



189 Greenwood Avenue • Bethel, CT 06801 • (203) 794-8756 • www.bethellibrary.org

**BETHEL PUBLIC LIBRARY
BUILDING AND GROUNDS USE
POLICY, PROCEDURES AND RULES FOR USE**

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The Bethel Public Library meeting rooms and grounds are used to hold Library activities and programs, as well as those of The Friends of the Bethel Public Library (the “Friends”).

When not in use by the Library or Friends, meeting rooms and grounds are made available to local agencies, community clubs, businesses and other organizations as part of the Library’s mission of service to the Town of Bethel. Use of the rooms and grounds is subject to the rules and regulations of use established by the Library Board of Directors, and should reflect the educational, cultural, social, and recreational role that the Library plays.

The Board subscribes to Article IV of the Library Bill of Rights which states that facilities should be made available to the public served by the library on an equitable basis, regardless of beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

SECTION 2: GENERAL GUIDELINES

Outside groups may use the Bethel Library’s meeting rooms or grounds under the following conditions:

- 2.1 The Library and the Friends have priority in the use of the meeting rooms and grounds. The availability of meeting rooms and grounds for all other groups shall be on a first come, first-served basis,
- 2.2 Meetings or events must not interfere with the normal operations of the Library.
- 2.3 All meetings and events held in the Maria Parloa Community Room (the “Community Room”) must be open to the public.

- 2.4 A group wishing to use the Library's meeting rooms and grounds must complete the Application and Guidelines for Meeting Spaces and Grounds Use form (the "Application Form"). (See Section 8 of this policy)
- 2.5 The group must assign one person to be responsible for proper use of the meeting room or grounds.
- 2.6 The Library reserves the right to seek references for any group before booking a meeting room or the Library grounds to the group.
- 2.7 No less than seven (7) day prior to the event, the group must provide a certificate of liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 for each occurrence and \$1,000,000 in the aggregate providing bodily injury and property damage coverage naming the Library and the Town of Bethel as additional insured.
- 2.8 Groups expecting ten (10) or fewer participants may use the Library's parking lot. Groups expecting more than ten (10) participants may be required to use off premises parking.
- 2.9 The group is responsible for the preservation of order by those in attendance. Police supervision, when deemed necessary by the Library Director, must be provided and paid for by the group.
- 2.10 The following are forbidden on Library premises: smoking, illegal substances, weapons, and/or the use of candles or other combustible materials.
- 2.11 Alcoholic beverages may be allowed for afterhours events with the appropriate permits and approval from the Library Director and the Library Board of Directors.
- 2.12 Trash or other items left from activities must be placed in receptacles provided by the Library.
- 2.13 No furniture or equipment will be furnished by the Library unless specified on the Application Form. Each group is responsible for room setup. If a group requires the Library's audio-visual equipment, the user must be thoroughly trained in advance by Library staff. The group will be held responsible for any loss or damage to furnishings, appliances, equipment, or software resulting from use. Monetary remuneration will be assessed commensurate with the damage, as determined by the Library Director.
- 2.14 The meeting room or grounds must be left in the original condition in which they were found. Chairs, tables and/or other furnishings and/or equipment must be returned to their original set up or to designated storage areas.
- 2.15 No group may charge admission fees at its functions held in a Library meeting room or on Library grounds. The Library and the Friends are exempt from this rule. The group may, however, make normal collections of dues from its own members.

- 2.16 No group using the meeting rooms or Library grounds may cite the name, address, and telephone numbers of the Library as the sponsor or official address of the group, nor may any group publicize its activities in such a way.
- 2.17 Only the Library's staff may display publicity regarding the group, its meeting or event. Groups may request that their fliers or posters be displayed on the Library's Community Events board in accordance with the Library's Bulletin Board Policy. No fliers or posters may be posted on the Library's doors, stairwells, pillars or other places within the Library or on the exterior of the building.
- 2.18 When using the Library grounds, lawn signs of a non-partisan nature and of community interest may be placed on the grounds with prior approval of the Library Director. The Library assumes no responsibility for the maintenance of the signs. The group placing the sign is responsible for its secure and stable placement. The group is responsible for the removal of the sign within 48 hours of the event or it will be required to pay for its removal. The use of banners on the building is limited to publicizing Library and Friends' events.
- 2.19 The Library Director has full authority to grant, refuse, or revoke permission to use the meeting rooms or the Library grounds. If a group is denied such permission, it may appeal to the Library Board of Directors. Appeals regarding any such decision must be made in writing to the to the Library Board of Directors. (See Section 8.6 of this policy)
- 2.20 All meetings must adhere to Federal, State, and local Health Department guidelines.

