

1. Proposed Select Board Policy

TOWN OF PELHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMUNITY HALL FACILITY USE POLICY

Select Board Adoption

Effective Date: October 19, 2026

1. Purpose

The Town of Pelham recognizes that Town-owned facilities are community resources. When facilities are not needed for municipal purposes, the Town may make them available for appropriate community, nonprofit, civic, educational, cultural, recreational, and private activities.

This policy establishes consistent rules for scheduling, fees, insurance, safety, and responsibility for use of Town facilities. Facilities principally administered by an independent board or commission, including facilities operated by the Library Trustees, Historical Commission, and Historical Society or other elected or appointed boards, may establish separate use policies consistent with applicable law.

2. Priority of Use

Facility use shall generally be approved in the following order:

1. **Municipal use** — Town boards, committees, departments, elections, hearings, and official Town activities.
2. **Town-sponsored and community-wide activities.**
3. **Local nonprofit, civic, and community organizations.**
4. **Resident private activities.**
5. **Commercial and nonresident activities.**

Municipal use shall take priority over previously scheduled outside use when necessary. The Town will provide as much notice as reasonably possible if a reservation must be cancelled or relocated.

3. Eligible Activities

Subject to facility availability and this policy, permitted uses may include:

- community meetings and discussion groups;
- card and board-game groups;
- coffee hours and social gatherings;
- nonprofit and civic meetings;
- educational and cultural programs;
- arts and crafts activities;
- makers' markets and craft fairs;
- fundraising events;
- exhibitions; and

- private or commercial activities approved under this policy.

The Town shall administer this policy on a viewpoint-neutral basis and shall not deny an otherwise eligible activity because of the political or advocacy position expressed by the applicant.

4. Application and Approval

A person or organization seeking to use a Town facility shall submit the Town's Facility Use Application.

Routine applications that comply with this policy may be approved by the Town official designated by the Select Board.

The application shall identify the applicant, purpose, facility, date and time, expected attendance, whether money will be collected or goods sold, and any special requirements.

The Select Board may establish additional rules for individual facilities.

5. Community Use

Pelham encourages reasonable use of Town facilities by local community groups.

Low-risk activities such as card groups, coffee hours, book groups, neighborhood meetings, exercise classes, and similar gatherings shall ordinarily:

- be permitted without a rental fee;
- not require liability insurance; and
- require only the applicant's agreement to comply with this policy and responsibility for cleanup and damage.

6. Commercial and Sales Activities

Activities involving the sale of goods or services, admission charges, or other commercial activity may be permitted but may be subject to:

- a facility-use fee;
- a security deposit;
- liability insurance;
- other reasonable conditions appropriate to the activity.

For a makers' market, craft fair, or similar multi-vendor event, the Town may require the event organizer to provide insurance and accept responsibility for the event rather than requiring each individual vendor to obtain separate insurance.

7. Insurance

The Town does not require liability insurance for every facility use.

\$1,000,000 per occurrence & \$3,000,000 aggregate

Insurance may be required when the nature, size, or circumstances of an activity create an elevated risk. Factors include:

- large attendance;
- commercial activity;
- physical or recreational activities;
- food preparation or sale;
- special equipment;
- activities involving animals;
- activities involving unusual hazards;
- use outside normal building operations; or
- all events will begin no earlier than 8:00am and end no later than 10:00pm;

When insurance is required, the Town may require commercial general liability coverage, a certificate of insurance, and designation of the Town of Pelham as an additional insured.

The amount and type of insurance shall be determined according to the nature and size of the activity, in consultation with the Town's insurance/risk-management advisor when appropriate.

8. User Responsibilities

All users shall:

- comply with this policy and applicable laws;
- comply with occupancy and fire-safety requirements;
- maintain appropriate supervision;
- leave the facility clean and orderly;
- return furniture and equipment to its original location;
- remove personal property;
- report damage promptly;
- reimburse the Town for damage or extraordinary cleaning caused by the use;
- not operate accessory entertainment before 9:00 a.m. and shall cease operations not later than 9:00 p.m.;
- park in designated parking areas in front of Community Hall, 40 Amherst Road, and outside the Library, 2 South Valley Road;
- return the key to either the drop box across from the Police Department's parking area, 2 South Valley Road, or the drop box outside the town offices, 351 Amherst Road.

Applicants shall agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Town of Pelham to the extent permitted by law.

9. Food

Food and nonalcoholic beverages may be permitted subject to facility rules and applicable health requirements. Questions and permits regarding food safe certificates can be directed to the Quabbin Health District Health Inspector, (413) 967-9615.

Alcohol is prohibited.

10. Use Restrictions

The following are prohibited:

- unlawful activities;
- activities exceeding the facility's occupancy limit (50 person maximum);
- activities that create an unreasonable risk to people or property;
- smoking or vaping inside Town buildings;
- unauthorized open flames or hazardous materials;
- blocking exits or accessible routes; or
- activities otherwise prohibited by law or facility-specific rules.

11. Fees & Deposits

The Select Board shall establish a fee schedule (pg 8). Fees may be waived or reduced when the Select Board or its designee determines that the activity provides a substantial community benefit.

