



# Council Agenda Report

To: Mayor Silverstein and the Honorable Members of the City Council

Prepared by: Kristin Riesgo, Community Services Director

Approved by: Steve McClary, City Manager

Date prepared: August 9, 2023

Meeting date: August 28, 2023

Subject: Malibu Poet Laureate Appointment

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** At the recommendation of the Malibu Arts Commission, approve the nomination of Nathan Hassall to serve a two-year term as the Malibu Poet Laureate beginning September 1, 2023.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** No additional appropriation is required. Funding for this agreement is included in the Adopted Budget for FY 2023-24 in Account No. 100-4012-5107-00 (Malibu Arts Contract Personnel).

**WORK PLAN:** This item was included as item #7.g. in the Adopted Work Plan for FY 2022-23. Staff continue to work on ongoing projects and normal business while the FY 2023-24 Work Plan is finalized.

**DISCUSSION:** In 2017, the Council approved the City's first Poet Laureate to help promote the literary arts in Malibu. The Poet Laureate serves as the poetry liaison for the City and Malibu Library, works with local schools to enhance the literary arts, and hosts the annual Poetry Invitational. The City has four former Poet Laureates including,

- 2021-2023: Ann Buxie
- 2020-2021: Dr. John Strueloeff
- 2019-2020: Ellen Reich
- 2017-2019: Ricardo Means Ybarra

Since the Poet Laureate program was established, several additional poetry-related programs and events have been added, including open mic poetry programs, poetry writing workshops, poetry in City parks, and Arts in Education workshops. The program

has also provided a platform for artist collaborations, visual artists, dancers, and musicians at various events.

In late 2022, the Malibu Poet Laureate Committee (Committee) began formulating the Poet Laureate application and the selection process. The Poet Laureate application period was open from April 10, 2023, to May 21, 2023, which resulted in three applicants. The Committee reviewed and discussed the candidates and unanimously recommended Nathan Hassall to serve as the 2023-2025 Malibu Poet Laureate (Attachment).

On July 25, 2023, the Malibu Arts Commission accepted the nomination and recommend Council approve Mr. Hassall as the Malibu Poet Laureate. Mr. Hassall has assisted the Committee with Arts in Education programming for two years at Malibu High School, Malibu Elementary School, and Webster Elementary School alongside former Malibu Poet Laureate Ricardo Means Ybarra. He is a Malibu's Writer's Circle member and attends Vital Poets and poetry workshops at the Malibu Library. Mr. Hassall plans to continue to support current poetry programs and formulate methods of promoting local poets while serving as the Malibu Poet Laureate. Mr. Hassall wants to inspire people and deepen their understanding of how poetry can be a part of their life. Activities will range from a poetry newsletter to providing new opportunities for readings, workshops, and publications.

If approved, Mr. Hassall will serve as the City's fifth Poet Laureate from September 1, 2023, to September 1, 2025 and will be compensated \$2,000 annually for his duties.

ATTACHMENTS: Malibu Poet Laureate Selection Committee Letter of Recommendation

June 24, 2023

Dear Malibu Arts Commission and Malibu City Council,

The Malibu Poet Laureate Selection Committee has come to a unanimous and joyful decision for the City of Malibu's fifth Poet Laureate:

Nathan Hassall.

We wish to formally submit his nomination to you now for your approval.

This was a fantastic candidate pool. How we admired and approved of all the poets, of their poetry and their desire and potential to serve as an ambassador of poetry for our City of Malibu.

Nathan Hassall is our decided and unanimous choice. His poetry is fabulous—earthy and evocative. He is an able and worthy contributor to the poetry community in Malibu—poetry instructor at Malibu Elementary, Webster, Malibu High School with Jolynn Regan, and Ricardo Means Ybarra; involved in community venues--Vital Poetry and Caffeinated Verse.

We are excited about this nomination and look forward to the events and activities that lie ahead.

We have contacted Nathan to request his formal acceptance of this position (pending final approvals by the Commission and the Council), and he has accepted.

On behalf of the Poet Laureate Selection Committee,

DocuSigned by:

*Ricardo Means Ybarra*

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Ricardo Means Ybarra

Malibu Poet Laureate Selection Committee

Full Selection Committee Membership:

Ann Buxie, current Malibu Poet Laureate

Ricardo Means Ybarra, Inaugural Malibu Poet Laureate (2017-19)

Lotte Cherin, Representative of the Malibu Arts Commission

Chloe Loquet, Malibu High Student