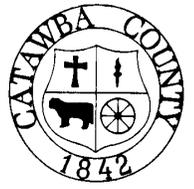




**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2015, 9:30 A.M.
ROBERT E. HIBBITTS MEETING ROOM
1924 COURTHOUSE, NEWTON, N.C.**



The Board adopted a revised Catawba County Library Meeting Room Use Policy to allow the community access to meeting room spaces for nonprofit educational, civic, and community meetings that are open to the public. North Carolina Public Library Standards include a benchmark that library facilities are designed to maximize opportunities for community collaboration and provide meeting rooms and other spaces for community programs and events. An excerpt from the recently adopted Library Strategic Plan aligns with this benchmark:

Goal: *As a community center of excellence, fuel citizens' passion for reading personal growth and learning*

Objective: *Create welcoming, vibrant, comfortable, and secure library spaces.*

Tactic: *Enhance community access to library spaces by aligning applicable policies around facility use.*

After reviewing options for increasing the community's access to library meeting room space, staff developed a policy that offers after-hours facility use at Sherrills Ford-Terrell, St. Stephens, and Southwest Branch Libraries, based on the feasibility of securing the interior of the library while still allowing access to the meeting room.

The revised policy also clarifies the type of gatherings that are permitted, allowing for nonprofit educational, civic, and community use that is open to the public, includes provisions to ensure fair and equitable use that does not interfere with others' ability to enjoy library facilities and services, and limits eligible uses to activities that are not commercial, political, religious, or social in nature.

Every effort was made to strike an appropriate balance between promoting community access and exercising responsible stewardship of public resources by maintaining the security of the facility. If the policy is adopted, staff will track facility use reservations, recording the names of individuals and groups that use the rooms and the estimated number of people who have benefited, and will report this back to the Board three months after implementation with discussion of any issues that have arisen.

Staff engaged the Library Board of Trustees in the development of the proposed policy, taking their concerns into consideration and integrating their input. The Board's Policy and Public Works Subcommittee recommends this revised policy.

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