

## **MEETING ROOM POLICY**

It is the policy of the Beloit Public Library Board of Trustees to encourage the widest possible use of the Library meeting room by community groups. The Library is smoke-free.

As a general principle, the Board adopts Article 6 of the Library Bill of Rights which states:

"Libraries which make exhibit space and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use."

Any opinions expressed in the Meeting Room are strictly those of the group or individual involved. The Library neither endorses nor contests the meeting's content.

The following guidelines apply to meeting room use:

The meeting room may be used by any group provided the following conditions are met:

- a. No admission or other fees are charged
- b. No sales or other commercial transactions occur
- c. The meeting shall be open to the public and the press.

Library fundraisers are allowed.

Under normal circumstances, groups may reserve a room in advance during the calendar year, with a limit of one meeting per month. Rare exceptions to this rule must be approved by library administration. The library reserves the right to limit organizations' use of the room to encourage the broadest possible use by many organizations.

**Library sponsored programs receive first** priority, after which other requests will be considered in the order in which they are received. Meetings related to City government will receive special consideration. In case of emergencies, other meetings may be canceled to accommodate library needs.

### **How to Apply:**

Reservations are made through the Business Office, 364-2908 for meetings during the calendar year. An application for use of a meeting room must be submitted the first time a group wishes to use a room.

When a meeting is postponed or canceled, the library must be notified. Failure to do so may result in the loss of future use.

Groups regularly meeting at the library should be assisting the library's development through gifts, donations of equipment, volunteers, or other forms of expertise that will further the ability of the library to serve its customers.

## **Regulations:**

The meeting room must be used during hours the Library is open. The room must be vacated at least 15 minutes before the Library closes.

The room capacity of 93 must be observed.

Non-alcoholic refreshments and the equipment to serve them may be brought in.

Doors at the first floor east entry will be opened fifteen (15) minutes before the meeting time and locked fifteen (15) minutes after the start of the meeting. Late-comers must ask the Circulation Desk attendants for entry.

Tables and chairs are available, but the group is responsible for setting them up for its members and expected audience. If a group uses tables and chairs, it must return them to their storage place at the end of the event.

The Library will not assume responsibility for damage to materials or equipment used in the meeting room. This applies to materials and equipment owned by the group. The group using the meeting room assumes responsibility for damage to the room, chairs, tables, or library-owned equipment in the room.

The room should be left clean and free of litter.

The group must comply with the Americans with Disability Act and is responsible for providing qualified interpreters or auxiliary aids upon request.

Failure to comply with these policies, rules, and regulations will result in responsibility for payment for necessary repairs, cleanup or maintenance and the cancellation of further use of the Library facilities.

Responsibility for the administration and interpretation of this policy rests with the Library Director. This policy is consistent with the attached "Meeting Rooms; An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights" statement.

## **Special Equipment:**

If library equipment is needed, it must be specified. The library has a TV, VCR/DVD player, LCD, the FM Assistive Listening System and overhead projector which can be reserved.

Contact the Business Office, 364-2908, Monday – Friday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., for scheduling meetings or any questions.

History: Approved September 1982, Revised December 1985, Revised August 1988, Revised October 1994, Revised December 1997, Revised November 2000, Revised November 2003, Revised November 2006.

# Meeting Rooms

## *An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*

Many librarians provide meeting rooms for individuals and groups as part of a program of service. Article VI of the **Library Bill of Rights** states that such facilities should be made available to the public served by the given library "on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use."

Librarians maintaining meeting room facilities should develop and publish policy statements governing use. These statements can properly define time, place, or manner of use; such qualifications should not pertain to the content of a meeting or to the beliefs or affiliations of the sponsors. These statements should be made available in any commonly used language within the community served.

If meeting rooms in libraries supported by public funds are made available to the general public for non-library sponsored events, the library may not exclude any group based on the subject matter to be discussed or based on the ideas that the group advocates. For example, if a library allows charities and sports clubs to discuss their activities in library meeting rooms, then the library should not exclude partisan political or religious groups from discussing their activities in the same facilities. If a library opens its meeting rooms to a wide variety of civic organizations, then the library may not deny access to a religious organization. Libraries may wish to post a permanent notice near the meeting room stating that the library does not advocate or endorse the viewpoints of meetings or meeting room users.

Written policies for meeting room use should be stated in inclusive rather than exclusive terms. For example, a policy that the library's facilities are open "to organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable activities: is an inclusive statement of the limited use to which the facilities may be put. This defined limitation would permit religious groups to use the facilities because they engage in intellectual activities, but would exclude most commercial uses of the facility.

A publicly supported library may limit use of its meeting rooms to strictly "library-related" activities, provided that the limitation is clearly circumscribed and is viewpoint-neutral.

Written policies may include limitations on frequency of use, and whether or not meetings held in library meeting rooms must be open to the public. If state and local laws permit private as well as public sessions of meetings in libraries, libraries may choose to offer both options. The same standard should be applicable to all.

If meetings are open to the public, libraries should include in their meeting room policy statement a section which addresses admission fees. If admission fees are permitted, libraries shall seek to make it possible that these fees do not limit access to individuals who may be unable to pay, but who wish to attend the meeting. Article V of the **Library Bill of Rights** states that "a person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." It

is inconsistent with Article V to restrict indirectly access to library meeting rooms based on an individual's or group's ability to pay for that access.

Adopted July 2, 1991, by the ALA Council.

Adopted January 20, 1993, by the Beloit Library Board