



Meeting and Study Room Use Policy

Approved by the Joint Board of Library Trustees 4/8/2021

Updated and Approved 3/20/2025.

Purpose

The Hamilton Wenham Public Library makes Library meeting rooms available to groups for civic, cultural, intellectual, charitable, and education purposes, and sets forth the following policy to ensure fair and equitable access for those who wish to use the meeting facilities of the Library, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of the individuals or groups requesting use of the spaces.

In allocating the use of Meeting Rooms, the Board of Trustees and Library staff shall not discriminate on the basis of the political or religious beliefs of applicant groups, or on any other constitutionally or statutorily prohibited basis. The use of Meeting Rooms does not imply the Library's endorsement of any ideas expressed in the meeting nor of the goals, objectives, or ideals of the person or organization using Library facilities.

General Guidelines

1. The primary purpose of the Library's Meeting Rooms is for Library activities, including programs presented by and meetings of Library staff, Trustees, or the Friends of the Library. Meeting Rooms are also available for town sponsored meetings or events. Use of Meeting Rooms for Library or town purposes shall take precedence over all other uses.
2. If a Meeting Room is not being used for a Library or town activity, the space will be available for meetings by government, non-profit, civic, cultural or educational agencies, groups, or organizations having a substantial relationship with the Hamilton and/or Wenham community. The Library reserves the right to decline a booking and/or uses that duplicate programs and services already offered by or sponsored by the Library.
3. All meetings shall be free of charge and open to the public. No person shall be excluded from attendance unless necessary to comply with applicable occupancy limits.
4. No donations may be solicited and no merchandise may be sold by any group using the Meeting Rooms, except for fundraising in support of the Library. Authors and musicians conducting a Library sponsored program may sell books or recordings of their works with prior authorization from the Library Director or their designee.
5. No use of Meeting Rooms will be allowed that is likely to disturb Library patrons in entering and using the facilities, impede Library staff in the performance of their duties, or endanger the Library building or collection. All meeting attendees using any Library Meeting Room must comply with the Library [Patron Behavior Policy](#).

6. Occupancy may be limited based on fire and public safety regulations. All exits must be kept clear at all times.
7. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed.
8. Light refreshments will be permitted with prior approval of the Library Director or their designee. All supplies needed for serving refreshments (cups, plates, etc.) must be supplied by the person/group making the reservation; no supplies are provided by the Library and no kitchen facilities are available. All trash must be bagged, surfaces wiped down, and the carpet swept.
9. Meetings of groups whose members are under age eighteen must be supervised and attended by an adult with a ratio of 1:10.
10. Meetings will be scheduled during regular Library hours. All meetings must end at least 15 minutes before the library closes. Special arrangements must be made with the Library Director or their designee to start a meeting before the Library opens or extend a meeting after the Library closes. A charge of \$50 per meeting will be assessed for meetings scheduled before or after regular Library hours. Library programs and town of Hamilton or Wenham official boards, commissions or trainings are exempt from this charge however, arrangements must be made to allow for Library staff coverage.
11. No advertisements or announcements implying Library endorsement will be permitted. Meetings or programs not co-hosted by the Library may not use the Library's phone number, email address or website on any publicity.
12. In the interest of fair access to all, no group or individual may consider the Library its permanent meeting place or use the Library as its mailing address. The Meeting Rooms are not intended to be used as a regular meeting location (daily, weekly, monthly) for any particular individual, group, and/or organization, and may not be advertised as such.
13. The Trustees and/or the Library Director have the authority to deny the use of Library facilities: if any individuals or group fail to comply with the intent and provisions of this policy; if the request for use contains a material falsehood or misrepresentation, including the official name of the group, contact information, or attempts to bypass request limits through inaccurate information; if any group has damaged the room, carpet, equipment, or furniture; if the proposed use is prohibited by law.
14. The Library specifically excludes the following types of uses of its Meeting Rooms: business firms and other for-profit organizations soliciting or selling products or services regardless of purpose; private social functions, such as showers, birthdays, dances, etc.; political campaigns, although bi-partisan political forums are permitted; programs not in keeping with the terms of this policy, or which would interfere with the Library's operation by causing excessive noise, a safety hazard, security risk, etc.
15. The Hamilton-Wenham Library and the Board of Trustees will not be held responsible for injuries or damage occurring during the use of the area. The Library cannot be held

responsible for loss or damage to exhibits or materials left in the Meeting Rooms or the personal property of those attending meetings, etc. in the Library.

