

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Poet Laureate Term Extension

Date Prepared: January 12, 2020

Report To: Arts and Culture Advisory Committee

Councillor and Role: Debbie Hanlon, Arts & Culture Advisory Committee

Ward: N/A

Decision/Direction Required: Recommendation of the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee to Committee of the Whole that Mary Dalton’s term as Poet Laureate be extended to include the calendar years 2021 and 2022, as referenced in the Poet Laureate Terms of Reference.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The City of St. John’s has appointed a local poet to the position of Poet Laureate for four-year terms since 2011, as follows:

2006-2009: Agnes Walsh
2010-2013: Tom Dawe
2014-2017: George Murray

The current Poet Laureate, Mary Dalton, began her term in 2019. When reviewing the Poet Laureate terms of reference before circulating the call for the current Poet Laureate in 2018, the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee recommended that the term be shortened to two years (the calendar years 2019 & 2020), with a possible extension of two years (the calendar years 2021 & 2022) to a total term of four years (which would be commensurate with the four-year terms of the City’s past Poets Laureate). A main contributing factor to this recommendation of a shorter term was due to committee discussion around the concept of broadening the municipal Laureate position to be inclusive of other arts disciplines (following the Decision Note dated January 18, 2018 “City of St. John’s Laureate Position”), and the committee’s intention to continue that discussion for possible action following a two-year rather than a four-year term timeline.

Because a recommendation has not come forward regarding a “cultural laureate,” “artist in residence,” or other similar appointment that the Poet Laureateship may evolve into, and considering that the 2020 calendar year presented understandable challenges to taking full advantage of the possibilities a Poet Laureateship might present, it is reasonable that Mary Dalton’s term as Poet Laureate should be extended to a four-year term, as indicated in the Poet Laureate Terms of Reference.

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The Poet Laureate Terms of Reference state that the term may be extended “if recommended by the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee.” Should the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee agree that Mary Dalton’s term as Poet Laureate should be extended as described above, that recommendation will be forwarded to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: The budget for the position (\$5,000 per annum) would remain unchanged.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Groups represented on the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee.
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: Our City, Our Future – Strategic Plan 2019-2029: “A Connected City;” Planning for a Creative Future – The City of St. John’s Municipal Arts Plan; Roadmap 2021 “A Leading Canadian Artistic Metropolis.”
4. Legal or Policy Implications: N/A
5. Privacy Implications: N/A
6. Engagement and Communications Considerations: N/A
7. Human Resource Implications: N/A
8. Procurement Implications: N/A
9. Information Technology Implications: N/A
10. Other Implications: N/A

Recommendation:

That Council extend Mary Dalton’s term as Poet Laureate to include the calendar years 2021 and 2022, as referenced in the Poet Laureate Terms of Reference.

Prepared by: Théa Morash, Arts and Cultural Development Coordinator

Approved by: Tanya Haywood, Deputy City Manager – Community Services

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Poet Laureate Decision Note.docx
Attachments:	- Terms of Reference - Poet Laureate.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jan 13, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Elizabeth Lawrence - Jan 13, 2021 - 8:51 AM

Tanya Haywood - Jan 13, 2021 - 9:52 AM