



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To:** Members of the Arts, Culture & Heritage Advisory Committee

**From:** Becky Rogers, Manager, Arts, Culture and Heritage Division

**Meeting Date:** September 14, 2017

**Subject:** Report ACHAC17-041  
Poet Laureate Pilot Project

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## **Purpose**

A report to provide the Arts Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee (ACHAC) with information on the recommended processes, duties and responsibilities for a Poet Laureate pilot project.

## **Recommendations**

That the ACHAC endorse the recommendations outlined in Report ACHAC17-041 dated September 14, of the Manager, Arts, Culture and Heritage Division, as follows:

- a) That the Report from the Manager, Arts, Culture and Heritage Division be received by ACHAC for information and discussion;
- b) That a Poet Laureate Program for the City be introduced as a one-year pilot project pending fundraising of \$2,000 for the position; and,
- c) That the Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee administer the selection of the Poet Laureate, monitoring and the evaluation of the project, and prepare an evaluation report on the project for Council at the end of the pilot.

## Budget and Financial Implications

The Poet Laureate position is an honorary post, not an employed position, however it does typically include an annual honorarium of \$2,000. As this is a new service and has not been identified in the 2017 City budget, funding for a pilot Poet Laureate program will be raised by the Peterborough Poetry Slam Collective. Should the pilot project be successful and there be interest in continuing the position as an ongoing Poet Laureate program it will be dependent on the availability of funding through the regular budget process.

## Background

Following a presentation on Poet Laureate programs and the 2017 Canadian Festival of Spoken Word (<http://cfsw.ca/>) at the June 8, 2017 ACHAC meeting ACHAC passed the following motion:

That the ACHAC approve the recommendation outlined in Report ACHAC17-032, dated June 8, 2017 of the Manager, Arts, Culture and Heritage Division, as follows:

- a) That the presentation from the Peterborough Poetry Slam Collective be received for information and discussion.
- b) That staff prepare a report that outlines the processes, duties and responsibilities to begin a pilot project to establish a Poet Laureate for the City of Peterborough, which will be presented to the Committee at their September meeting.

To advise ACHAC of the process and requirements involved in establishing a Poet Laureate program, staff has reviewed the Poet Laureate programs from other municipalities including:

- the duties, roles and responsibilities of such an appointment;
- eligibility;
- the length of the candidate's term;
- the process for selecting and appointing a Poet Laureate; and,
- possible financial implications to ensure there is no financial impact on the City of Peterborough for the pilot project;

The position of Poet Laureate honours a poet who writes excellent poetry and focuses on themes that are relevant to the people who live in the city. Many cities across

Canada have Poets Laureate who serve as ambassadors for the arts in their respective cities. Appendix 1 contains a review of such programs from numerous cities.

The Poet Laureate advocates for poetry and the arts - particularly literary arts. As advocates for the poetry, language and the arts, they can attend municipal events to promote and attract people to the arts world. The position of the Poet Laureate is an honour bestowed and not a position of employment.

**Duties, Roles and Responsibilities:**

The duties of the Poet Laureate should be to:

- Serve as an advocate for literature and for literacy,
- Create artistic work that reflect Peterborough's landscape, cityscape, civic identity; and/or the life of the city.
- Produce at least three original works for specific events or occasions identified by the City every year;
- Make public presentations of their work at least three times a year;
- Serve as a literary ambassador; and,
- Participate in the literary life of the City to raise the visibility of literacy, poetry and spoken word.

A successful Poet Laureate must have both a mastery of the art form as well as a public profile. The public components of the Laureate's duties are as important as the creation of literary works.

**Eligibility:**

Candidates must:

- be residents of Peterborough, or currently pay taxes to the municipality;
- have published a minimum of one book of poetry (not including self-publication) or be a recognized spoken word artist with an established body of work;
- have the ability to be an ambassador for literacy, writers and the literary arts; and,
- be willing to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the position.

**Selection Criteria:**

- literary excellence and significant ability in composing poetry;
- contribution to the Peterborough Arts, Culture & Heritage community;
- recognition within their peer community; and,
- ability to fulfill ambassadorial duties

The Poet Laureate's achievement need not be measured by the total amount of works produced or published, or by the length of time spent as a professional poet, but must be recognized for artistic excellence and have had a demonstrable impact upon and recognition by the literary community, regardless of the length of the individual's career.

**Selection Committee**

In order to establish a poet laureate for the City it is important to ensure that community partners and professional organizations be included in the selection process.

ACHAC will oversee a nominating committee for the selection of a Poet Laureate. The committee will consist of five Peterborough residents and should include a mix of the literary/poetry community, a member of Council, staff of the Peterborough Public Library, a local bookseller or publisher, an educator from a local secondary or post-secondary institution, and a member of the public with an interest in literature. A member of ACHAC will chair the selection committee. The committee will review all eligible nomination packages and make a selection based on the criteria outlined above. Individuals may be nominated or self-nominate for consideration. See Appendix 2 for the submission form.

**Selection Process**

The Selection Committee will advertise that they are seeking applications. Following the nomination deadline, the Selection Committee will review all applications; meet to discuss the applications and shortlist up to three nominees. Shortlisted nominees will be invited to participate in an in-person interview and presentation of their work for the selection committee. During these meetings, the Selection Committee will assess each nominee's presenting skills and aspirations for the position. Following the in-person interviews and presentations, the Selection Committee will select the Peterborough Poet Laureate.

