

**SKANEATELES FIRE STATION  
MEETING ROOM REGULATIONS**

The following rules and regulations have been adopted by the Village and Town Boards governing the use of the community room at the Skaneateles Fire Station. The room may be made available for meetings and events as follows:

1. **THIS IS AN ALCOHOL-FREE BUILDING.** No alcoholic beverage may be consumed on the premises. There are no exceptions to this rule.
2. **THIS IS A SMOKE-FREE BUILDING.** No smoking is permitted anywhere in the building. Smoking is permitted outside the east entrance, near the handicapped parking spaces and outside the west side entry door adjacent to the radio room.
3. The various boards and committees of Village and Town government may use the room for official functions, without charge. The Board of Elections may use the room for polling purposes without charge and shall have priority for the use of the room on election dates.
4. The Skaneateles Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. and Auxiliary may use the meeting room for functions without charge.
5. The room is not available for political events, commercial activities or private parties.
6. Non profit groups based in Skaneateles may use the room for meetings or functions. If the kitchen is to be used, a user fee of \$250 will be charged; if the kitchen is not to be used, a user fee of \$150 will be charged. The user will also provide a \$250 deposit for damage or cleaning which may be necessary.
7. Non profit groups from outside the Skaneateles community may use the meeting room if sponsored by a member of the fire department and if the room is available. For such groups the user fees shall be \$300 if the kitchen is used and \$200 if the kitchen is not used.
8. Reservations for use of the room shall be made through the SVFD, Inc. Activities and operations of the Skaneateles Volunteer Fire Department shall have priority.
9. Public restrooms in the lobby will be available for use during meetings or events.
10. The SVFD, Inc. reserves the right to have a person present to monitor use of the meeting room. In the event it is determined SVFD, Inc. that any event shall require the presence of police, the user agrees to pay the cost for off-duty police, to be paid at least five days prior to the event.

11. Groups using the meeting room are responsible for trash removal and cleaning together with lobby and restrooms. If the facilities are not cleaned satisfactorily, the security deposit will be used for that purpose.

12. No materials of any kind may be attached to walls, ceiling or floor in the lobby or meeting room. Tables and chairs are available, but the user is responsible for set up, clean up, and tear down.

13. Parking is permitted only in the designated areas of the parking lot. Parking is prohibited in certain designated areas and in front of the overhead doors.

14. The maximum permitted occupancy in the meeting room is 234.

15. The user agrees to be responsible for the cost of all damage caused during its event and agrees to hold the SVFD, Inc., Village of Skaneateles and Town of Skaneateles harmless from and against any damages or liability, including attorney's fees, arising out of use of the meeting room and premises.

16. No admission fees may be charged.

17. No games of chance are permitted.

18. All reservations for use of the community room are subject to preemption by the Volunteer Fire Department in the event of an emergency or call-out. Notice of cancellation will be provided to the user as soon as possible and any user fee or deposit will be refunded if a scheduled event must be cancelled.

19. All non-governmental, and non-Fire Department or Auxiliary events shall conclude by midnight.

20. All revenue generated by the use of the room shall be turned over to the Village Clerk/Treasurer at the end of each month, to be held for repairs and maintenance of the fire station.

# MEMORANDUM

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**to:** File  
**from:** Michael J. Byrne  
**re:** Fire Station/Policy Regarding Use of Meeting Room  
**date:** March 12, 2009

A meeting was held on March 11, 2009 to discuss a request from a citizen and Supervisor Tierney to amend the rules regarding the use of the community room at the fire station. The request was that the fee schedule be modified or eliminated.

Those attending the meeting were:

- From the Town; Supervisor Tierney and Town Board Member Jim Greenfield and Attorney Pat Sardino.
- From the Village; Mayor Green and MJB.
- From the Fire Department; Fire Chief Eric Sell and President Kathy Murphy.

Supervisor Tierney reviewed the letter he had received from Cynthia Loring MacBain objecting to a fee charged for an event which her group wished to hold in the community room. Supervisor Tierney said that he felt that the fees for the use of the room, reflected in the rules, were excessive and should be modified or eliminated.

Mayor Green indicated that he felt a lot of thought, discussion and study went into the establishment of those rules, including the fees, and that it would be unwise to eliminate them.

Eric Sell and Kathy Murphy explained the rationale for charging fees, from their prospective:

- ▶ The room is primarily for the use of fire fighters to relax and unwind after responding to an emergency. Those events can sometimes be physically demanding and psychologically traumatic.
- ▶ Neighbors have objected to extensive use of the community room because of concerns over traffic, etc.
- ▶ The equipment used in the community room (tables, chairs, etc.) are the personal property of the SVFD, Inc. They were not purchased with tax dollars. The

from the desk of...

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- corporation desires to safeguard that equipment and protect its investment.
- ▶ There is no janitor or full-time staff person on duty in the fire station. Typically, the building is closed and the only person present would be the dispatcher on duty, who cannot leave the dispatch office. When an event is to be held in the building, a volunteer firefighter(s) must open the building, remain present during the event, check the premises to see that it is cleaned up properly and then close the building. It is not fair to those volunteers to expect them to do that on a routine basis, in addition to their emergency response duties.
  - ▶ There are other rooms available in the community for meetings including both public facilities (the Community Center) and private facilities (the library, Creamery, Sherwood Inn, etc.).
  - ▶ The modest fees are consistent with other facilities and help in the firefighters efforts to raise funds.

The volunteer firefighters understand that taxpayers supported and are paying the cost of the facility but feel that it is not appropriate or wise to promote the use of the community room on a widespread basis for meetings. Chief Sell and President Murphy also pointed out that they had fought hard to enforce the rule prohibiting alcohol consumption in the building. That rule was not popular with some firefighters but the rule has been enforced. They believe that, if the rules are to be amended to eliminate or reduce the fee schedule, there will also be pressure to revise the policy on alcohol consumption.

The group agreed that this situation should be resolved quietly, without public fanfare and the possibility of negative news coverage.

After much discussion, the following compromise solution was agreed to:

1. The rules regarding use of the community room will not be revised.
2. The Town Board had agreed to "sponsor" the meeting requested by AAUW on March 25 and the meeting will go forward. However, an anonymous donor (Supervisor Tierney) will pay the fee for use of the room by that group.
3. The group will be told that an anonymous donor has paid the fee and that a decision has been made to retain the rules and fee structure regarding the use of that room.

MJB

/jt