



CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG

Division: Council and Committee

Effective Date: November 13, 2023

Department: Council

Approval Level: Council

Policy Title: Poet Laureate Terms of
Reference- Administration

Section # 1-1
Policy # COUN-ADM2

Purpose

Town Council appoints a Poet Laureate as a means by which the importance of literature, language and all forms of arts and culture is encouraged and promoted within the Town of Cobourg. The position of Poet Laureate serves to complement the development and promotion of Cobourg as a cultural community, while also acknowledging the individual's accomplishment in poetry and other forms of literary arts.

As an advocate of Cobourg, the Poet Laureate will serve to honour and nurture the expression of life in Cobourg's past, present and future and to establish the reputation of Cobourg as a culturally dynamic community.

Policy

1. ORIGIN

The position of Poet Laureate was established in 1997 by the Municipal Council of the Town of Cobourg. As a result of various activities set in motion by Eric Winter, Cobourg's First Poet Laureate, people across Ontario and Canada now consider the Town of Cobourg as a "go to" place for poetry. The Town has a spirited poetry group which has been active since July 11, 2000. In addition to the Town of Cobourg celebrating Poetry month in April, Cobourg is the location of monthly poetry events that are open to the public, which have run continuously for many years.

2. DUTIES

The Poet Laureate will act as literary ambassador for the Town of Cobourg and will be required to write one new and original poem in each year of their appointment that addresses or reflects one or more aspects of life in Cobourg, to be read (by the Poet Laureate or a designate) on the occasion of the Mayor's annual New Year's Day Levy and the Inaugural event on the year of a Municipal election. The Poet Laureate will give the Town a limited license to publish these poems that is first publication rights in hard copy and electronic forms, including on the Town website for the term of the appointment. Copyright for all these poems will be retained by the Poet; the intellectual rights to writing produced during tenure remains the property of the Laureate.

The Poet Laureate will be present and read a selection of poetry (which may be the Laureate's original composition or a piece by another poet) at no fewer than three (3) of the following public events each year:



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- Mayor's Levy
 - Poetry Weekend in Cobourg
 - Canada Day
 - Cobourg Day
 - James Cockburn Day (Cobourg's Father of Confederation)
 - Inaugural Council Meeting (on the year of a Municipal election)
 - Selected non-annual civic ceremonies or official functions such as the opening of new buildings or parks, the inauguration of new community festivals or events, the installation ceremonies for public art, the official greeting of visiting dignitaries, the swearing-in for other municipal positions, significant retirements or milestones reached by citizens, or other occasions by invitation of the Mayor.

Furthermore, the Poet Laureate will serve as an advocate for literature and for literacy; bringing the effect of Laureate's role into our schools and library is strongly encouraged.

The Poet Laureate will be expected to participate in the strong and thriving literary life of our Town; the Laureate is free to determine which specific activities will be pursued in this area and in consultation with the Mayor. The Poet Laureate's efforts should also ensure that our community encourages self-expression by youth through spoken word and written poetry.

Each Laureate is encouraged to follow the example of Cobourg's First Poet Laureate in that legacy projects were created to enhance our Town's literary voices and support the other Arts.

While it is acknowledged that each Laureate will bring a different emphasis to the position, the Town Council encourages every Poet Laureate to launch a public project during each term of the appointment, even community-wide in scope.

The duties of the Poet Laureate will not include reading manuscripts or any requirement to comment on other people's individual writing efforts.



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3. TERM

The Poet Laureate will be appointed for a four (4) year term that corresponds with the term of Council. If an appointment is made at any time during the term of Council as a result of the position being vacated prematurely, the Poet Laureate will be appointed for the remaining term of the previously appointed Poet Laureate.

An incumbent Laureate may be reappointed to serve for consecutive terms of Council for a maximum of eight (8) consecutive years. Previous Poet Laureates may be appointed to serve in the position again, provided that the third or subsequent appointments do not create an uninterrupted succession of more than two (2) terms or eight (8) consecutive years.

4. SUPPORT

The Poet Laureate will receive an annual honorarium of \$500.00 (five hundred dollars) for each year of their term for each year of their term appreciation for service to the Town of Cobourg.

The Town of Cobourg will provide appropriate liability insurance coverage for the Poet Laureate for all tasks performed at or on behalf of the Corporation during the performance of the assigned duties of the Poet Laureate.

