

STRAFFORD TOWN HOUSE FACILITY USE POLICY (FUP)

INTRODUCTION

The Strafford Town House facility is made available to the public and all users by reservation according to this policy and the terms of use herein.

The Town of Strafford does not discriminate against any person on the basis of disability (including the use of a wheelchair), race, color, religion/creed, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex, age, marital status, lawful source of income, status as a victim of domestic violence, familial status, or military status.

BRIEF HISTORY

The Strafford Town House is the civic gathering space of our community. It was built in 1799 to accommodate local civic and religious meetings, and was made available to various religious groups in town according to a specified schedule. At the time of the disestablishment of churches in Vermont, during the 1820s and 1830s, most meeting houses were transferred to the possession of church organizations. However, during a religious controversy in Strafford during the 1830s, both of the leading church groups built their own church buildings. As a result, this meeting house remains the property of the Town of Strafford to this day. It continues to serve as the Town Meeting House for the Strafford community.

BUILDING SIGNIFICANCE

In 1832 the belfry and tower were added to the original meeting house and were built by Martin Barret, a local craftsman. The bell was cast in 1832 by George H. Holbrooke of Medway, Massachusetts. A Seth Thomas tower clock was installed in 1935.¹ The exterior otherwise survives in an unaltered condition.

The original interior high pulpit was removed and replaced with a performance stage during 1886 alterations.² The original box pews survive in the balcony only. The wood stove heating system, installed during the 1886 alterations, was removed in 2008 and replaced with a modern forced air heating system.

The exceptional post and beam frame backhouse with a slate roof and stone foundation, complementing the historical character and setting of the Town House, was built by Strafford volunteer craftsmen between 2012 and 2016 with ADA compliant composting toilets.

1. Historic American Buildings Survey, Written Historical and Descriptive Data, prepared by Osmund R. Overby, HABS No. VT. 36, November 1959.
2. Gwenda Smith, *The Town House*, (Strafford, VT: Strafford Historical Society, 1992).

RESERVING YOUR EVENT

The Strafford Town House facility is open to the public and may be reserved for private events on a limited basis, from May 1 through October 31. Events may include weddings, birthdays, reunions, funerals and memorial services, recitals, exhibitions, concerts, political meetings, graduations, lectures, and readings. The expanded use helps to raise awareness and increase appreciation of the importance of maintaining and preserving this historic building. Please contact the Strafford Town Clerk by phone at 802-765-4411, or by email at townclerk@straffordvt.org to check availability and to make a reservation well in advance of your planned event to ensure availability.

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RENTAL AGREEMENT

The Rental Agreement for use of the Town House facility is available at the Town Clerk's Office or on the web at www.traffordvt.org

Click on the Town House tab and select "Reservations" from the drop-down menu, or see below.

FEE SCHEDULE

The Fee Schedule and the accompanying Rental Agreement apply to all Users as defined below:

STRAFFORD TOWN-SPONSORED USERS

- A Strafford town-sponsored group or entity (an organization that receives support from or has a contractual relationship with the town) may use the Town House facility without charge, but must complete a Rental Agreement that is available on the town website.
- Town committees or groups officially appointed by the Strafford Selectboard are exempt from a User Fee. Other town groups may request a fee waiver. A waiver form is available at www.traffordvt.org/reservations.
- A \$150 deposit is required at the time of reservation.

STRAFFORD RESIDENT USER FEES

- Resident-Users must complete a Rental Agreement that is available at the Town Clerk's office or on the Town website (see above).
- The fee for Resident-Users is \$550 for most events, including but not limited to weddings, birthdays, family reunions, or religious ceremonies. A \$150 deposit is required at the time of reservation.
- Resident-User reservations for a funeral or memorial service are without charge, but donations are encouraged and greatly appreciated.

NON-RESIDENT USER FEES

- For nonprofit organizations with 501(c)3 status: A \$1000 user fee is required.
- For Non-Residents: A \$1000 user fee is required.
- A \$150 deposit is required at the time of reservation.

ADDITIONAL FEES

- There is a \$50 per hour charge if the facility requires heating during an event for any and all groups from the time the heating system is enabled to when it is turned off.
- A \$150 cleaning fee per event will be charged if the Town House premises are not adequately cleaned by the renter to the satisfaction of the Overseer.
- A \$100 per lost key fee will be charged if the facility keys are not returned following the event.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The Town House facility and its contents are expected to be returned to the same condition as they were before the time of use. If the User renting the facility cleans the interior spaces following the event to the satisfaction of the Overseer, the deposit fee will be returned. Cleanup by the User may happen on the following day after the event, provided there is no other scheduled event.

