

Effective Date: March 19, 2025

Community Room Policy

The Community Room is a general-purpose program room that is available for educational, recreational, and civic purposes, provided such use does not interfere with Library services or programs. The Community Room is equipped with a hearing loop for patrons' needs. The room can be divided into two separate spaces via a folding door. Meeting Room A holds 20 seats; Meeting Room B holds 80 seats. These spaces can be combined to hold a total of 100 seats. Community Room A can be booked for 10 to 20 people. Community Room B can be booked for 21 to 80 people. The combined room can be booked for 20 to 100 people.

The 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, or the Board of Library Trustees.

The main focus of this policy is the Community Room; however, other Library meeting spaces have similar regulations—please refer to the Meeting Room Policy.

*Any group or individual reserving The Community Room **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 can be expected when both sides of the Community Room are being used simultaneously. The Library shall not discriminate based on the political or religious beliefs of applicant groups.
2. Library programming and events take precedence over all other uses of the Community Room.
3. Reservations made by organizations, clubs, and similar groups may be made two (2) months in advance. 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 meeting spaces to a wide variety of community groups, the Library may limit the number or frequency of requests from the same group.
4. Requests for organizations wishing to host larger events that include speakers and/or presentations may be made more than two months in advance with the approval of the Library Director or designee.

5. There is no charge for use of the Community Room by nonprofit organizations during Library hours of operation. Proof of nonprofit status may be required. Individuals should contact the Library Director for approval.
6. For-profit groups can request use of the Community Room and will be charged as follows: \$150 to reserve the entire Community Room, \$50 to reserve Community Room A, and \$100 to reserve Community Room B.
7. Outside groups (non-Library associated groups) reserving the Community 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.
 - 7.1. A commercial entity or professional practitioner may request the use of the Community 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 for use of the Community Room or to 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 and the Library Foundation are authorized, upon approval from the Library Director, to fundraise for Library-related needs.
11. Reservations for use of the Community Room must be for 10 or more participants and made by an adult age 18 or older through the online website reservation portal. At least one adult age 18 or older must be present for all youth programs held in the Community Room and may be subject to CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) requirements.
12. Programs held in the Community Room during Library hours of operation must adjourn 15 minutes before closing. Meetings that are reserved back-to-back must include a 10-15-minute cleanup and setup period.
13. After-hours programming may occur with permission. Please see the After Hours Use Policy.
14. A kitchenette is available for use by groups reserving the Community Room. Light refreshments may be served, but groups may not prepare food on Library property. Groups are responsible for cleanup. No alcoholic beverages are allowed in the building.
15. Tables, chairs, and AV equipment are available for use. Groups are responsible for setting up, rearranging, and returning tables and chairs to their original positions. The Community Room 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 by such damage and may lose the privilege to use the Community Room in the future.
16. In publicizing a meeting to be held in the Community Room, the sponsoring group must be identified clearly. Groups must not imply Library sponsorship or endorsement of their

program or organization in their publicity. With prior approval, flyers may be posted on the Community Bulletin Board.

17. The Library is not responsible for patron belongings left unattended, stolen, or damaged.
18. Each group is responsible for ensuring attendance at its meeting does not exceed the maximum occupancy for the Community Room as set by the Sharon Fire Department.
Community Room Reservations:
 1. Community Room not divided – 100 patrons
 2. Community Room A – 20 patrons
 3. Community Room B – 80 patrons
19. The Community Room will not be available for use if the building is closed due to emergency conditions or inclement weather. Library closings are posted on the Library website. **Please check the Library website for all closings before notifying your group.**
20. Individuals interested in reserving the Community Room for virtual meetings via Zoom, Teams, or other software must be able to conduct their meetings using their own virtual meeting accounts.
21. Please contact the Library 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 is an allowable space to solicit signatures in the Library and to distribute related printed material.***

How to Reserve the Community Room

All groups/individuals must complete the Reservation Request Form from the Library website's online [Reservation Portal](#) after reading the Community Room Policy.

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 fee per use, made payable to the Sharon Public Library.

The Library Director or designee reserves the right to cancel existing reservations due to emergencies such as inclement weather or building issues. Please contact the Library Director to reschedule canceled meetings for a new date and time.

Reservations for the Community Room may be made two months in advance, or more, with the approval of the Library Director or designee. Use is granted on a first-come, first-served basis.