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Inaugural Policies on Renting Library Spaces

By Cathy Tyson

While the city will be opening the main doors of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center (LLLC) in November for patrons to check out books and materials, doors will also be opening on all of the rentable spaces in the facility: the Homework Center, the Technology Center, small meeting rooms, Teen Center, as well as the Community Hall, Art & Science Discovery Center and Amphitheater & Reading Court. Developing policies and a pricing structure that is community friendly and covers the costs incurred of room rentals while at the same time striving for frequent usage was a challenge for the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation (LLLCF). "We benchmarked against multiple venues, like the Veterans Memorial Hall, the Lafayette Park Hotel, LOPC, Temple Isaiah, Orinda Community Center & Library and San Ramon Community Services facilities. We put special focus on the Lafayette Community Center to achieve some continuity, though the facilities are quite different," said Kathy Merchant, President of Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation Trustees. Because larger spaces like the Community Hall, which has a maximum capacity of 229 people, are completely different from the Homework Center which has a capacity of 35, the LLLCF developed two policies to govern the facility - one for reserved rooms on the library main floor and one for larger spaces. If the Community Hall was reserved for a wedding for example, there are insurance requirements, staff set up, rules for caterers and more; renting the space is more complex. Hourly rates are divided into categories with respect to the renters for Library Main Floor rooms. Lafayette resident non-profit groups get the lowest rate, non-resident non-profits pay a bit more, followed by private resident or commercial renters, and finally private non-resident or commercial renters. Larger spaces are set up similarly with different rates for resident non-profits, non-resident non-profits and in the last category private parties or commercial use. Organizers want to make library spaces as accessible as financially feasible. "The concept behind this is to acknowledge the generosity of our community in supporting the creation of LLLC and at the same time not pricing the spaces out of reach of all non-profits," noted a recent statement from the Foundation. The Reading Court/Amphitheater is available for free to non-profit groups, subject to a refundable security deposit to encourage a dynamic amphitheater environment for community enjoyment. The LLLCF is taking a wait and see approach, and plans on reviewing all aspects of the policies in three to six months.

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