Sample time line for Poet Laureate Selection Process:

Start date – January 2018 meeting of ACHAC

End week two - Finalize the Selection Committee

End week six - Selection Committee meets to select and review potential candidates

- Selection Committee chooses a maximum of three candidates to be considered

End week eight – Selection Committee completes interviews/presentations by short listed poets

End week nine - Candidate is contacted and confirmation of acceptance is determined

**Term:**

As this is a pilot project, the Poet Laureate will serve a one-year appointment commencing in 2018.

**Remuneration:**

The Poet Laureate will receive an honorarium of \$2,000 for the year. The City will not be responsible to reimburse or pay performance fees for poetry readings, travel expenses or accommodation costs for out of town appearances

**Administration:**

The Arts Culture & Heritage Advisory Committee will administer the program, including:

- Appointing the Selection Committee.
- Collecting nominations.

Administrative support by Arts, Culture & Heritage staff includes supporting ACHAC and the selection process. The position will have a mailing address and an email address using the peterborough.ca domain. It does not include secretarial assistance for preparing drafts or manuscripts for publication.

Updates on the Poet Laureate's activities will be required from time to time as requested by ACHAC and the Poet Laureate will be required submit a report at the conclusion of their term.

**Intellectual Property:**

All writing, notes and original materials produced during the tenure of the Poet Laureate remain the property of the individual, who shall retain all rights thereto. The City will retain the right to use the Poet Laureate's poems in its own publications, for example the CAO's Year in Review. Such usage will be solely for the purposes of publicity and awareness of the program and of the ACHAC and will not be used for commercial or other purposes.

**Summary**

Peterborough has a strong and thriving literary tradition. By initiating a pilot project for City of Peterborough Poet Laureate, the City reinforces support for this tradition and the city's literary community as a whole.

Submitted by,

Becky Rogers  
Manager, Arts, Culture and Heritage

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Attachments:

Appendix 1: Matrix of Poet Laureate programs  
Appendix 2: Submission Form

**Appendix 1**

Municipality/Region	Year Started	Term Length	Honorarium	Duties	Programming Responsibilities
City of Kingston	2011	4	\$2,000/year	-Ambassador of arts to the City & for the City -Reading at City events (3) -Supports writing poetry	No
City of Calgary	2011	2	\$5,000/year (private sector funding)	-Reading at City events -Supports writing poetry -Ambassador of arts to the City & for the City	No
City of Mississauga	2015	2	\$5,000/year	-Reading at City events -Literary ambassador for City -Advocate for poetry & literary arts -Create legacy	No
City of Toronto	2001	3	\$10,000/year Includes cost of travel & incidentals	-Supports writing poetry but not for City events -Literary ambassador for City -Create legacy	No
City of Windsor	2011	3	\$2,500	-Reading at City events Supports writing poetry	No
City of Winnipeg	2017	2	\$5,000/year	- Reading/Performing at City events (4) -Literary ambassador for City -Create & produce legacy for an event	No

Cobourg	1997	4	\$500/year	-Reading at City events (3) -Literary ambassador for City	No
Edmonton	2005	2	\$5,000/year	-Reading at City events (4)/per year -Supports writing poetry (3)/year -Literary ambassador for City	Yes
Regional Municipality of Halifax	2001	2	\$1,000 per year for total of \$2,000	-Reading at City events -Literary ambassador for City -Advocate for poetry & literary arts -Create legacy	Yes
Vancouver	2006	3	\$5,000	Supports writing poetry	No

## Appendix 2

### Submissions

Eligible poets or spoken word artists are invited to submit proposals that include the following:

1. Curriculum Vitae
2. A maximum of 5 examples of published work from within the last 10 years
3. Confirmation of place of residence
4. Letter of Intent of 500 words maximum detailing:
  - How the poet would represent the City of Mississauga and interact in civic life
  - How the Poet would engage with the Mississauga Library System
  - The Poet's potential special civic project(s)
  - How the Poet will use digital engagement to advocate for the literary arts
5. An artist bio of no more than 250 words to be used on the City's website if the application is selected.

Submissions are accepted via email or paper copy.

Please send email submissions to:

Paper submissions will be accepted c/o:  
City of Peterborough Poet Laureate Submissions  
Administrative Assistant  
Arts, Culture & Heritage Division  
210 Wolfe Street  
Peterborough ON, K9J 2K9

### Selection Process

Appointment will be by a selection committee comprised of arts professionals from the community. Submissions will be reviewed on the following criteria:

- display of literary excellence and significant ability in composing poetry;
- contribution to the Peterborough Arts, Culture & Heritage community;
- recognition within their peer community; and,
- ability to fulfill ambassadorial duties

### Reserved Rights of the City of Peterborough

The City of Peterborough, at its sole discretion, reserves the following rights:

- To request clarification or additional information, as it deems necessary to evaluate submissions;
- To determine suitability of the submission and capability of the prospective artist(s)
- To select the artist(s) that it deems most appropriate for the project;
- To make no selection or to cancel this process at any time;
- To issue public announcements regarding the competition.



This document and any submissions in response to it by prospective artists do not create any binding obligations on the City, the prospective artist, or any other party.

Any questions about the Poet Laureate Program should be directed to:

Becky Rogers,

Manager, Arts Culture & Heritage Division

Community Services Department

[brogers@peterborough.ca](mailto:brogers@peterborough.ca)

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