



Memorandum

Date: 9/16/2025
Meeting of: City Council

File No. AM No. 25-134
Type: Consent Item

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:
Approval of the 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, who was interviewed by the Mayor and City Council.

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
9/9/2025	Special Meeting	Receive Information

Proposed Upcoming Contact(s)

Date	Meeting	Requested Action
	None proposed at this time	N/A

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