The Poet Laureate will liaise with the Town through the offices of the Mayor and the Town Clerk. Cooperation with the Events Coordinator and Cobourg Tourism will be essential in fostering the Laureate in the role. Municipal staff will provide orientation to the newly appointed Poet Laureate.

The Poet Laureate will be provided with a business card, an email address using the cobourg.ca domain and a Town of Cobourg ground-mail address. Occasional clerical, legal or technical support will be made available as required to fulfill the duties of Laureate.

Reception staff at the municipal offices will be able to field inquiries about the position and forward to the Poet Laureate, if requested, "return contact" information from any interested member of the public.

If the Laureate opts to exercise a "poet-in-residence" component of the position, and, if Municipal space is available, the Town may provide space to allow public access to the Poet Laureate. Such access will be at the discretion of the Poet Laureate.



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Council will be open to proposals for public projects of the Laureate's choosing and will offer its support in any way that is practical, such as willingness to consider sponsorship of arts funding applications for these community efforts.

The Town of Cobourg will post the Poet Laureate's annual poem for the Mayor's Levy on its website, along with other material mutually agreed by the municipality and the Poet Laureate.

The Town will not be responsible to reimburse or pay performance fees for poetry readings, travel expenses or accommodation costs for out of town appearances, or any other expenditures of a similar nature that the Laureate may incur.

5. ELIGIBILITY AND APPOINTMENT CRITERIA

Preferred Candidates should:

- be willing to fulfill the duties of the position;
- display literary excellence and significant ability in composing poetry;
- hold a record of high achievement in poetry demonstrated by peer and/or public recognition;
- have a published book of poetry and/or a history of publication in literary Periodicals, print or digital and/or performance;
- live and/or work in the Town of Cobourg or currently pay taxes to the municipality.

The Poet Laureate must relinquish the position if he or she leaves Cobourg permanently or is absent for a period greater than one year during the appointed term, or if other specific duties and criteria set out above are repeatedly not performed or cannot be met.

Selection Criteria:

- aptitude as a poet, also the attributes of the poet's compositions;
- an acknowledged contribution to the Arts in our Town and to poetry;
- knowledge and understanding of Cobourg indicating a capacity to capture in poetry the life, times, and place;
- personal qualities and stature to effectively fulfill the ambassadorial duties of Poet Laureate;
- the Committee will follow the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy for the Town and that be reflected in all public communications.



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6. APPOINTMENT PROCESS

The Cobourg Town Council will appoint a special ad hoc "Nominating Committee for the Poet Laureate" that will consist of five (5) members, which will include:

- Coordinator of Arts, Culture and Tourism Services
- CEO of the Cobourg Public Library
- Executive Director/Curator of the Art Gallery of Northumberland
- two (2) members-at-large comprised of any of the following: writers, publishers, book sellers, teachers, librarians, journalists, and/or any member of the public with suitable knowledge of poetry.

Any person with an interest in serving as Poet Laureate for the term under consideration should excuse herself or himself from sitting on the Nominating Committee.

The Town of Cobourg will invite members of the public to submit nominations for the Poet Laureate. The Poet Laureate Nominating Ad Hoc Committee will present a recommendation of appointment from the nominees to the municipal Council.

The Nominating Committee will deliberate and identify a candidate, and confirm the willingness of the candidate to serve in this role. They will present a recommendation of appointment to the municipal Council within 6 weeks of the Committee being struck.

Taking the Committee's recommendation in full consideration, the Cobourg Town Council will make the appointment. Town staff will contact the successful candidate to confirm the appointment. The public announcement of the appointment of the Poet Laureate by the Mayor should take place no later than March 31 of the year following the election of Council.

The Nominating Committee will not have ongoing existence or have any continuing responsibilities beyond this nominating task but will be reappointed when needed in the event that a vacancy occurs during the term of Council in which the Ad Hoc Committee was struck. In a case where the Town and the incumbent Laureate have mutually agreed on the appointment to a second consecutive term, no Nominating Committee will need to be appointed.

Scope

This policy shall apply to the Poet Laureate as Terms of Reference for the Town of Cobourg.



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Administration

The Mayor of the Town of Cobourg shall implement and administer the terms of this policy.

Cross Reference

Policy #

Procedure#

Resolution #	Revision Description:	Signature Municipal Clerk:	Council Approval Date:
323-2023			November 13, 2023