The Select Board shall establish a refundable deposit which is required for all events that are not for town government use (pg 9).

The Town may separately charge actual costs for extraordinary custodial services or damage.

12. Administration

The Select Board establishes this policy and the associated fee schedule.

The Town official designated by the Select Board shall administer applications and routine reservations consistent with this policy.

Requests involving unusual risk, substantial commercial activity, long-term commitments, or significant departures from this policy may be referred to the Select Board.

13. Appeals

An applicant whose request is denied may request review by the Select Board.

14. Review

The Select Board shall review this policy periodically and may amend the policy, application, or fee schedule as appropriate.

Adopted: _____ Date

Select Board: _____ Chair

_____ Vice-Chair

_____ Clerk

2. Facility-use application

TOWN OF PELHAM

COMMUNITY HALL FACILITY USE APPLICATION

Please submit this form to: Select Board Executive Assistant

APPLICANT

Name: _____

Organization/group (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Person responsible for the event: _____

EVENT

Room/area: _____

Date: _____ Start time: _____

End time: _____ Expected attendance: _____ (50 person maximum)

Is this a recurring event? ☐ No ☐ Yes

If yes, frequency: _____

PURPOSE

Briefly describe the activity:

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

Will admission be charged?

☐ No ☐ Yes

Will goods or services be sold?

☐ No ☐ Yes

Will the applicant or participants receive compensation?

☐ No ☐ Yes

If yes, please explain:

FOOD

Will food and/or non-alcoholic beverages be served?

☐ No ☐ Yes

Will food be prepared on site? (Pots & pans will need to be brought in)

☐ No ☐ Yes

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Will you need tables, chairs, kitchen facilities?

☐ No ☐ Yes

Please describe:

APPLICANT AGREEMENT

I have read the Town of Pelham Community Hall Facility Use Policy and agree to comply with its requirements and with all applicable laws, regulations, occupancy limits, and facility rules.

I accept responsibility for the conduct of participants and for leaving the facility in the condition in which it was provided. I agree to reimburse the Town for damage or extraordinary cleaning resulting from this use.

I understand that the Town may require liability insurance or other documentation depending upon the nature and size of the activity.

I understand that Town use takes priority and that the Town may cancel or relocate an approved reservation when the facility is required for municipal purposes.

Applicant signature: _____

Date: _____

FOR TOWN USE

Approved: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Fee: \$ _____

Security deposit: \$ _____

Insurance required: ☐ No ☐ Yes

Additional conditions:

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

3. Proposed fee and insurance matrix

TOWN OF PELHAM

FACILITY USE RENTAL FEE AND INSURANCE MATRIX

Type of activity	Examples	Proposed fee	Insurance
Town use	Select Board, boards/committees, departments, hearings	None	Town coverage
Local community group	Card group, coffee hour, book group, neighborhood meeting	None	None ordinarily
Local nonprofit/civic group	Nonprofit meeting, civic organization, community program	None	None ordinarily
Community educational/cultural activity	Lecture, workshop, art activity, exercise classes	None	Usually none; may be required depending on activity
Community event with sales	Small fundraiser, art sale	\$50	May be required
Makers' market/craft fair	Multiple artisans selling their own products	\$50–\$100	Normally required from organizer
Private resident use	Private gathering, family event	\$50	Generally none for small, low-risk events; may be required
Commercial/business use	Business meeting, paid class, commercial event	\$100+	Normally required
Large event	50 attendees maximum	Fee based on event	Normally required

Type of activity	Examples	Proposed fee	Insurance
Higher-risk activity	Physical activity, special equipment, animals, unusual hazards	Case-by-case	Required as appropriate
Damage/extraordinary cleanup	Damage or excessive cleaning	Actual cost	As appropriate

FACILITY USE DEPOSIT

Type of activity	Proposed fee
All Events that are not for town government	\$50 refundable deposit required

Proposed Insurance Guidelines

When insurance is required, the Town may generally request:

Commercial General Liability:

\$1,000,000 per occurrence / \$3,000,000 aggregate

Additional insured:

Town of Pelham, Massachusetts

Certificate of Insurance:

Required before the event.

The Town may require higher limits or additional coverage when warranted by the nature of the activity.

Important Administrative Principle

Insurance requirements should be **risk-based rather than automatic**.

A six-person weekly card group should not be subject to the same insurance requirements as would be for a makers' market.

The Town official administering the policy may require insurance when the circumstances warrant it and may consult the Town's municipal insurance/risk-management advisor.

Fee Waiver

The Select Board or its designated official may waive or reduce a fee when:

- the activity provides a substantial community benefit;
- the applicant is a nonprofit or civic organization;
- the activity is Town-sponsored; or
- charging the fee would be inconsistent with the purpose of this policy.

Extraordinary Costs

Regardless of the basic facility use fee, the applicant may be charged the actual cost of:

- additional custodial services;
- Town employee overtime;
- special setup or cleanup;
- repair of damage; or
- other extraordinary costs directly resulting from the event.