



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Board of Supervisors



Date: September 20, 2016

Board Meeting Date: October 4, 2016

Special Notice / Hearing: None

Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Supervisors Warren Slocum and Carole Groom

Subject: Appointment of Lisa Rosenberg as San Mateo County Poet Laureate

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution appointing Lisa Rosenberg to the honorary post of San Mateo County Poet Laureate for a two-year term from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018.

BACKGROUND:

The tradition of naming a Poet Laureate began in 17th century England when John Dryden was first named to the post. The United States Library of Congress appointed an official Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in 1937. In 1985, an Act of Congress changed the name of the position to Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress.

California was the first state to name a Poet Laureate informally and the position was established by the Legislature in 2001. A number of California counties and cities have followed suit and established the position of Poet Laureate, including the Bay Area counties of San Francisco, Marin, Napa, Sonoma, Alameda, Santa Clara and San Mateo.

In April 2013, the Board of Supervisors approved a resolution establishing the honorary post of San Mateo County Poet Laureate for the purpose of elevating poetry into the consciousness of San Mateo County residents and highlighting and celebrating the literary arts within our County.

On October 8, 2013, the Board of Supervisors approved a resolution naming Caroline Goodwin as our County's first Poet Laureate. Ms. Goodwin has served with distinction since January 1, 2014. Poet Laureate Nominee Lisa Rosenberg will be San Mateo County's second Poet Laureate.

DISCUSSION:

The Poet Laureate will represent San Mateo County and the art of poetry through outreach activities related to poetry; will propose and lead a community project throughout their term; will present appropriate works at a minimum of four selected County-sponsored events during the year, including events involving schools and youth; and will open the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meetings with a poem every quarter.

An ad hoc Poet Laureate Advisory Committee, co-chaired by Supervisors Carole Groom and Warren Slocum, which includes members from the San Mateo County Arts Commission, a college professor, poets, librarians, publishers and poetry enthusiasts, met several times to set the parameters regarding the selection of the Poet Laureate. At the close of the eight-week nomination period, eight outstanding San Mateo County poets applied for the post. Individuals considered for the Poet Laureate were those who have resided in San Mateo County for at least five years, who have been published or recognized for poetry and literary contributions, and have demonstrated a commitment to reading and writing poetry and embraced the opportunity to engage in civic discourse. The Committee culled through the nomination packets for each poet and then selected five finalists to interview in person.

The interviews and selection process were completed on September 14, 2016 and Lisa Rosenberg has been unanimously recommended as the Advisory Committee's nominee for honorary post of San Mateo County Poet Laureate. A copy of Lisa Rosenberg's biography is attached as Attachment A. The position of Poet Laureate is for two years, with appointment by resolution by the Board of Supervisors.

Poet Laureate Nominee Lisa Rosenberg is a "scientist poet". She holds a BS degree in Physics from UC Davis, a Master's degree in Creative Writing from Boston University, and received a Wallace Stegner Fellowship in Poetry from Stanford University. In addition to physics and aerospace engineering, her professional experience includes technology marketing, freelance design, and instruction in creative writing. She was active in aviation for many years as a private pilot. Her writing appears in literary, technical, and scientific venues; from poetry anthologies to journals as diverse as *The Threepenny Review*, *POETRY*, *Shenandoah*, *Witness*, and *Semiconductor International*. She resides with her family in Menlo Park.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the Resolution as to form.

Approval of this Resolution contributes to the 2025 Shared Vision of a Collaborative Community by promoting the literary arts throughout the County, bringing poetry inside the classroom, to our libraries, and communities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.