



STAFF REPORT

AGENDA NO: 11a

MEETING DATE: June 15, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

Date: June 15, 2026

From: Bradley McCulley, City Librarian – (650) 558-7401

Subject: Adoption of Resolution Approving Main Library Updated Community Room Rental Policy

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Council adopt a resolution approving the updated Main Library Community Room Rental Policy.

BACKGROUND

The renovation of the Main Library was completed in October of 1997. At that time, the Lane Community Room was new, with state-of-the-art technology, and its use by outside groups was limited depending on their needs. More importantly, however, use was restricted based on the needs of the library and, occasionally, the needs of other City departments. Prior to the remodel, the library had never had such a large and well-appointed space for programming and events.

Since 1997, there have been many iterations of a community room use policy using phrases such as "As a tax supported meeting space, all meetings must be open to the public. The Lane Community Room should be used for Library and City sponsored programs. Non-profit, civic, educational, and cultural organizations are welcome to use the Lane Room based on availability." This standard has been the norm at the Main Library for many decades because meeting space was limited. At the time, it was considered the "Jewel of Burlingame," much as the current Community Center is considered today's popular new event space. However, the 2015 Library renovation and the addition of four separate study rooms and a medium-sized meeting room have created more opportunities to use these spaces in ways that reflect the interests and needs of the community and relieve some of the pressure from the Lane Room calendar of former years. Additionally, the use of Zoom meetings and events has also contributed to this discussion.

DISCUSSION

In the interest of uniformity in the use and rental of City facilities, such as the Community Center and the Library, staff proposes revising the Library Community Room Rental Policy ("Policy") to clarify rental processes and procedures for potential users. The following table highlights some of the disparities the two departments currently have in their room rental processes:

	Room required to be open to public	Requires event insurance	Allows public and private events	Requires security deposit	Renter can charge for private event
Main Library	Yes	No	No	No	No
Community Center	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The proposed changes to the Policy will not affect Library events or events held in Library-adjacent rooms, such as the Spring and Fall Library Foundation Book Sale. The Library will retain the right of first refusal based on its priority calendar and the responsibilities of the Library Board of Trustees and Library Foundation. While these changes give room renters greater flexibility in the types of events they may host, renters will also be required to purchase event insurance and take on greater liability for their events.

The proposed changes to the Library's Policy also conform to the Community Center in that the Library will be considered an "open public form," allowing any users to rent and use Library facilities for any lawful and safe purpose, without regard to the viewpoint or opinion of the renter. Some examples might be discussions involving extreme political views.

It will be imperative that Library staff enforce the use of the following statement to protect the reputation of the Library and the City of Burlingame:

'This rented meeting space is provided as a community service by the City of Burlingame. The City neither sponsors nor endorses this event nor the presenting individual or organization. Written materials for public distribution that do not include this disclaimer will be removed, and future use of the meeting rooms may be prohibited.'

Even with these precautions, some confusion and assumptions are likely to persist, as the proposed Policy represents a departure from the Library's 117-year history.

The Library Board of Trustees unanimously approved this Policy change at the April 21st meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT

The City Council adopted updated fees as part of the Master Fee Schedule update for FY 2026-27. Room rates will remain the same for the time being until the planned Lane Community Room renovation is complete. Room rates will be reassessed at that time.