

**TOWN OF WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT
Special Meeting Notice**



Zoom instructions

Dialing in by Phone Only:

Please call: **646 558 8656** or **646 931 3860**

When prompted for participant or meeting ID enter: **818 1941 7872** then press #

Joining in by Computer:

Please go to the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81819417872>

When prompted for participant or meeting ID enter: **818 1941 7872**

AGENCY: Arts Commission

DATE: March 19, 2024

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: Hybrid meeting - via Zoom or In-person at Town Hall in Ludlow Room

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3. Selection of a Chairperson & Vice-Chairperson
4. *Discussion on Poet Laureate
5. Minutes of Preceding Meeting
 - a) *February 22, 2024
6. Adjournment

*Backup materials

Public Act 75-312 requires notice of Special Meetings to be posted in the Town Clerk's Office not less than 48 hours prior to the time of such meeting. No other business shall be considered at this meeting than that listed on this Agenda.

Agenda Item Summary

Date: March 19, 2024
To: Members of the Arts Commission
Prepared by: Scott W. Colby, Jr., Assistant Town Manager
Subject: Poet Laureate

Background

At the February 22, 2024 Art Commission Meeting, the group had a presentation from a representative of the Connecticut Coalition of Poets Laureate learning what a poet laureate is and the function within a municipality.

Discussion/Analysis

Staff researched poet laureates that have been established in various municipalities in Connecticut. Highlights of the research include:

- Selection process;
- Selection committee;
- Interview process;
- Term length;
- Activities a poet laureate participate in.

Financial Impact

None.

Other Board Action

None.

Recommendations

This item is presented for informational purposes only. No action is requested of the committee.

Attachments

List of municipalities researched for a Poet Laurette

Municipality	Selection Process	Selection Committee	Interview Process	Term Length	Removal Process	Events	Stipend / Honorarium
Bethel	Official call for submissions (Bethel resident poets send in three original poems and a resume by the deadline). Applications are reviewed by a selected group and the list is narrowed down to five. The group goes back and narrows down to three. The three finalists are interviewed where they are asked to read their poems and let us know their laureate plans. The group then selects their recommendation.	Members of Bethel Arts (local nonprofit), previous Poet Laureate, representatives from Bethel Public Library and local bookstores.	One formal interview	Three years	No	Local events where appropriate, usually by request of the First Selectman.	No
Bolton	Information not provided	Information not provided	Information not provided	Two years, but can reapply for extended term.	No	Organize/participate in poetry readings open to the public, read a poem at a town event, write/find poems about the community/historical events/figures, visit schools and work with students, present poetry workshops, facilitate the publication of an anthology of poetry by community members, participate in or help organize akphrastic poetry events, manage a poetry showcase in a public area such as the town hall of library, work with the local library to create a poetry corner or collection of poetry books by CT authors, create/facilitate the creation of a poetry bench, create/facilitate the creation of poetry posts in the public parks, be available for poetry consultations and/or outreach with community groups.	No
Branford	Put a call out for applications. Read through all applications and determined top two choices. Scheduled interviews with both applicants. Met as a group to discuss the results and choices. Made a final selection and let applicants know the results.	Library Director, Library Board member, Branford high school English teacher, other town library director, director of nonprofit arts group based in Branford.	Did not anticipate needing interview but both candidate were strong in different areas. They did not ask for a reading as part of the interview, but thinks they will going forward.	Three years	No	The PL is creating a lot of her own events and is working with the Town and schools to encourage her invitation to attend their events.	No
Chaplin	Advertised the opening (schools, flyers, library, Facebook, etc.) and asked for a sample of a poem which reflects on the town, present or past. The applicants sent their work to the Library Director who gave the committee copies without any identifying information.	Three members of the Library Board developed the selection process and chose semi-finalists.	Asked for a cover letter with information about publications, town address, phone, etc. The poem submitted was the most important factor. Rubric to evaluate poems. Each committee member silently voted using a 1-10 scale. The three highest scorers' poems became semifinalists and were presented to the Library Board to make the final choice.	Three years	No	Celebratory recognition event for poet. She has read at other events and participated in a NE Corner ZOOM Poets Laureate program during COVID	No
Clinton	Town Council appointment	No info given	No info given	Three years	No	promotes and encouraged the appreciation of creative expression through poetry and literary arts activities. Provides at least two public appearances each year. Readings may include but not limited to, open mic performances, poetry slams, poetry reading events, radio or television appearances, and participation at community organizations' events	No
Enfield	Promote PL program and application through our social media and local papers. Application: one page narrative, resume, two letters of support, work sample. Panel of ECAC commission members and town staff liaison will review all applications and select the PL. Selection criteria: outstanding reputation and distinction within the field of poetry, excellence of the poet's work, publication history, commitment to fostering appreciation and participation in poetry.	The ECAC members discuss all applications and vote. Liaisons participate in the discussions. We also have an Enfield librarian who specializes in poetry join us for the discussions.	No formal interviews. Strongest candidate emerges just reviewing the application.	Three years, but can reapply for extended term.	No official removal process. Important consideration, separating the PL's personal views/work/career from the town position of PL.	Making connections and visits to Enfield schools. ECAC also helps the PL find and create community events to boost poetry and literacy. Must participate in at least three public events per year as requested by ECAC or Town Council (incl. award ceremonies, Torch Light Parade, etc.)	\$500
Hebron	Based off qualifications as set forth in ordinance	Two members of Board of Trustees, 2-3 teachers, Hebron Selectperson, potential representation from CT Coalition of Poets Laureate or Arts Council	Open houses at the library where people can come and discuss/read their poetry. Application/portfolio review. Informal discussions with the applicants. No formal interview.	One year, potential extension of two additional years	No	Implement a community outreach/education program, participate in events each year to encourage writing/reading/performance of poetry by providing public poetry readings/workshops/lectures/presentations, promote literacy through poetry in schools, commemorate the Town of Hebron by composing poetry that speaks to/for/of the town	No
Litchfield	Solicit for applicants. Must submit three original poems, two ideas of what they would like to do or accomplish in their term. Selection committee reviews submissions, interviews candidates, and vote on the person they feel should be the PL. If there is a tie, the First Selectman will decide. The candidate chosen will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for their approval.	First Selectman, Library Director, two-four community volunteers	Yes, must read one of their poems to the Selection Committee at the interview	Three years, but can reapply for extended term.	Not specifically indicated. They would choose not to reappoint after term ends or dismiss for failure to comply with policy's duties.	Present a poem at one of our town's celebrations, host a poetry discussion at library, celebrate Poetry Month each April, engage school-aged children in community with poetry (including but not limited to at least one workshop event), come up with other ideas that will stimulate and involve the town at large, report periodically to the First Selectman	No