16. The individual and/or organization making the reservation, as well as the membership of the group as a whole, will be held financially responsible for any and all damages incurred during the use of the facilities.
17. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to determine, in its reasonable discretion, whether any proposed use of a Meeting Room will require a police detail or other police protection, and if so, the anticipated cost thereof. The Board may consult with the Hamilton and/or Wenham Police Chief or their designee in making said determination. If the Board determines that police protection is necessary, the group or individual seeking to use a meeting room will be required, as a condition of doing so, to pay in advance of the meeting the anticipated cost of said police protection.
18. Final determination on the use of the Meeting Rooms by any group or individual rests with the Board of Trustees.

Reservations and Scheduling

1. Reservation requests can be submitted sixty days in advance to use the Large Meeting Room or the Local History Room. All requests will be reviewed by the Library Director or their designee. Library staff may follow up with questions before the reservation is approved; if the individual making the reservation does not respond to a follow up inquiry within 48 hours, the reservation will be cancelled. A request is considered approved when the applicant receives a confirmation email.
2. A reservation form is available on the Library website. All information must be filled out completely. If an applicant does not have access to the website they may stop by or call the Library and speak to the Library Director and/or Assistant Director.
3. Applicants must be at least 18 years old.
4. The contact name will serve as the authorized representative of the group who will assume responsibility for adhering to all requirements stated herein, corresponding with the Library about the group's reservation, and must be present for the duration of the meeting.
5. Audiovisual equipment must be requested at the time the room request is submitted. When AV equipment is requested, groups must make an appointment for training prior to the day of the meeting. Staff may not be available to assist with troubleshooting during a meeting. If showing a movie or other copyrighted material, the user is responsible for obtaining public performance rights.
6. Advertisement or public notice regarding a meeting cannot be made publicly until the meeting has been appropriately scheduled in accordance with this policy.

7. Notice of cancellation should be made as soon as possible. After 30 minutes of delay or failure to appear/notify as scheduled for a Meeting Room reservation, an individual, group, and/or organization will forfeit its reservation. Abuse of the reservation procedures may result in the loss of Meeting Room privileges.
8. In the event of an unscheduled Library closing for any reason, a group may request to reschedule for another available meeting time. Unscheduled closings will be posted on the Library's website. Whenever possible, the Library will attempt to notify the contact person after the Library decides to close.

Care and Use of Space

1. Preparation and set up are the responsibility of the party reserving the Meeting Room space; the Library does not have custodial staff to help with furniture movement. Time for setting up and cleaning up afterward should be included in the meeting time requested. The room must be left in the same condition as found.
2. No materials shall be attached to the walls.
3. Furniture and/or equipment from other areas of the Library may not be brought into the Meeting Rooms without permission.
4. Equipment, supplies, or personal effects cannot be stored or left in the Library Meeting Rooms before or after use.
5. Service area must be cleaned thoroughly if used. No food, beverage, or materials may be left in the Meeting Room at the conclusion of a program.
6. Excessive sound or noise cannot be permitted.

Available Meeting Rooms, Occupancy Limits & Equipment

First Floor Large Meeting Room:

- 100-person capacity
- Tables and chairs
- Drop down screen, ceiling mounted projector, sound system, blue-ray/DVD player
- Microphone
- Podium
- Sink, small service area (no stove or refrigerator)

Local History Conference Room:

- 16-person capacity
- Minimum number for booking: 4
- Tables and chairs
- Whiteboard
- Projector available by request
- No food is allowed in this space and no craft activities; covered drinks are allowed

**** The Children's Activity Room is not available for use by outside groups.****

Library Study Rooms

The Library offers one small quiet study room (1-2 people), one medium-sized study room (3-4 people), and one large study room (4-5 people).

1. Requests for reservations of study rooms should be made using the Library's online reservation application or by contacting the Reference Desk.
2. Study rooms may be reserved by an individual age 12 years and older. All users of quiet study room spaces must adhere to the Library Patron Behavior Policy.
3. These rooms may be reserved one week in advance, for up to two hours at a time and are limited to one reservation per day by any individual or group.
4. The reservation of a study room left vacant for more than 15 minutes will be cancelled and the room made available for other patrons to use/reserve.
5. Use of study rooms begins when the Library opens for the day and must end 10 minutes before the Library closes for the day.
6. All applicable reasons for refusal of requests listed for other Library meeting rooms will be in force for study rooms.
7. Users must check in at the Reference Desk before entering a study room.
8. All applicable responsibilities listed for other Library meeting rooms must be followed for study rooms.
9. Walk-in use of the study rooms is permitted on a first come, first served basis after checking in at the Reference Desk.