



To: West Fargo Public Library Board of Directors
From: Maria Kramer, Deputy Director of Public Services, WFPL
Date: August 19, 2021
Subject: Review and approve Public Meeting Rooms policy revision
Action: Approve revision to Public Meeting Rooms policy

West Fargo Public Library Board of Directors

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Summary and Recommendation:

Library meeting rooms became available for public reservation again in spring 2021 after hiatus due to COVID-19. Upon preparing to reopen meeting rooms for public reservation, staff discovered a discrepancy – although policy said that a fee would be charged for non-profit groups to use Library meeting rooms, that fee was not specified in any documentation. To remedy this discrepancy, Library administration performed research into other systems in North Dakota and Minnesota, which revealed a wide variety of fee schedules and meeting room use criteria.

Given the relatively small size and simple amenities of the WFPL meeting rooms, as well as identified local need for co-working space, we recommend liberalizing the meeting room requirements, and charging no fee for any qualifying group, as set forth in detail in the revised policy draft.

Policy Analysis:

This policy change brings meeting room requirements more in line with the Library's draft vision statement - "We envision a library whose services ensure that every person has resources and opportunities to learn, meet, share, read, play and create" - by making it easier for groups to book a WFPL meeting room without a fee.

Financial Analysis:

Amy Hitch, Circulation Supervisor, has been in charge of meeting room reservations for the past three years. During that time, no meeting room fees have been collected for reservations by for-profit entities. There will be no financial impact to the library with this policy revision.

Process/Timeline:

Upon Board approval, the policy revision can be implemented immediately.

West Fargo Public Library

Board Policy: Public Meeting Rooms

Approved: March 8, 2007

Revisions approved:

07/10/2008, 09/09/2010, 05/14/2015, 06/13/2019

West Fargo Public Library's public meeting rooms comfortably accommodate groups of 5 to 30 people and are located on the upper floor of the library. The primary purpose of the meeting rooms is to provide facilities for library-related activities. However, they are also available for lawful public use by the general population.

~~1) In accordance with the Library's educational, social, and informational mission, the public meeting rooms are available at no charge for civic, non-commercial, public information, and nonprofit activities~~ **educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable activities.** Eligible groups and activities include:

- Local government
- Civic organizations
- Social clubs of educational, cultural, or informational nature
- Non-profit and charitable organizations as evidenced by tax-exempt status
- Strictly informational presentations open to the public, including those by commercial entities.

Buying/selling, commercial transactions, or other exchange of goods is prohibited.

No soliciting, selling, or distribution of promotional materials is permitted.

Any fees charged may only cover the cost of materials.

~~Events should be open to the public.~~ **Events may be public or private.**

Groups and events that do not meet the criteria may not use Library meeting rooms.

~~2) For-profit entities may also use the public meeting rooms for a fee. (See "Circulation Limits, Late Fees, and Related Charges" for more information.) Meeting room fees must be paid in advance.~~

~~Buying/selling, commercial transactions, or other exchange of goods is prohibited.~~

~~Admission fees may be charged.~~

~~Events need not be open to the public.~~

The public meeting rooms may not be used by:

- Unaccompanied minors

- Private, social groups meeting for personal social events such as birthday parties or showers
- Any group which has, in the past, abused the facility or violated any of the regulations set forth in this policy or the signed contract.
- Groups meeting for any purpose which, in the opinion of the Library Director ~~and/or the Library Board~~, may interfere with normal use of the Library.

In light of the special relationship that the Library shares with other city departments and library organizations, the WFPL reserves the right to make special accommodations for their needs.

Scheduling:

- Reservations must be made with the Library Director or other designated staff by an authorized representative of the group who takes responsibility for the condition of the room after the meeting and for the orderly conduct of participants.
- **Reservations should be made online through the Library's website, or in person by filling out a form at the Service Desk. An authorized group member must be responsible for the orderly conduct of participants and the meeting room's condition once the gathering has concluded.**
- The applicant must be at least 18 years of age and authorized to accept responsibility for maintaining the good condition of the space and the acceptable behavior of attendees.
- Meetings may only be scheduled during the Library's normal operating hours, and users must tidy and vacate the room at least 15 minutes before closing. No access is possible outside of scheduled Library hours.
- Other than the library, municipal, county and state government, and the West Fargo Public Schools, no group may reserve the meeting room for more than four four-hour blocks in a single month. The Library does not accept standing reservations beyond three consecutive months.
- ~~Any applicable fees must be paid at the time of the application. Fees are nonrefundable unless notice of cancellation is received by library administration at least one day in advance of the event or unless the library cancels the booking. Fees must be paid by cash, check or money order.~~
- The Library reserves the right to cancel any booking with four weeks' notice should it need the room for its own programs. If the Library should be forced to close due to weather conditions or other emergencies, the Library reserves the right to cancel reservations for that time during which it is closed.
- **Reservations periods should be made for a minimum of a half hour and a maximum of four hours.**

Other Conditions:

- Library staff reserve the right to enter the meeting room at any time.
- Groups using the facilities are responsible for setting up the room and for clean-up. Groups will be charged for any damage to the room or its equipment which results from vandalism, carelessness, or misuse.
- The Library assumes no responsibility for injury to individuals attending meeting room events, or for loss or damage to their property.
- Adult supervision must be provided at all times. The Library staff will not provide child care services for the children of adults who are using the meeting room.
- Refreshments may be served but cooking is prohibited. Groups serving food are responsible for cleanup.
- Signs may be posted at the door to the meeting room indicating that the group is meeting there.
- A group may not use the Library's address as its address.
- The Library staff will not accept calls or relay messages to people attending meetings except in case of emergencies.
- Scheduling of a meeting for any organization in the library's public meeting rooms does not in any way constitute an endorsement by the Library.
- Users must comply with all relevant state and local ordinances to include all licensing and copyright requirements in regards to program content. Failure to comply with said ordinances and requirements will result in suspension of meeting room privileges.
- In accordance with the Library mission, the Library Director reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy.

Equipment and media:

- Subject to availability, the following may be provided for use in the meeting room: projector, ~~VCR~~, DVD player, television, screen, wi-fi access.
- There is no charge for the use of the equipment. Equipment should be reserved at the time the room is reserved. The library cannot provide operators for the equipment. If instruction is required for equipment operation, it is suggested that a representative of the group set up an appointment in advance. The library reserves the right to deny use of audio visual equipment to anyone who cannot demonstrate due competence and proper care in the use of the equipment.
- At the time of booking, patrons planning to bring in their own equipment must inform library staff of the nature of the equipment that will be brought in. Library staff will not assist customers with the operation of customer-owned equipment.