

## **PUBLIC MEETING ROOM GUIDELINES - TOWN OF CHESTER LIBRARY**

**1.0 PURPOSE** To establish a standard process/procedure for requesting, approving and providing guidelines for the use of Town of Chester Library facilities in the conduct of public meetings in addition to any established regulations, guidelines or laws published by higher authorities. This is in support of providing a resource for not-for-profit community groups or agencies.

It gives the Library Director the authority to either approve or disapprove the conduct of a public meeting within the facilities under their control. This will be done on an equitable basis, regardless of beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting use.

### **2.0 DEFINITIONS**

**2.1 Director** For the purpose of this policy the term Director is synonymous with Library Director, Library Manager, Manager or Library Technician and may be used interchangeably.

**2.2 Meeting Room** While the Library does not maintain a space specifically designated for meetings, the Director may allocate specific areas for temporary use thereof as best suits the Library and supports the requester.

**2.3 Higher Authority** This includes, but is not limited to, Federal, State and Municipal governing bodies.

**2.4 Board** Unless otherwise noted this is the Town of Chester Library Board of Trustees.

**2.5 Sponsor** For the purpose of this policy a "Sponsor" is the individual or the organization or their representative that is requesting the use of the Library as a meeting place for a specified event.

**3.0 ACCOUNTABILITY** The Director is responsible to the Library Board of Trustees for all matters regarding the management and maintenance of Library functions and activities.

### **4.0 SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

**4.1 Meetings** that do not directly benefit or apply to Library functions should

be addressed to the Town of Chester which does maintain formal meeting rooms. Contested or questionable meetings will be directed to the Town Solicitor via the Board for resolution. Non-approval will be provided in writing to include a justification. The Board will be informed of all correspondence in this regard.

**4.2 Meetings** promoting specific political or religious causes are prohibited.

**4.3 Except** for fund raising events sponsored by the Library, Friends of the Library or other organizations affiliated with the library, marketing, sales, solicitation and for profit activities are prohibited. Ancillary benefits such as an author, artist, or musician providing a product for sale (book, CD, art) relevant to their scheduled performance may be approved by the Director on a case by case basis.

**4.4 Request** for use of Library space will be made in writing to the Director. This request should contain the requester, the purpose, the intended audience and number of participants, space required, the duration of the event and the time and date(s) requested with an alternative time/date. Any meeting should be limited in length to four hours. This request should be made with sufficient time for review and approval/disapproval, preferably 30 days. Cancellations and/or changes by either the Library or the requester may be made verbally or by telephonic means.

**4.5 All** meetings should be conducted within published Library hours unless specifically approved by the Director.

**4.6 Consideration** should be made first to use the Town meeting rooms due to the limited space for attendees and open hours available within the Library.

**4.7 Meetings** cannot interfere with normal Library functions nor be disruptive to operations.

**4.8 The Library** or its Board of Trustees is not responsible for the content of any meetings. If the meeting appears to contain questionable material it may be discontinued upon the request of the Director or their authorized staff.

**4.9 The sponsor** of the meeting is responsible for restoring the furniture and/or configuration to its original state.

**4.10 The sponsor** is solely responsible for the conduct of the meeting and its participants and for any damage(s) caused. No charges shall be imposed

for attendance at any meeting or event.

**4.11 All meetings** must be open to the public and posted on the Library bulletin board.

**4.12 Recurring** meetings such as a book club should be requested to the Director for blanket approval and scheduling.

**4.13 The Library** reserves the right to cancel a reservation for library purposes in accordance with paragraph 4.4 above.

**4.14 Any** meetings approved and conducted must be presented at the monthly Board of Trustees meetings and duly recorded in the minutes.

**Approved by the Chestertown Library Board of Trustees**

**Date Approved:** September 19, 2017