

**RESOLUTION NO. 20240502-093**

**WHEREAS**, Poet Laureate positions have existed in cities, states, and countries since the 1600s to be stewards of poetry in their communities through programs that positively impact the general public; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin is the only major city in Texas without a Poet Laureate program and Austin could benefit from a socio-politically engaged Poet Laureate who uses poetry as a way to promote literacy across the City and to integrate poetry into the fabric of Austin's history, politics, and culture; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, Texas ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> among states supporting artists in the U.S.; and

**WHEREAS**, as of 2003, 121,074 adults in Central Texas either could not read or struggled with reading; and

**WHEREAS**, for decades, many local organizations have created and nurtured Austin's poetry scene with little to no budget or recognition, the University of Texas at Austin has one of the most nationally recognized Masters of Fine Arts program, and Austin is a mecca for Texas arts; and

**WHEREAS**, a Poet Laureate program would keep Austin accountable to its promise of being the arts center of Texas and would assist with improving Austin's literacy rate; and

**WHEREAS**, an adult Poet Laureate program has the potential to inspire Austin residents to read and write, to celebrate Austin's literary scene, and to nurture and amplify Austin-based poets of all ages through performances, teaching, and public speaking; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**


The City Manager is directed to establish an adult Poet Laureate program to be housed in and managed by the Austin Public Library department or another department deemed appropriate by the City Manager.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The Austin Public Library, or other department designated by the City Manager, shall establish a City Poet Laureate committee, to include a representative of the Austin Public Library, a representative of the Arts Commission, and members of the City's literature community to be charged with providing input and guidance on the structure of the Poet Laureate program and the Poet Laureate position, reviewing applications, and recommending City Poet Laureate nominees to the Director of the Austin Public Library or of another department designated by the City Manager.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to create the City Poet Laureate committee and develop the Poet Laureate program by October 1, 2024.

**ADOPTED:** May 2, 2024 **ATTEST:**   
Myrna Rios  
City Clerk