

**CULTURAL ARTS COMMITTEE  
CITY OF PALM DESERT  
STAFF REPORT**

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MEETING DATE: March 12, 2025

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL REPORT ON THE CITY'S POET LAUREATE

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive and file informational report on the City of Palm Desert's Poet Laureate.

**BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

In March 2023, the City Council established an honorary position of Poet Laureate to support Palm Desert's artistic and cultural initiatives. Following a competitive selection process, Lori Davis was appointed for a one-year term starting October 1, 2023. She has successfully completed all assigned duties, including:

- Recited an original poem for the City's 50th Anniversary (Nov. 18, 2023)
- Performed at the Veterans Day Ceremony (Nov. 11, 2023)
- Mentored Junior Poet Laureate
- Hosted a poetry workshop and reading at the Palm Desert Library (April 8, 2024)
- Performed at the State of the City (June 25, 2024) and Independence Day Celebration (July 4, 2024)

Given her successful contributions, at its May 23, 2024, meeting, the City Council approved a two-year contract extension with Lori Davis through September 30, 2026.

With this extended contract, Ms. Davis has developed Poet's Oasis, a free, twice-monthly poetry workshop at the Palm Desert Library designed to engage both new and seasoned poets in a supportive, generative writing group. Sessions focus on craft, poetry prompts, writing time, and feedback. The program averaged 9 – 11 attendees per session, with a peak of 13 attendees in December, and has received positive feedback.

**Programming:**

- **Poet's Oasis Showcase Reading** (April 16, 2025, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m., Palm Desert Library)  
- A National Poetry Month celebration featuring participants from the workshop. The event will be free and open to the public, including live, acoustic music and refreshments.
- **Poet's Oasis Anthology** - A chapbook-style (pocket-sized booklet, 20 – 40 pages) poetry collection published by the Palm Desert Library debuting poems from workshop participants, to be released in conjunction with the April 16 showcase reading.
- **Remaining Poet's Oasis Dates This Season:**
  - March 19, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
  - April 2, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

- April 16, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Davis will provide quarterly updates on her programming to the Cultural Arts Committee. The Committee will have the opportunity to offer feedback and recommendations, which will be shared with the City Council.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The Poet Laureate receives an annual honorarium of \$3,500, paid quarterly, as well as mileage expenses to and from events. Funds are paid from the Public Art Budget – Account No. 4364650-4309200.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Poet Laureate's Scope of Work
2. Poet's Oasis Workshop Flyer
3. Poet's Oasis Workshops Attendance Data
4. Poet's Oasis Participant Feedback