



COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS STAFF REPORT

ITEM NO. 5.5

DATE: February 24, 2026

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Commission for the Arts

FROM: Allen McFarland, Management Analyst II

SUBJECT: Appointment of ad hoc committee to review applications and interview Poet Laureate candidates and make a selection recommendation to the full Commission for the Arts.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends the Commission for the Arts appoint an ad hoc committee to review applications and interview Poet Laureate candidates and make a selection recommendation to the full Commission for the Arts.

DECISION TYPE

Administrative

SUMMARY

The Commission for the Arts participates in the selection of the Poet Laureate every two years. The current Poet Laureate, Peggy Schimmelman, is completing her second successful term in the position. The next Poet Laureate will serve from July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2028.

DISCUSSION

The City of Livermore's Poet Laureate is responsible for developing literature and poetry programs in the community and for writing poems for civic events and dedications. They also serve as a resource and liaison between the City's arts program, local schools, and literary organizations.

The recruitment for this position is initiated by the City Clerk's Office; they handle publishing, outreach, and formal noticing related to the recruitment's opening and closing. Upon the close of the recruitment window, received applications are forwarded to the Commission for the Arts ad hoc committee - this ad hoc committee will then review the application materials, schedule and hold interviews with applicants meeting the required qualifications, and make a selection recommendation to the full Commission for the Arts. The Commission for the Arts will receive the ad hoc committee's recommendation at a regular meeting and will then collectively make a formal selection recommendation to the City Council.

Current Poet Laureate Peggy Schimmelman and former Poet Laureate and Commission for the Arts member Cher Wollard will meet with the ad hoc committee to offer their unique perspectives, feedback, and guidance on what makes for an effective and successful Poet Laureate, and to answer any questions about the function of the role. Please note that while current Poet Laureate Peggy Schimmelman is eligible to apply for re-appointment, she has indicated that she will not. If this should change, she would not be involved with any decision making or ad hoc committee discussions.

It is anticipated that the new Poet Laureate will be appointed by the City Council between May and June of 2026. The City Clerk's Office will provide the pertinent dates related to the recruitment to staff, who will then share this information with the Commission as it becomes available.

ATTACHMENTS

Prepared by: Allen McFarland
Management Analyst II