

City of Redmond



Redmond
WASHINGTON

Agenda

Special Meeting Notice and Agenda

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

6:30 PM

**City Hall: 15670 NE 85th St; Remote: Comcast Ch. 21/321, Ziplly Ch. 34,
Facebook (@CityofRedmond), Redmond.gov/rctvlive, or 510-335-7371**

City Council

Mayor

Angela Birney

Councilmembers

Vanessa Kritzer, President

Jessica Forsythe, Vice President

Jeralee Anderson

Steve Fields

Angie Nuevacamina

Osman Salahuddin

Melissa Stuart

Redmond City Council Agendas, Meeting Notices, and Minutes are available on the City's Web

Site: <http://www.redmond.gov/CouncilMeetings>

FOR ASSISTANCE AT COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR THE HEARING OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED:

Please contact the City Clerk's office at (425) 556-2194 one week in advance of the meeting.

Meetings can be attended in person, viewed live on RCTV (redmond.gov/rctlive), Comcast Channel 21/321, Ziplly Channel 34, Facebook/YouTube (@CityofRedmond), or listen live at 510-335-7371

AGENDA

ROLL CALL

1. Candidate Interview: Poet Laureate

[Attachment A: Ordinance 2444 - Establishing Poet Laureate](#)

[Attachment B: Poet Laureate Application-Nancy Mburu](#)

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting videos are usually posted by 12 p.m. the day following the meeting at redmond.legistar.com, and can be viewed anytime on Facebook/YouTube (@CityofRedmond) and OnDemand at redmond.gov/OnDemand



Memorandum

Date: 9/9/2025
Meeting of: City Council Special Meeting

File No. SPC 25-070
Type: Verbal Report

TO: Members of the City Council
FROM: Mayor Angela Birney
DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR CONTACT(S):

Parks	Loreen Hamilton	425-556-2336
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DEPARTMENT STAFF:

Parks	Hannah Coleman	Cultural Arts Coordinator
Parks	Chris Weber	Cultural Arts Supervisor
Parks	Brittany Pratt	Recreation Business Manager
Parks	Zach Houvener	Parks Deputy Director

TITLE:

Candidate Interview: Poet Laureate

OVERVIEW STATEMENT:

Established in 2008 by Ordinance 2444, the Poet Laureate program builds a more literate and understanding community through poetry and the literary arts by broadening the awareness of poetry and expressing the spirit of Redmond culture. The selection process for Redmond’s 9th Poet Laureate is in process with the Arts & Culture Commission recommending Nancy Mburu to be interviewed by the Mayor and City Council later this month, for potential appointment at the September 16 City Council Meeting.

Nancy Mburu is an author and performing poet. Her writing amplifies the experiences and stories of East African immigrants in an authentic way that also encompasses black diasporans’ complex relationship with culture, tradition, language, gender dynamics, and race. Her style involves uplifting her culture by incorporating her native language Swahili and rooting her stories in their cultural and political context. Nancy has a BA in Creative Writing from the University of Washington, and is a former Jack Straw writer.

Additional Background Information/Description of Proposal Attached

REQUESTED ACTION:

- Receive Information
- Provide Direction
- Approve

REQUEST RATIONALE:

- Relevant Plans/Policies:
2023 PARCC Plan, 2017 Public Art Plan

- **Required:**
Ordinance #2444 - Establishing a Poet Laureate
- **Council Request:**
N/A
- **Other Key Facts:**
N/A

OUTCOMES:

The goal of the Redmond Poet Laureate program is to make a significant contribution to the cultural life of the city and reveal new ways of understanding throughout our diverse community. This may take place through participation in municipal events, public poetry readings, reading at city council meetings, workshops, classes, lectures, text based visual art, composing and publishing original works, public art projects or other literary based performance or activity, which could include partnerships with the library, local schools, or other community groups.

COMMUNITY/STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT:

- **Timeline (previous or planned):**
N/A
- **Outreach Methods and Results:**
N/A
- **Feedback Summary:**
N/A

BUDGET IMPACT:

Total Cost:
\$10,000 (Artist Fees: \$5,000 per year, Project materials: \$5,000 per year)

Approved in current biennial budget: Yes No N/A

Budget Offer Number:
0000308

Budget Priority:
Vibrant & Connected

Other budget impacts or additional costs: Yes No N/A

If yes, explain:
N/A

Funding source(s):
Arts Activity Fund

Budget/Funding Constraints:
N/A

Additional budget details attached

COUNCIL REVIEW:

Previous Contact(s)

Date	Meeting	Requested Action
N/A	Item has not been presented to Council	N/A

Proposed Upcoming Contact(s)

Date	Meeting	Requested Action
9/16/2025	Business Meeting	Approve

Time Constraints:

Seeking approval so that the Poet Laureate can be contracted and ready to start their term starting January 1, 2026

