



Approved Date: 4/21/2026

Date of Adoption: 9/18/2012

Signed: _____

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Public Meeting Rooms Policy

APPLICABLE TO: Any person wishing to use a Blount County Public Library (BCPL) meeting room.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Affiliated organizations:** Organizations formally connected to the Blount County Public Library.
- **Disruptive Activity:**
 - Any behavior, noise, or activity that interferes with normal library operations, patron use of library services, or staff duties.
- **Endorsement:** Approval, support, or promotion by the BCPL, its Board of Trustees, or its staff of the viewpoints, activities, or objectives of an individual, group, or organization.
- **Nonprofit organizations:** An organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of meeting and study rooms at the Blount County Public Library (BCPL). BCPL makes meeting spaces available as a community resource in support of its mission. This policy ensures that meeting spaces are used in a manner that is equitable, consistent, and compatible with the Library's operations, while protecting Library property and maintaining a welcoming environment for all patrons.

POLICY STATEMENT: The meeting rooms of the BCPL are a library resource to be utilized in the fulfillment of its mission to empower and connect our community so that every story can be shared.

PUBLIC MEETING ROOMS OVERVIEW

BCPL has meeting rooms for use by the public: the Dorothy Herron Room holding up to 90 persons, the Sharon Lawson Room holding up to 90 persons, the Learning Lab holding up to 62 persons, and the Board Room holding up to 26 persons. Each room is equipped with internet access, via WIFI and Ethernet as well as Zoom meeting capabilities.

The BCPL Board of Trustees, the Library staff, the Foundation for the Blount County Public Library, the Blount County Friends of the Library, and the Blount County Genealogical and Historical Society will have first priority in use of the meeting rooms. In other cases, the rooms will be available for both profit and nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations at a rate so determined by the Library Board of Trustees.

Use of the public meeting rooms does not constitute BCPL endorsement of the viewpoints expressed by the participants in any program conducted at BCPL. No advertisement or announcement implying such endorsement will be permitted and any advertisement or announcement of any program shall contain the following wording: "Except for providing meeting space, the Blount County Public Library is not in any manner connected with this meeting, and neither BCPL nor the Board of Trustees endorses any position expressed by the group." Library staff may enter a room in use at any time.

BOOKING OF PUBLIC MEETING ROOMS

Meeting room space is made available during the hours of library operation.

Meeting room space must be reserved in advance. Reservations will be accepted up to six (6) months in advance unless prior authorization is given by the Library Director, Hospitality Services Manager, or designee. ***No meeting room booking will be confirmed until an online application is completed and payment is received.*** Applicants must be aged 18 or over.

FEES FOR THE USE OF PUBLIC MEETING ROOMS

Fees are charged with the intention of covering BCPL room maintenance and overhead costs. Meeting room fees will be reviewed regularly by the BCPL Board of Trustees.

MEETING ROOM SPECIFICATIONS

	Dorothy Herron Room Maximum Occupancy: 90	Sharon Lawson Room Maximum Occupancy: 90	Board Room Maximum Occupancy: 26	Learning Lab Maximum Occupancy: 62
Projection Screen	Yes	Yes	No	No
Microphones	Available on Request	Available on Request	Available on Request	No
Podium	Yes	Yes	No	No
LCD Projector	Yes	Yes	No	No
MondoPads	No	No	Yes	Yes
US and State Flags	Yes	Yes	No	No

SCHEDULING, ADMISSION FEES, AND SALES

In order to confirm the reservation online, payment must be completed. Payment may be made in cash, by check or by credit card to BCPL staff during hours of operation or online during the booking process. Refunds will be given only if the cancellation of the meeting is received and acknowledged at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting. Adjustments to the fees charged (due to damage or occupying the room beyond the scheduled time of the reservation) will be provided within 3 days of the meeting and must be paid within 30 days to avoid penalties. The client named in the application will be held responsible for all rental fees, clean-up fees and damages as well as all costs associated with collecting those fees. This may include referral to a collection agency or the barring of a person's use of his/her library card, or the organization from future meeting room use

Except for BCPL and its affiliated organizations, groups using the meeting rooms may not charge an admission fee. In addition, no sales at any meeting or event may be conducted without prior consent of the Library Director and BCPL Board of Trustees. Commercially manufactured and distributed products are excluded from being sold in the meeting rooms at any time.

COMMON SPACES AND FOOD SERVICE

The Bookmark Café offers limited catering options such as coffee, tea, scones, and cookies which may be ordered ahead of time.

