or telephone number of the Newburyport Public Library may not be used as the contact for any meeting. No telephone messages will be taken regarding the

organization or meeting. Any announcement or notices to publicize a meeting should not be posted or distributed within the Library without prior approval from library staff.

Parking: There is limited on-street parking and limited paid parking at nearby municipal lots, both subject to posted limits.

Fire Code and Exits: All exits must be kept unlocked and access must remain clear at all times. Open aisles must be maintained within the set seating arrangement to provide clear access to exits. Do not use Emergency Exits except in cases of emergency. Maximum meeting room capacity may not be exceeded.

Food and Drinks: Covered drinks are permitted in all meeting rooms. No alcoholic beverages of any type may be brought into, served, or consumed on Library premises (except during approved Friends of the Library events).

No food is permitted in the Conference Room or Study Rooms. With prior approval, light refreshments are permitted in the Large Meeting Room; the group serving refreshments will be responsible for any clean up following the meeting.

Accidents/Damage: Individuals and groups shall be held responsible for any damage to or loss of library property. Damage to the furnishings or space, and personal accidents should be reported to library staff promptly. The Library is not liable for injuries, for damage to personal property, or for loss of property belonging to individuals or groups using the meeting room.

Other Conditions: No items may be attached to the walls, windows or ceiling of any meeting room. No additional furniture may be brought into any meeting room. Candles and open flames are prohibited. Smoking and vaping is prohibited throughout the Library.

End of meeting: All meetings must end fifteen minutes before the Library closes (by 8:45 p.m. Monday through Thursday and by 4:45 p.m. on Friday and Saturday).

The person in charge of the meeting must empty the meeting room by reserved scheduled time, and must alert a library staff member when leaving the Library.

If AV equipment is used in the Large Meeting Room, the person in charge of the meeting must return to the 2nd floor Reference Desk to check out.

Use of a library meeting room by any group or individual signifies acceptance of the terms of this policy. Failure to comply with any part of this policy or with other library policies and procedures will be denied further use of the meeting rooms.

Revised and approved by the Newburyport Public Library Board of Directors – September 15, 2021