Municipality	Selection Process	Selection Committee	Interview Process	Term Length	Removal Process	Events	Stipend / Honorarium
Middletown	No information given	No information given	No information given	Three years, but can reapply for extended term.	No information given	PL reception, promote awareness of poetry in Middletown, promote at least one public event per year as requested by Mayor and/or Middletown Commission on the Arts, foster public appreciation of and participation in poetry and literary arts activities in schools/colleges/local literacy community, represent Middletown within the CT Coalition of Poets Laureate	Unknown
New Milford	Mayor appoints	None	Mayor chooses based on knowledge of candidate	Two years	No	Poetry contest, poetry reading for contest winners, reading of PL poetry	No
Thompson	Advertised the position via press release to area media, on website, and social media. Applicants needed to sent a cover letter with specific information.	Board of Selectmen (2 of 3 participated), the Director of Planning and Development, and Library Director	The committee conducted interviews. Interviews were also open to the public to participate.	Two years, but can reapply for extended term.	No	Community events; plan is to add local poetry programming for adult/youth audiences	No
Washington	Informal, appointment done by Board of Selectmen	Arts Council	No formal interviews. They do ask for a brief letter of interest and resume.	Indefinite	There are no defined behaviors or ethics but it would have to be rather egregious for removal. In that event, the Board of Selectmen would simply unappoint.	No defined schedule. Typically events endorsed/sponsored by the Arts Council.	No
West Hartford	Appoint prior to April 1 and name and present Poet Laureate proclamation at an April Town Council meeting.	Began program in 2005. Since then, the selection committee has slowly been made up of past poet laureates.		Two years (three for the first Poet Laureate to figure things out). Also extended during COVID	No	Each PL has their own interests and serves in their own way. They encourage some education - public readings - support for other poets, writing a poem for a milestone event, etc.	No
Windham County	N/A, only one candidate submitted his name	None. A call for committee members was put out to the Council with no interest. The mayor was the only individual in charge of selection.	Yes. Mayor did a forma interview at Town Hall then went out informally with the candidate after.	Unknown	Charter has removal process for all appointment officials. Initiated upon mayor's discretion.	Poetry Park events, poem at HS graduation	No
Woodbury	Five months of advertising. Interviews held during a two week period. Announcement of the new PL and a reception will be shortly after.	Panel of three: Library Director, Adult Programming Librarian, First Selectman	Application and formal interview	Three years	must follow town and library policies. Content must be appropriate for all ages. PL must work in collaboration with library staff, especially regarding advertising/social media posts	Poetry open mics, poetry writing workshops focusing on the craft, all day poetry celebrations in the library with various activities and panels, poem in your pocket day, specially written poems for town/library events which are read as part of the ceremony, collaboration with schools to encourage writing contests, etc.	No