ANTICIPATED RESULT IF NOT APPROVED:

The Poet Laureate selection process would need to be restarted and most likely the start of their term would be delayed several months into 2026.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Ordinance 2444 - Establishing a Poet Laureate

Attachment B: Application Materials for Nancy Mburu

ORDINANCE NO 2444

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF REDMOND, WASHINGTON, ADDING A NEW CHAPTER, RMC 2 19, POET LAUREATE, TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE, CREATING THE POSITION OF POET LAUREATE OF THE CITY OF REDMOND, DEFINING THE DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE POET LAUREATE, ESTABLISHING THE METHOD OF APPOINTMENT OF THE POET LAUREATE

WHEREAS, a Poet Laureate makes a significant contribution to the cultural life of a city, and

WHEREAS, the literary arts are an essential part of the human spirit and can reveal new ways of understanding throughout our diverse community, and

WHEREAS, the Poet Laureate of Redmond will broaden the awareness of poetry, express the spirit of Redmond culture through poetry, and raise the level of discourse during discussions and debates in the City, and

WHEREAS, the Redmond Arts Commission has carefully considered the process of selecting and guiding the efforts of a Poet Laureate, and

WHEREAS, the Redmond City Council has determined that it should support a more vibrant sense of community and culture in Redmond

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF REDMOND, WASHINGTON, DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS

Section 1. Adoption of Chapter RMC 2 19, Poet

Laureate, is hereby added to read as follows

Chapter 2.19

POET LAUREATE

Sections:

2.19.010 Poet Laureate Established - Selection, Responsibilities, and Compensation

(A) The Redmond Arts Commission shall set criteria for selection of the Poet Laureate and recommend candidates for the position to the Mayor for approval by the City Council,

(B) The Responsibilities of the Poet Laureate shall be established by the Redmond Arts Commission and may include but not be limited to providing public poetry readings, reading poetry at city council meetings, composing and publishing poems, teaching poetry classes, and encouraging poetry appreciation within Redmond,

(C) The Poet Laureate shall be compensated through a contract established by the Arts Commission from Arts Activity Funds

Section 2 Severability If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance or any code provision adopted hereby should be held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a

court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity or constitutionality of any other section, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance or any such code provision

Section 3 Effective Date This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force five (5) days after publication of a summary consisting of the title

ADOPTED by the Redmond City Council this 20th day of January, 2008

CITY OF REDMOND

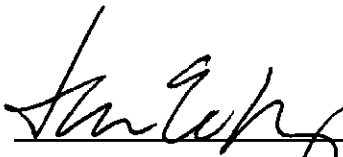

MAYOR PRO TEMPORE NANCY MCCORMICK

ATTEST


MICHELLE M MCGEHEE, CMC, CITY CLERK

(SEAL)

APPROVED AS TO FORM
OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

By  _____

FILED WITH THE CITY CLERK January 13, 2009
PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL January 20, 2009
SIGNED BY THE MAYOR January 20, 2009
PUBLISHED January 26, 2009
EFFECTIVE DATE January 31, 2009
ORDINANCE NO 2444

PASSED (6-1), YES Carson, Cole, Margeson, McCormick, Myers and Vache, NO Allen

Statement of Interest – Poet Laureate Application

Nancy Mburu

My name is Nancy Mburu, and I am a poet and author based in Seattle. My creative work is rooted in the immigrant experience and often explores themes of the African diaspora, cultural identity, and womanhood. I am drawn to the Poet Laureate role because I believe poetry has the power to foster belonging, celebrate cultural richness, and reflect a city's evolving spirit. I would be honored to serve as Redmond's Poet Laureate to uplift the voices of its residents, celebrate its diversity, and inspire collective reflection through poetry.

I earned my degree in Creative Writing from the University of Washington Tacoma and have been an active contributor to Washington's literary and arts community ever since. I served for three years as a Fiction and Poetry Intern at Hugo House, where I helped organize monthly readings and participated in a creative cohort. Later, as a Hugo House Writer-in-Residence, I worked under the guidance of a mentor, collaborated with other writers, and helped host public events. My work has been featured at events like Stage Fright and Creative Colloquy, where I performed poems such as *The Tourist*, *Chains of Justice*, and *Pandemic*, which explore cultural appropriation, racial injustice, and the emotional toll of the pandemic.

I have also collaborated on multi-genre projects, including *Alama* (2019), a three-episode web series created with other African artists in Seattle. The series follows a young immigrant actor navigating identity, dreams, and diaspora in America. Projects like this reflect my passion for complex, culturally grounded storytelling.

My poetry has been shared in spaces of healing and empowerment, such as Travel to Prevail, a women's conference where I performed *I Am Woman* to honor the strength of immigrant women. That same year, I was invited as a guest speaker at a spoken word poetry class at UW Tacoma, where I lectured on performance techniques, gave feedback on student work, and shared my poem *Chains of Justice*.

