



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Board of Supervisors



Date: September 10, 2015
Board Meeting Date: September 22, 2015
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Supervisors Warren Slocum and Carole Groom

Subject: San Mateo County Poet Laureate Honorarium

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution approving a \$5,000 honorarium for the San Mateo County Poet Laureate

BACKGROUND:

In April 2013, the Board created the honorary post of Poet Laureate for the purposes of elevating poetry, literature, and the arts into the consciousness of San Mateo County residents. Following the review of numerous nominations, the Poet Laureate Advisory Committee nominated, and the Board approved, Caroline Goodwin as the County's inaugural Poet Laureate for the term of January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2015. Ms. Goodwin's term has since been extended to December 31, 2016.

Since her appointment, the Poet Laureate has done much to highlight and celebrate the literary arts within our County by leading public readings, giving workshops, and speaking at civic events such as Board of Supervisors' meetings. The Poet Laureate launched the County's "Poetry Is" campaign to increase awareness of San Mateo County cities, towns and neighborhoods through the power of the spoken word. To date, this campaign has included calls for submission of poems for "Poetry Is", "Poetry Is Love" during the month of February 2015, and "Poetry Is Heritage" during the month of May 2015. Hundreds of poems were submitted and two poetry receptions were held at County Public Libraries that included readings from poets of all ages within our County. The Poet Laureate also maintains a poetry blog and a website and has participated in over 40 poetry events within San Mateo County and beyond.

DISCUSSION:

In establishing this honorary post, the Board noted that the Poet Laureate would not be an employee of the County and that any compensation would be in the form of stipends

or grants. As the program has progressed, the time, travel, and effort of the Poet Laureate has far exceeded what was initially anticipated. As such, it is recommended that the County provide a mid-term honorarium in the amount of \$5,000 to the current Poet Laureate as well as to future Poet Laureates. This honorarium would defray travel and other expenses incurred by the Poet Laureate in connection with the functions of the position as well as provide resources for the Poet Laureate to further his or her artistic or other pursuits. This honorarium is consistent with stipends offered by other public entities to their poet laureates and will further the County's interests in promoting and celebrating the arts, and more specifically, poetry.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The \$5,000 honorarium will be paid through the County's General Fund and will be included in September Revisions for the County Manager's FY 2015-16 budget in connection with Arts Commission funding.