Municipality	Selection Process	Selection Committee	Interview Process	Term Length	Removal Process	Events	Stipend / Honorarium
CT Council of Poets Laureate	<p>Options: 1) A librarian recommends a poet to the Town Council or Board of Selectpersons, and the Council/Board votes.</p> <p>2) The Town announces via newspaper, social media, etc. that it has created a PL post, and will accept letters from interested poets who are over the age of 21 and a current resident. The poets usually propose a few kinds of programs, submit a resume and sample (1-5 pages) of their work, state other service to the Town if applicable.</p> <p>3) Sometimes a current PL (or committee of past PLs) will select the next PL. (This happens in Manchester and West Hartford)</p> <p>4) Sometimes a poet, seeing the need for a PL, will propose the post to the library or Town governing body, and the Town can just say "go for it! (This has happened in many towns, Thompson most recently).</p>	<p>Committees often consist of representatives from the library, Arts Commission, and a civic organization such as the Historical Society. For example, in Middlebury right now it is the Town Historian who is rallying for a PL.</p>	<p>if the candidates have similarly worthy credentials, I would highly recommend an interview. The committee members will end up working with the PL, and this is the best way to determine the dynamic. Questions may arise in the course of the interview, the answers to which aren't in the submission materials. Again, it depends on the Town's needs. If they want a person who is deeply interested in history, an interview would provide this information. You also want to make sure the PL can be politically nonpartisan and open to ideas, which should also be nonpartisan</p>	<p>Anywhere from two to four year, and terms can be renewable if the PL is amenable, and if there are no other candidates.</p>	<p>I've never heard of such a thing, but any criminal behavior would certainly be grounds for dismissal. Foul language at a formal event would warrant a warning, but should never be tolerated with minors. But I'd caution the governing body to separate poems written for the Town from poems not written for the town, i.e. poems published in a journal or in the poet's own books. Poets should remain free to use common language and idiom as they see creatively fit under the First Amendment. We often write about difficult situations, and poems can have realistic dialogue expressing a wide range of emotions.</p>	<p>Major positive celebrations like anniversaries or holidays would count as suitable requests, bearing in mind the poet's personal plans. But negative events often prompt poets to create work as well. State PL Emeritus Dick Allen wrote a beautiful poem in honor of the Sandy Hook victims. I've written sad poems about Covid, but also joyful ones about how the Town of Vernon drew national acclaim for its handling of testing and vaccine clinics, and its Drive-through Holiday fests and other Covid-safe events. An example of a request I declined was to write a poem about "unfunded mandates" I proposed to the Town that I hold one event (such as a reading or workshop) a month, excluding January and one summer month. Of course, I did many more than that. I logged an average of 60 hours/year, not including writing Town poems. In a normal year, a more suitable request would be 20-30 hours/year and two-four poems. Keep in mind that most of are still working full-time, and have families, and volunteer elsewhere.</p>	<p>They range from unfunded to \$1000. The large cities pay considerable stipends--\$5K-10K/year.</p>



**TOWN OF WINDSOR
ARTS COMMISSION
HYBRID Meeting
Ludlow Room
February 22, 2024
Special Meeting
UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Present: Kathryn Grimshaw-Parker, Sarah Laiuppa, Christian Ryan, Neill Sachdev (left at 8:15 PM), Catherine Lewis

Absent: Michael Daly, Christina Swaidan, Edward Richters, Spencer Moore

Staff: Scott W. Colby, Jr., Assistant Town Manager

2. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

3. DISCUSSION OF LOCAL ART ORGANIZATION INVENTORY

Staff discussed the inventory of local arts organization. Commissioners will continue to work on the inventory for a future discussion.

4. LOCAL ARTS COMMISSION PRESENTATION

A presentation was provided by the Amanda Roy, Director of Equitable Arts Advancement for the Greater Hartford Arts Council.

5. POET LAURETTE COALITION PRESENTATION

A presentation was provided by Peggy Dietz, of the Poet Laurette Coalition. Staff will gather research into how other communities have established a poet Laurette for a future discussion.

6. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

a) January 17, 2024

MOVED by Ms. Parker, seconded by Ms. Laiuppa, to approve the meeting minutes of the January 17, 2024 meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 4-0-0 (Mr. Daly, Ms. Swaidan, Mr. Richters, Mr. Sachdev and Mr. Moore absent)

7. STAFF REPORT – None



Arts Commission Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2024

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Ms. Laiuppa, seconded by Mr. Ryan, to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

Motion Passed 4-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott W. Colby, Jr.
Assistant Town Manager