I have also been shaped by residencies at Jack Straw Cultural Center and Mineral School, where I deepened my creative practice, published a chapter of my forthcoming book *Sauti* (which means "voice"), recorded podcasts, and participated in public readings. Most recently, in my role as a Communications Consultant with the Washington State Office of Equity, I create inclusive content that reflects the realities of communities

across the state. This work continues to strengthen my commitment to equity-driven storytelling and inclusive public engagement.

As Redmond continues to grow, embracing its diversity, innovation, and natural beauty, it deserves an artistic voice that can both witness and shape its journey. Through poetry, I hope to celebrate its green spaces and technology hubs, its rooted histories and future aspirations.

I believe poetry belongs everywhere: in parks, libraries, classrooms, and public spaces. As Poet Laureate, I will help make poetry a living, breathing part of Redmond, accessible to all and reflective of all.

Thank you for considering me for this opportunity to listen, uplift, and write in service of the city's heart.

Nancy Mburu

Communication & Digital Strategist
Seattle, Washington, United States



SUMMARY

Experienced Communications Strategist with expertise in developing and executing integrated communication strategies that drive engagement and deliver results. Skilled at fostering relationships with internal and external stakeholders, creating compelling content, and managing high-impact digital and traditional media campaigns. Passionate about inclusive communication practices, digital equity, and using storytelling to connect organizations with their audiences. Looking to leverage a strong background in messaging, content creation, and digital strategies to drive impactful communication.

KEY SKILLS

- **Internal & External Communication**
- **Public Relations & Media Outreach**
- **Brand Messaging & Positioning**
- **Crisis Communication**
- **Stakeholder Engagement & Relationship Building**
- **Content Strategy & Development**
- **Social Media Management & Digital Campaigns**

EXPERIENCE

Communications Consultant

Washington State Office of Equity | Olympia, WA

August 2024 – Present

- Spearheaded digital equity communication strategies by integrating goals into overarching communication frameworks for key stakeholders.

- Developed compelling content (written, multimedia, social media) to promote digital equity initiatives.
- Managed social media accounts, digital platforms and websites to engage audiences and increase awareness.
- Cultivated media relationships and prepared press releases to ensure targeted coverage and increased visibility of digital equity initiatives.
- Developed and executed strategic partnerships with government agencies and advocacy groups to expand digital equity efforts.
- Created and managed surveys and forms to gather stakeholder feedback, ensuring continuous improvement in digital communication strategies.

Communications Manager

SEIU6 Property Services NW | Seattle, WA

October 2019 – August 2024

- Managed internal communications through newsletters, website, presentations, reports, and digital platforms, ensuring alignment with the organization’s mission and strategic goals.
- Developed key messaging and talking points for various campaigns to maintain consistency across all communication channels.
- Led key internal communication meetings, presenting performance metrics and updates to senior leadership.
- Streamlined project tracking using Azure DevOps to improve communication flow and meet project deadlines.
- Collaborated with union representatives and account managers to ensure communication needs were met for all stakeholders.
- Spearheaded crisis communication responses, crafting messaging to address sensitive issues and ensure a unified approach.

Communications and Branding Specialist

Allied Universal | Seattle, WA

March 2018 – October 2019

- Developed and executed internal communication strategies to ensure seamless communication between teams.
- Created and distributed internal newsletters, bulletins, and reports to keep employees informed of key updates.
- Coordinated cross-functional teams to ensure timely project completion and alignment with business objectives.
- Enhanced internal communication platforms, ensuring information was easily accessible to employees.

- Led the creation and management of internal branding initiatives, strengthening company culture and employee engagement.
- Provided support for event management for internal meetings and All Hands events.

Diversity and Inclusion Program Assistant

University of Washington | Tacoma, WA

January 2016 – March 2018

- Developed communication strategies to increase student participation in diversity and inclusion programs.
 - Supported the creation of inclusive communication policies and practices across the university.
 - Coordinated outreach and communications for student organizations promoting equity and inclusion.
 - Facilitated communication workshops to foster cultural competency among student leaders.
 - Collaborated with faculty and staff to integrate effective communication strategies into various campus-wide initiatives.
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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Communications, Creative Writing & Public