SECTION 3: MEETING ROOMS AND LIBRARY GROUNDS AVAILABLE FOR USE

- 3.1 The following Library meeting rooms are available for use:
- The Maria Parloa Community Room (Capacity: 75 persons chairs only; 50 persons at tables)
 - The Cady Morse Conference Room (Capacity: 25 persons)
 - The Jennie Keeler Meeting Room (Capacity: 10 persons)
 - The Seelye Room (Capacity: 10 person)
- 3.2 The following outdoor spaces on the grounds are available for use:
- The Lincoln Courtyard
 - The West Lawn along Library Place (3 spaces)
 - The Front Lawn along Greenwood Avenue (8 spaces)
 - The Seelye House Lawn
 - The Barnum Terrace

SECTION 4: HOURS OF USE

- 4.1 The Library's meeting rooms may be used only during the Library's regular hours of operation. (See Library website for hours.)
- 4.2 Meeting room and grounds must be vacated fifteen (15) minutes prior to the Library's closing time. If the meeting room is not vacated by closing time, the group will be billed \$25.00.
- 4.3 The Library's grounds may be used outside of regular Library hours at the discretion of the Library Director.
- 4.4 Under special circumstances, use of meeting rooms outside of the Library's regular hours may be agreed to by the Library Director. Any meeting or event extending beyond the hours of the Library must have a pre-arranged qualified staff member in attendance.

SECTION 5: ELIGIBILITY

- 5.1 The Library's meeting rooms or grounds may be used by Bethel-based groups pursuing educational, informational, cultural, civic, recreational, governmental, professional, and service goals. Exceptions may be made for town-wide events with the approval of the Library Board of Directors.
- 5.2 A group's official mailing address will be the standard used to determine whether or not it is Bethel-based.
- 5.3 Bethel for-profit businesses may use the meeting rooms or Library grounds to present educational or informational programs open to the public, at the discretion of the Library Director. A for-profit business is not permitted to promote its business or use the Library's facilities for sales purposes. No solicitations or handouts advertising the business are allowed.
- 5.4 The Library's meeting rooms or grounds may not be used for partisan political events, religious worship services or programs, commercial or sales programs, or private social events.
- 5.5 The Library Board of Directors views the use of its meeting rooms and grounds by outside groups as an extension of library services to the community. Neither the Board nor the Town of Bethel advocate or endorse the beliefs or purposes of the groups given permission to use the meeting facilities.

SECTION 6: FEES

- 6.1 Qualified service organizations and not-for-profit groups may use the Library's meeting rooms and grounds free of charge. A group may be asked to provide evidence of its not for profit status.
- 6.2 Qualified for-profit businesses will be required to pay a rental fee, as follows:
- Maria Parloa Community Room
 - half day (up to four hours) \$100.00
 - full day (more than four hours) \$150.00
 - Cady Morse Conference Room
 - half day (up to four hours) \$50.00
 - full day (more than four hours) \$75.00
 - Jennie Keeler Meeting Room
 - half day (up to four hours) \$25.00
 - full day (more than four hours) \$35.00
 - Seelye Room
 - half day (up to four hours) \$25.00
 - full day (more than four hours) \$35.00
 - Library grounds
 - \$25.00 per space per event
- 6.3 The Library may require a security deposit of one hundred dollars \$100.00 from any group using the Community Room, in addition to the normal rental fee. This deposit is to ensure that the room is left in a clean and orderly condition, after each use, as specified in this policy. The deposit will be returned if the Library staff determines the room has been left in the proper condition. The deposit will be forfeited if the Library staff determines the room has not been left in the proper condition.
- 6.4 Rental fees and security deposits are due and payable seven (7) days prior to the group's function. Checks should be made payable to The Bethel Public Library.

SECTION 7: FREQUENCY OF USE

- 7.1 In order to allow the widest possible use, any one group will be limited to two (2) meetings on Library premises per month. Exceptions may be made only with the permission of the Library Director or their designee.
- 7.2 Any one group may reserve a room for meetings up to twelve (12) times a year beginning with the first reservation. Reservations cannot be booked more than three (3) months in advance of the date requested. Town agencies may reserve the meeting rooms or grounds more than twelve (12) times per year. Additionally, exceptions may be made only with the permission of the Library Director or their designee.

- 7.3 The Library reserves the right to move a group to an alternate location within the Library or on the grounds when necessary.

