

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: May 23, 2024

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

REQUEST: APPROVE A TWO-YEAR EXTENSION TO THE PALM DESERT POET
LAUREATE AGREEMENT

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a two-year extension to the Palm Desert Poet Laureate Agreement with Lori Davis.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

At its regular meeting of March 9, 2023, the City Council appointed Mayor Quintanilla and Mayor Pro Tem Harnik to a subcommittee to form a selection process for a City Poet Laureate. This honorary position was created to uplift the artistic achievement of the City of Palm Desert through active participation in ceremonial, educational, and community activities.

After a four month long competitive application and performance process which included selection by a qualified panel, at its regular meeting of September 14, 2023, the City Council unanimously appointed Palm Desert resident Lori Davis as the City's Poet Laureate for a one-year term from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024.

Since her appointment, Ms. Davis has successfully completed four (4) of the six (6) duties under the scope of work:

- Recited an original poem for the City of Palm Desert's 50th Anniversary Celebration on November 18, 2023
- Performed a reading at the City's Veteran's Day Ceremony on November 11, 2023
- Selected and is mentoring a junior poet laureate
- Proposed and executed a successful poetry workshop and reading at the Palm Desert Library on April 8, 2024

The two remaining events under the scope of work are to perform readings at the following events:

- State of the City on June 25, 2024
- Independence Day Celebration on July 4, 2024

In addition to her current scope of work, Ms. Davis has proposed to build community programming for poets and writers by offering the following:

- Monthly workshops from November through April
- Open mic evenings
- Youth programming: 2-3 events from November through April
- Poetry projection on buildings for City events
- Public poetry at the Civic Center Park

- Holding an event for National Poetry Month

With the successful program development of the current Poet Laureate, recent selection and mentoring of a junior laureate and more community programming, staff is recommending a two (2) year extension to the agreement with Lori Davis to serve as Palm Desert's Poet Laureate.

If this extension is approved, prior to the end of Ms. Davis' agreement in September 2026, staff will request direction from the City Council as to if they would like to continue the program and if so, another call for nominations will be sent out.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

If approved, Ms. Davis would continue to receive an annual honorarium of \$3,500, paid quarterly, as well as mileage expenses to and from events. Funds have been requested as part of the FY 2024/2025 Public Art Budget – Account No. 4364650-4309200.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Call for Nominations 2023-2024 Poet Laureate
2. Lori Davis' Application
3. Palm Desert – City of Warmth and Light by Lori Davis