Relations *University of Washington | Tacoma, WA*

REFERENCES

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The tourist

My audience please indulge me

In a simple game of

Tourist gaze or savior complex

Tip the scale higher or lower

Bid to your heart's desire

Ladies and Gentlemen

It's a question of which is a lesser evil

Against contrary belief,

Africa is not uneducated

Especially when 95% of Americans

think that a continent that can hold both the united states, china and India

at the same time

is a country,

When their only knowledge of Africa is through

the lion king movie

Hakuna matata is your slogan

Yet you have no idea

the language is Swahili

But no worries

Even when your exploitive nature

Yes, Disney

steals the rights to words of my language

So now I have to ask for you

for permission to use it

All in the name of diversity and awareness

When you profit from a culture

you did not invent or sustain

Ladies and Gentlemen it's a question of which is a lesser evil

Your persona is a double edged sword
Its either your savior complex
Or you look at us with your tourist gaze
Yes,that gaze
That sees africa as exotic
A land where people live with Animals
Savages left in the wild for too long
that walk around in no clothes and in the middle of nowhere
Afraid our primal nature has kept us away from school
That's why every campaign is one dollar for a school desk
So enchanted by the thought of seeing slums
So you pay money to drive around
In tour buses to see
People that are lavishing in squalor
For sport,
a pass time
As if they are animals to watch

Ladies and gentlemen it's a question of which is the lesser evil

Then there are the stories you tell about our women
That we live under the thumb of the master,
Who rules with the iron fist, the husband
That our men have a thirst for the underage girls that has just reached
puberty
That we were chained and dragged to the altar
A marriage can't just be a marriage
Its either arranged or forced
Or our culture is so barbaric that it would
support the butchering of a woman through female circumcision
Or that the bride price is the act of buying a woman
A fact not based on understanding the culture or custom
Because from a western lens
culture equals backwardness and barbarism
Acts by individuals are poster children for movements
So you spin your yarn with tales
Of Lies, half truths and unsanctioned biases
Ladies and gentlemen it's a question of which is the lesser evil

Your media is overloaded with images of starving children
Large stomachs and thin arms and legs
As if the narrative of the 1% is representative of a whole continent
Your egoistic savior complex
looks at us as defenseless creatures
Too ignorant to change their circumstance
So forgive me if I do not want your help
Excuse me, I meant your condescending outstretched hand
You think you know what I need
You never ask for my ideas yet you say are planning over my future
But you are too distracted by the fact that I don't speak English
So you assume I have no mind of my own
Or worse, my English is covered by my thick accent
so you cross me out as dumb or uneducated
Imitate my language in Hollywood as a bunch of clicks and knocks
But you can never say my name
Even after I learnt your language
Heaven forbid you give me the common courtesy

To say my name

Ladies and gentlemen it's a question of which is the lesser evil

Coins

You and I are two sides of the same coin

Reflections of each other

A story of kin and kindred spirits

Our destiny tied by our geographical context

Caught in the cosmos of history

You are Yin and I am Yang

They can't tell your story without mine

To them we are all the same

They call you black and I dark

Unless I talk they wouldn't tell us apart

So why do you draw a sword and I my spear

Forever in mortal kombat

Why do we bicker and sneer

Yet, we were once comrades

But history is told by victors

Puppeteers create weapons of warfare far more lethal than bullets

They live in our heads

Enslave our minds

Corrupt our very souls

Till we can't recognize ourselves

Divide and conquer
So we argue that Africans sold their people
But in that story
There were no winners
Just slaves
Whether slaves of the motherland
Or slaves in a foreign land
We were all slaves
This tragic tale of pain and loss
Is span Again and Again and Again
Across time and distance

They had said this sacred ground was paradise
But it was a lie to lure us here
This is a land where
Black Mothers bury Black sons
Cops meant to protect eradicate
Black sons criminalized
Stripped of Innocence on the playground
It's not enough that they kill your sons
Now they must have ours too
They mock us

Make us labor in vain
Only to Keep their knees on our sons neck
Press until they shout I can't breath

In this fight
There is no African-American
Nigerian, jamaican, Kenyan or Ghanaian
For here we cry the same cry
That the fruits of our wombs may bloom
That they might outlive us
For on this knees I sired him
And in this arms held him
And by this hands I will fight for him
Mother to mother
Bonded by trauma
Haunted my the cloud that seeks to take our men
Our sons
So sister, I ask
Will we be comdrads once more
Take this fight to the streets
Legislate it in law
That they may know
That we are mothers of the Black people

Work Sample List

1. *The Tourist*

Poem | Performed at the Umoja Graduation, University of Washington Tacoma (2022); Creative Colloquy Reading

The Tourist is a reflective poem that challenges common misconceptions about Africa. Originally written in a University of Washington poetry class, it was selected for performance at the 2022 Umoja Graduation—an event honoring Black student excellence—and later featured at a Creative Colloquy literary reading.

2. *Coins*

Poem | Performed at the Daima Co-creative Cultural Talent Show (2024)

Coins is a spoken word piece exploring the shared struggles and connections between the African Diaspora and Black Americans. It was performed live at the 2023 Daima Cultural Festival, a celebration of African and diasporic arts and culture. 🌸

Link to Event performance:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/A2DI5cV4jr8?si=T3UG6EUNp1eNv3Tm>

Performed at: 2:15:44 - 2:19:31