SECTION 8: APPLICATION FOR USE

- 8.1 In order to reserve a meeting room or outdoor space, a representative of the requesting group must complete and sign the Library's Application and Guidelines for Meeting Space and Grounds Use (the "Application Form") and present a check for any applicable usage fee and security deposit. Submitting the Application Form signifies the group's agreement to comply with the terms and conditions of this policy. The Application Form is available online on the Library's website: www.bethellibrary.org
- 8.2 Application Form for use of a meeting room or the Library grounds must be filed at least seven (7) days before the meeting or event is to start.
- 8.3 Application Forms must be completed by a representative of the group who is at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- 8.4 A group may request to reserve a meeting room or outdoor space by telephone or email; however, the reservation is not considered final until a completed written Application Forms, Certificate of Insurance and a check for the usage fee and security deposit, if applicable, are received and approved by Library staff. Application Forms must be received within 48 hours of the telephone or email request or the reservation will be cancelled.
- 8.5 Any group that cancels its use of a meeting room or outdoor space must notify the Library at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to its scheduled use in order to receive a refund of the usage fee, if applicable. If the Library is closed due to unforeseen circumstances, such as inclement weather, fees will be refunded. A group representative should contact the Library on the day of the meeting or event for Library hours that day.
- 8.6 The Library, acting through its Board of Directors and/or its Library Director, reserves the right to accept or reject any application for the use of its meeting rooms or grounds. Reasons for denial may include, but are not limited to:
- Failure to meet eligibility requirements as outlined in this policy
 - Previous failure to comply with this policy
 - Previous failure to comply with any other Library policy and Code of Conduct

If a group's application is rejected, it may appeal the rejection in writing to the Library Board of Directors.

SECTION 9: RULES FOR USE

9.1 Any group using a Library meeting room or outdoor space will be responsible for:

- Setting up the furniture and/or equipment needed for its meeting or event. No doorways or fire equipment will be blocked.
- Proper supervision of meeting or event attendees
- Restoring the room or grounds to the condition in which it was found
- Placing litter in proper containers
- Turning off lights
- Ensuring doors are locked
- Paying the cost of any damage or loss to Library property resulting from its use in excess of the security deposit. The cost of the damage will be determined by the Library.

9.2 Meeting or event participants may not leave children under twelve (12) years old unsupervised in other areas of the Library or grounds.

9.3 Groups must adhere to the posted fire codes regarding the number of persons allowed in a meeting room.

9.4 Groups of children under the age of eighteen (18) may use the meeting rooms or grounds only with sufficient adult supervision. The Library requires at least one (1) adult supervisor twenty-one (21) years or older for every ten (10) children.

9.5 If requested on the Application Form, groups reserving the Community Room may use the following Library furnishings and equipment free of charge.

- The adjoining kitchen and its equipment may be used to serve beverages and light refreshments.
 - The group is responsible for providing its own paper goods, utensils, and small appliances such as a coffee or tea pot.
 - The kitchen must be left in a clean and orderly condition after use.
 - The group must deposit its trash in the dumpster in the Library parking lot.
- The Library's folding tables and chairs, podium/lectern, DVD player, and projector may be used.
- Other supplies and equipment are the sole responsibility of the group.
 - The signatory on the application assumes responsibility for the proper use of Library equipment and will be held responsible for any damages to hardware and/or software. Monetary remuneration will be assessed commensurate with the damage, as determined by the Library. Remuneration may exceed the amount of the security deposit.
 - Training by Library staff on the use of the Library's equipment is required prior to use.

- 9.6 Storage of items owned by a group or its members before or after a meeting or event is not permitted. Neither the Library nor the Town of Bethel assumes responsibility for personal items left on the premises before or after a meeting.
- 9.7 Permission to use the meeting rooms means floor space only. Groups may not affix items to the walls, tack boards, etc. Artwork on display may not be moved or altered.
- 9.8 Not-for-profit groups will be permitted to engage in fundraising or sales on Library property, if so requested on the Application Form, and if approved by the Library Director. For-profit businesses may not engage in any form of fundraising or sales.
- 9.9 Whenever a meeting in the Community Room extends beyond the Library's closing time, the group's authorized representative must ensure upon exiting that all exterior doors are fully closed and locked from the outside.

SECTION 10: SECURITY SYSTEM

- 10.1 The Library's meeting rooms and grounds are protected by a security system. This system includes cameras and motion detectors.

SECTION 11: VIOLATIONS

- 11.1 Any group or individual that fails to comply with this policy may be asked to leave and/or be denied future use of the facilities. Room or grounds use also may be denied to groups or individuals that cancel without proper notification twice within a twelve (12) month period.

SECTION 12: DISCLAIMER

- 12.1 The fact that a group is permitted to use meeting space or the Library grounds does not in any way constitute an endorsement of the group's policies or beliefs by the Library or the Town of Bethel. Neither the Library Board of Directors nor the Town of Bethel, including its employees or agents, is liable for any claims arising out of the use of the Library's meeting space or the Library's grounds.

SECTION 13: POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE, AMENDMENTS, AND REVISIONS

- 13.1 This policy is effective upon approval of the Library Board of Directors. Amendments and/or revisions to this policy shall be formulated and recommended to the Board by the Policy Committee. The policy may then be amended and/or revised at the regular meeting of the Board, following the meeting at which the amendment and/or revision was proposed.

Adopted by the Library Board of Directors June 28, 1977

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