

Meeting Room Use and Community Programming Policy

The Pelham Library welcomes community use of the Henry W. Ramsdell Meeting Room (Ramsdell Room) and the Local History Reading Room (History Room). When not being used by the library, these rooms are available to town government, school, and established non-profit groups based in Pelham. Individuals and other non-profit groups with a Pelham contact or Pelham residents may apply to the Library Director or Board of Trustees for permission to use either space. The Library Director will put all reservations on the hall calendar along with a contact name and phone number.

In accordance with the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* and its interpretation pertaining to meeting rooms and Massachusetts general laws, the library does not limit use of a meeting room based on the subject matter or content of the meeting or on the beliefs or affiliations of the meeting's sponsors. The main area of the library is not available for private rental.

With the exception of Library and Library-related programs, groups, including town organizations, must receive special permission to use the meeting rooms more than once each month. Rules and Procedures for use of the meeting rooms are established by the Trustees of the Library and a copy will be given to each group to review and sign. The individual who signs the Meeting Room Use Application is responsible for the security, safety, and behavior of the group and for any property damage resulting from the group's use of the room. The Behavior Policy of the Pelham Library is in effect during all meetings. Clean up charges will be assessed in cases of unusual wear and tear on the room.

Use of the meeting rooms does not imply endorsement, support, or co-sponsorship by the Pelham Library of the activities that take place in the meeting rooms or of the beliefs of the group using the meeting rooms. Private groups using the meeting rooms may not imply that the event or program is sponsored, co-sponsored, or endorsed by the library in any advertising or publicity. The library's phone and fax number may not be used as a meeting contact.

Town residents or private groups wishing to use the meeting rooms for private events such as birthday parties or classes must carry liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 and name the Town of Pelham as also-insured. Such certificates are generally available at low cost through homeowners' insurance policies. Check with your insurer for details. The Library must be provided with a copy of the insurance certificate before the event may occur. Insurance is the responsibility of the individual or group using the room.

For-profit classes or workshops may not take place in the library's meeting rooms, nor will the library sponsor for-profit virtual events. All classes and programs held at the library or held virtually must be free and open to the public. No selling, solicitation, or taking of orders may occur without permission from the Library Director. No admission or fees may be charged. Voluntary donations to cover expenses may not be collected without prior permission of the Library Director. Such donations, when allowed, must be truly voluntary and not a condition for participation in the event.

Use by political groups

The Pelham Public Library building and property are subject to restrictions set forth by the State of Massachusetts on the use of public buildings for political use (Mass. General Laws: Part I, Title VIII, Chapter 55, Section 14). Elected officials can hold office hours and public forums at the library. A political party or political group may use space at Pelham Public Library for a program provided that:

- The event features a guest speaker on a theme or topic and is not a campaign rally
- The event is open to the public
- An admission fee is not charged
- No fundraising or collecting of money can take place in the building or on the property
- No distribution of campaign or party/group related buttons, flyers, posters, etc. can be done in the building or on the property
- The event must be advertised as “Presented by [Group name]” and “held at Pelham Public Library.” Pelham Public Library must not be listed as a host or sponsor on any flyers, social media, advertising or town boards.
- The Pelham Public Library is committed to providing varied programming to our patrons for both educational and recreational purposes. The Library Director oversees programming and reserving spaces.

The Library Director and Board of Trustees reserve the right to cancel an event if this policy is violated. Groups failing to comply with any part of this policy or the established procedures may be denied further use of the meeting rooms.

Approved by Pelham Library on November 14, 2001
Amended January 14, 2026

Library Board Chair

RULES AND PROCEDURES:

Henry W. Ramsdell Room

Reservations:

The Ramsdell Room has a maximum capacity of 60 people. Massachusetts fire regulations will not allow us to accommodate larger groups in this room.

Reservations are made with the Library Director or, in the case of a school request, with the School Librarian. Requests are first come first served, with town elections and certain other government events taking priority over other reservations.

All requests are to be marked on the Library calendar along with a contact person's name and phone number.

Should a meeting conflict with a library-sponsored program, the library program will receive priority.

Individuals must be 18 years of age or older to reserve the meeting room.

Keys for after-hours use along with instructions for locking up must be obtained from the Library Director or a Library staff member.

Equipment and Supplies:

Four large folding tables and approximately 50 chairs, which groups may set up however they wish. They do not need to put them away at the end of the program.

A projector, screen, and large-screen TV with data input are available for use. Presenters must provide their own laptop computers. WIFI is available. Groups or individuals wishing to use this equipment must receive training from the Library Director &/or staff in advance to learn set-up and operation.

Easels are available for presentations. Markers and flip charts are the responsibility of the group.

A piano is available for use with permission of the Library Director.

No decorations, posters, or any other materials may be installed or displayed in the meeting room without prior approval from the Library Director.

Tables and chairs are provided in the room and may be configured as you desire. Furniture from other parts of the Library may not be moved into the meeting room without permission from the Library Director or library staff.

The Library will not store AV equipment or other equipment and supplies belonging to groups using the library.

Kitchen Facilities:

The library will provide a coffeepot, microwave and a tea kettle, but cups, paper goods, utensils, cream, sugar or other equipment and supplies will be the responsibility of the group. Tablecloths are available with permission of the Library Director and must be washed and returned within five days of use.

No alcohol is allowed in the library at any time.

No smoking is allowed in any part of the library or on library grounds. No open flames are allowed in the building per Massachusetts fire code.

The library will not store food or other supplies belonging to groups using the library without permission from the Library Director.

Food and drink may only be consumed in the Ramsdell Room and outside.

Groups using the library are responsible for cleanup, which includes:

- Bagging trash and depositing it in the large trash bin
- Cleaning all dishes and wiping the countertops
- Wiping all tables
- Removing items from refrigerator
- Sweeping the floor with hand sweeper
- Securing the building at the end of the meeting

History Room

The History Room is available primarily to support the use of its collections. When not being used for research, the History Room is also available for use by local groups.

Users of the History Room should be advised that, so as to meet the needs of researchers, meetings may be briefly interrupted by the librarians or people needing access to the archives in order to retrieve items held in the History Room collections.

The History Room seats eight. Groups larger than eight should reserve the Henry W. Ramsdell Room.

Keys for afterhours use, along with instructions for locking up, must be obtained from the Library Director or a Library staff member.

No food or drink is permitted in the History Room.

Groups are expected to leave the History Room in good and clean condition. Please turn off all lights.

Pelham Library Meeting Room Use Application

Name of Group _____ Date of Application _____

Type of meeting _____

Date(s) of meeting _____

Which room is needed? ___ Henry W. Ramsdell Room ___ History Room ___

What is needed in the room? _____

Contact name _____ Contact # _____

Number expected _____ Hours of meeting _____

I have read and agree to apply with the Pelham Library Meeting Room Use policy and the Meeting Room rules and procedures. I understand that neither the Board of Trustees for the Pelham Library nor the Town of Pelham shall be responsible for injury to persons or property that occur while a meeting room is being used.

Signature

Private groups and individuals: Please attach a copy of your certificate of liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 naming the Town of Pelham as also-insured (often available through your homeowners or business insurance company usually at little to no cost).