ROOM ARRANGEMENT

Room arrangement/set up is the responsibility of the group renting the space. The furniture needs will be supplied according to what is requested on the rental application. No items shall be taped or tacked to the walls, doors, windows, or any other surface. A display easel and/or podium are available by request. Furniture and/or equipment from other areas of BCPL may not be brought into the meeting rooms without prior approval from the Library Director. Personal furniture and/or equipment and/or displays may be provided by a group with prior approval. **All room(s) set up and clean up must be accomplished within the time period for which the room is rented.**

ADDITIONAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following rules and regulations apply to all groups using the meeting rooms:

- (a) No organization other than an organization affiliated with BCPL shall use the Library as its official address, unless a memorandum of understanding exists between BCPL representatives, specifically the Library Director and/or the BCPL Board of Trustees.
- (b) Storage of goods by organizations using the public meeting rooms will not be permitted without prior approval, unless a memorandum of understanding exists between BCPL representatives, specifically the Library Director and the BCPL Board of Trustees.
- (c) Attendance at a meeting may not exceed the maximum number of people established by the Maryville Fire Department as the occupancy limit for the room. These limits are: Dorothy Herron Meeting Room 90; Sharon Lawson Meeting Room 90; Board Room 26; Learning Lab 62.
- (d) Any use of the meeting rooms which disrupts the normal operations of BCPL, such as those uses that produce excessive noise, will not be permitted. Live or recorded

music is permitted only with prior approval. BCPL reserves the right to terminate any disruptive activity.

- (e) Use of tobacco is not permitted anywhere in BCPL, and within 20 feet of any entrance doorway.
- (f) Alcoholic beverages may not be served or consumed.
- (g) Groups whose members are under the age of eighteen must be accompanied by one adult chaperone for each fifteen participants.
- (h) Weapons and hazardous materials including, but not limited to, paints, solvent, explosives, and lighted candles are prohibited.
- (i) Groups using the facilities must comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act, as appropriate.
- (j) All exits must remain unblocked at all times. Open aisles must be maintained within the seating arrangement to provide clear access to exits.
- (k) Public entrances are to be used for entrance to and exit from the building and for all deliveries unless prior approval is given.
- (l) Exterior posters/lawn signs and other outdoor displays not sponsored by BCPL will be prohibited. Yard signs will be allowed by candidates on the ballot during early voting only, and once it ends they are responsible to collect the signs.

DAMAGES AND LIABILITY

BCPL is not responsible for the loss of or damage to any equipment or materials owned or rented by an individual, group, or organization using its meeting rooms. Any individual, group, or organization using the meeting rooms shall be held responsible for willful or accidental damage to the BCPL building, grounds, collections, or equipment caused by the group or organization, its members or those attending its program.

The BCPL Board of Trustees and staff do not assume any liability for groups or individuals attending a meeting at BCPL. Any individual holding a meeting in BCPL must release, indemnify, and hold harmless the Blount County Public Library (BCPL) Board of Trustees, Blount County, the City of Maryville, and the City of Alcoa, their officers, agents, and employees from any and all claims for injuries, damages or loss, which may arise or which may be alleged to have arisen out of, or in connection with the meeting.

The County's Risk Management Department requests, when possible, proof of liability insurance with an ACORD form, listing Blount County Library as "additional insured" under the description of operations/locations/vehicles/special items.

CLEAN-UP AND REPAIRS

Cleanup of the meeting space must be accomplished within the time period for which the room is booked. If it is necessary for BCPL staff to clean up following a meeting, the client named on the application will be charged according to the current fee schedule found in the Clean Up and Repair section of this policy.

If necessitated, cleanup charges of \$25.00 per hour or part thereof and the actual cost of repairs necessitated by misuse of BCPL property, plus all costs of collections, will be billed to the user. Should there be any damage to equipment, a bill for the cost of repair will be sent to the client named on the application.

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to the Public Meeting Rooms Policy and waivers of fees must be approved by the BCPL Board of Trustees. However, the Library Director is granted the power to waive these policies and fees, provided such waivers are reported to the BCPL Board of Trustees at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

CANCELLATIONS

In the event, BCPL is closed due to unusual circumstances, meetings may be rescheduled at no additional cost. Information about such closings can be obtained by calling the main number (865-982-0981) and listening to the recorded message or checking the BCPL website and/or social media.

DENIAL OF MEETING ROOM PRIVILEGE

Failure to abide by the BCPL Public Meeting Rooms Policy and Rules of Conduct Policy ([BCPL Policies](#)) or failure to pay the appropriate charges in a timely manner may result in the cancellation of current reservations, or refusal of future bookings.

STUDY ROOMS

BCPL has study rooms, with seating for 6-8 persons for use by the public at no charge. These rooms may be booked through the Reference Department up to one month in advance on a first-come first-served basis. No music is permitted. Any use of the study rooms must not disrupt the normal operations of BCPL, which reserves the right to terminate any disruptive use.

** A non-profit 501c3 organization is one engaged in civic, educational, cultural, intellectual, literary, scientific, religious, political, or charitable activities in Blount County.*

POLICY REVIEW: To be reviewed every two years.

POINT OF CONTACT: The Board of Trustees Secretary is the point of contact for this policy.

Blount County does not discriminate based on race, color, or national origin in federal or state sponsored programs, pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d).