The interior furnishings and windows are very fragile and shall not be moved or operated without the direct supervision of the Overseer.

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No open flames (such as candles) are allowed in the building.

No smoking is permitted anywhere on the premises.

No use of alcohol or illegal substances is permitted on the premises.

The use of nails, staples, tape, or fasteners on interior woodwork, furniture, and walls, or anywhere on the building exterior, is strictly prohibited. No painting or construction of any kind is allowed inside the Town House facility.

Any damage to the property and the historic building, including interior furnishings, interior finishes, and any interior and exterior materials, are the responsibility of the User. The cost of repairs and/or replacement will be charged to the User.

User activities are limited to the public areas of the facility and outdoor property during the event. No access to the balcony, tower, and storage areas of the facility are permitted unless approved and supervised by the Overseer.

Dancing is not permitted in the building in order to preserve and maintain the historic interior finishes.

The Town of Strafford is not responsible for any rentals or equipment retained by the User on the premises or left on site following the event.

Events extending past dark may only use portable light fixtures, which will be provided at the front door under the direction of the Overseer. Portable light fixtures are available upon request and are to be promptly returned to the Overseer at the conclusion of the event.

Audio and visual services are provided by the Town House Overseer for an additional fee. For more information on audio-visual services please contact the Town Clerk.

The Town House facility key can be obtained from the Overseer. At the end of the event, the key must be returned promptly to the Overseer or Town Clerk.

ADVANCE PREPARATION/REHEARSALS

A key can be made available for rehearsals held the same day as the event. Rehearsals held the day before the event may be accommodated if there is no other event scheduled on that day.

Upon advance notice to the Overseer, every effort will be made to meet any reasonable special requests of the User.

SECURITY

For any event involving more than 100 people, a law enforcement or traffic control official must be hired by the User to control parking and traffic. Please refer to the parking map available at the Town Clerk's Office or on the web at www.straffordvt.org. Click on the "Town House" tab and select "Reservations" from the drop-down menu and select the link to the Parking Map.

LIABILITY

All renters using the Town House facility must have a liability insurance policy through their own insurance carrier and provide a Certificate of Insurance (COI) with the Town of Strafford named as the insured. Alternatively, renters may use a Tenant User Liability Insurance Policy (TULIP). A TULIP

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provides insurance coverage only for the duration of an event. More information about insurance and obtaining TULIP coverage is included in the Rental Agreement.

USER AGREEMENT

You and your guests shall follow all requests of the Overseer and comply with all applicable laws, ordinances, and regulations.

You agree to assume responsibility for any damages or loss to the Town of Strafford by your guests, invitees, agents, or employees, and for the cost of facility repairs and/or replacements. The Town of Strafford will not be responsible for loss of or damage to any merchandise or articles left on the Town House premises prior to, during, or following the event. Any charges incurred through damage or loss through an outside vendor (i.e. linen, decorations, floral pieces, etc.) that are caused by you or your guests, agents, vendors, invitees, or employees, are your sole responsibility.

In the event that the Overseer determines at any time that any violation of the terms of this agreement or any applicable laws, ordinances or regulations is likely to occur in your use of premises for your function, they reserve the right to cancel your function at any time (even while it is in progress) and retain all payments. Any such determination shall be pursuant to our sole discretion and shall be binding and final and the Town of Strafford and its representatives shall not be liable either to you, the vendor or agent for any of the charges of, and any deposits made to, the he vendor or agent or any losses you may incur as the result of the said cancellation.

The Town of Strafford is pleased to have you use the Town House facility for your private function; however, our obligation to the community and the security of our historic property is foremost. Accordingly, the Overseer and/or Town Clerk reserves the final right of approval for the use of the premises for your function. In the event that the Overseer and/or Town Clerk determines to cancel your function for reasons other than as set forth above, they will make every effort to so advise you within a reasonable time and they will refund your deposit in full, but they will not reimburse you for any costs your vendors may impose on you, including any forfeited deposits, in the event of such cancellation.

CONTACTS

For specific Facility Use Policy (FUP) questions please contact the Strafford Town Clerk, Lisa Bragg at 802-765-4411 or by email at townclerk@straffordvt.org; or the Overseer, Paul Kifner at townhouse@straffordvt.org. You may also refer to the Town House web page: www.straffordvt.org/townhouse

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PLEASE KEEP THIS DOCUMENT FOR REFERENCE