

Town of Amherst, Virginia
Town Hall Building and Grounds Use Policy

Approved August 13, 2014

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Town of Amherst (the “Town”) to allow the use of its Town Hall at 174 S. Main Street as a place for governmental meetings and Town-sponsored and endorsed activities. This document establishes the general procedures for the use of the Town Hall building and associated grounds.

II. BUILDING USE

The primary use of the Town Hall building shall be for the official business of the Town of Amherst. Official business shall be defined to include activities such as:

- Meetings of the Town Council of the Town of Amherst
- Committees appointed by the Town Council, including:
 - Standing or special committees appointed by the Town Council,
 - Town of Amherst Planning Commission,
 - Town of Amherst Board of Zoning Appeals,
 - Town of Amherst Industrial Development Authority,
 - Town of Amherst Property Maintenance Investigation Board,
- Meetings and activities involving Town Councilors and Town employees during the performance of their Town duties,
- Groups who focus on serving the interests of the residents and/or business operators of the Town of Amherst who have been endorsed by the Town Council of the Town of Amherst and whose use of the Town Hall has been specifically authorized by the Town Council of the Town of Amherst.

In general, the use of the Town Hall for official business of the Town of Amherst shall be on a first-come, first-served basis with the Town Council of the Town of Amherst having priority. The Town Manager shall be responsible for coordinating the use of the Town Hall.

Town Hall restrooms shall be made available for public use during downtown events such as parades and festivals supported, sanctioned or endorsed by the Town Council as approved by the Town Council. The parade or event sponsor is expected to provide restroom monitoring and security during non-working hours.

Use of the Town Hall building by other parties is discouraged but may be allowed on a case-by-case basis by the Town Council.

The Amherst Town Hall is a tobacco free building and smoking is not allowed in the Town Hall. Except during events permitted by the Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, the possession and consumption of alcohol in the Town Hall is prohibited.

III. TOWN HALL GROUNDS USE

The Town Hall parking lot is reserved for Town use only during business hours except for an off-street handicapped parking space near S. Main Street for use by downtown patrons.

Town employees are to park toward the rear of the building during non-meeting days to allow “customers” to use the parking spaces in front of the building but at the front of the site during public meeting times.

The Town Hall parking lot may be used for bake sales and similar activities by church and community groups during evening and weekend daylight hours with prior authorization.

Car wash fundraisers are not allowed on the Town Hall grounds.

Except during events permitted by the Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, the possession and consumption of alcohol on the Town Hall grounds is prohibited.

IV. BUILDING USE FOR NON-OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Non-official use of the Town Hall building is discouraged but may be allowed on a case-by-case basis by the Town Council. Any proposal for the use of the building for other parties shall be in writing and address the following items:

1. No non-official business events held at the Town Hall may conflict with any scheduled Town meetings, events or activities.
2. The use of the Town Hall for non-official business is limited to the parking lot, Council Chambers, rear hallway and public restrooms.
3. The Applicant shall defray personnel costs associated with monitoring the activity and cleaning the Town Hall following its use which shall be deducted from a \$500 deposit. Checks are subject to the Town’s usual and customary non-payment fees.
4. The applicant shall agree to indemnify and hold harmless Town of Amherst, including the Town Council, Town employees and contractors against all claims, damages or causes of action for damages and related expenses arising out of, or brought on account of, injury to any person or persons or property, or loss of life, resulting from Applicant’s occupancy of, and use of, the Town Hall and its operations therein.
5. Decorations are discouraged and the Applicant must disclose all decorating plans in writing at the time of application. Candles are not allowed. Decorations, banners, or signs may not be affixed to ceiling tiles or painted walls. Permanent signage provided by the Town may not be removed or covered up. Confetti, rice, birdseed or other like items are prohibited in the Town Hall and the Town Hall grounds. All decorations, supplies, and property of the Applicant must be removed prior to the closing time of the Event.
6. Full food preparation on-site is prohibited. Under no circumstances shall food, food particles, grease, oils, food by-products or other inappropriate substances be deposited into the Town Hall plumbing system whether through the sink, bathroom facilities, or otherwise.
7. Smoking and the possession or consumption of alcohol in the Town Hall is prohibited. The possession or consumption of alcohol on the Town Hall grounds is prohibited.
8. The Town Council reserves the right to determine whether security and/or police presence will be needed in connection with the Applicant’s event and the number of officers required, the cost of which shall be borne by the Applicant.

9. The Applicant is responsible for cleaning the Town Hall and must return it to at least the same condition it was before the Applicant's event.
10. Disorderly conduct of any kind is prohibited and any person engaging in disorderly conduct is subject to being ejected from the premises. The Applicant shall be solely responsible for supervising the conduct of those attending the Applicant's event and is financially responsible for any damages caused.
11. No furniture, decorations, or other items may be placed in such a way as to block the exits. The Applicant is responsible for assuring the Town Hall does not become overcrowded.
12. The Applicant assumes full responsibility for the appropriate conduct of all the group members and Guests at the Town Hall during the rental hours. The Applicant also assumes full responsibility for any loss, breakage, or damage caused to the Town Hall, its contents, or the grounds. The Town is not liable for any loss, damage, injury or illness suffered during the use of the Town Hall by the Applicant or the guests. The Town is not responsible for any items that are left at the Town Hall by the Applicant or the guests.
13. There shall be no charge admission for the Applicant's event unless approved by the Town. Town police and event monitors shall not be charged for admission.
14. Except for weapons in the possession of the Town police department, there shall be no weapons on in the Town Hall or on the Town Hall grounds. However, weapons used for ceremonial or security purposes may be allowed with prior written consent of the Town.
15. Gambling of any nature or manner is prohibited.