



## City Council

### Special Recognition - Poetry Reading from City of Olympia Poet Laureate Ashly McBunch

**Agenda Date:** 1/10/2023  
**Agenda Item Number:** 2.A  
**File Number:** 23-0029

---

**Type:** recognition **Version:** 1 **Status:** Filed

---

#### Title

Special Recognition - Poetry Reading from City of Olympia Poet Laureate Ashly McBunch

#### Recommended Action

##### Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

##### City Manager Recommendation:

Receive a poetry reading from City of Olympia Poet Laureate Ashly McBunch.

#### Report

##### Issue:

Whether to receive a poetry reading from Olympia's Poet Laureate Ashly McBunch.

##### Staff Contact:

Stephanie Johnson, Arts Program & Planning Supervisor, Parks, Arts & Recreation, 360.709.2678

##### Presenter(s):

Stephanie Johnson, Arts Program & Planning Supervisor  
Ashly McBunch, Olympia Poet Laureate

#### Background and Analysis:

Part of the work of Olympia's Poet Laureate is to present a poem at a January City Council meeting of each year. Since their appointment as Poet Laureate in April 2021, Ashly has worked to fulfill the goals of the Poet Laureate program:

- Promote poetry as an art form
- Expand access to the literary arts
- Connect the community to poetry
- Promote poetry as a community voice that contributes to a sense of place
- And to address the topic of the Poet Laureate appointment to utilize the power of poetry and language to contribute insight, foster understanding and support healing around issues of equity and inclusion in our community.

In 2022, McBunch:

- Conducted an online workshop called “Everyday Poetry”
- Conducted an in-person workshop called “Walking Poetry”
- Brought poetry breaks to 7 Reimagining Public Safety Meetings
- Read poetry at City Council, Armory Housewarming, Juneteenth Celebration and City Pride events.
- Conducted poetry activities at Love Oly and Fall Arts Walk.

In addition, Ashly has participated in podcasts with the Washington State Arts Commission and Dignity City, been a guest speaker at SMU’s Black Student Union, worked with the Leonor R. Fuller Gallery at SPSCC, shared poetry at the 2022 Washington Center Salon and connected with students and local organizations speaking about the art of poetry and as a juror for Poetry Out Loud.

In 2023 a new Poet Laureate will be selected, given the task of utilizing the power of poetry and language to contribute to thoughtful response and centering around our environment and climate change in our community. Ashly will be involved in the solicitation, selection and onboarding of the 2023-2025 Olympia Poet Laureate.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

None known.

**Climate Analysis:**

The task of the 2023-2025 Poet Laureate will be to utilize the power of poetry and language to contribute insight, foster understanding and support healing around issues of equity and inclusion in our community.

**Equity Analysis:**

The task of the 2021-2023 Poet Laureate is to utilize the power of poetry and language to contribute insight, foster understanding and support healing around issues of equity and inclusion in our community.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

The Poet Laureate program is of interest to many community members.

**Options:**

1. Receive the poetry reading from Poet Laureate Ashly McBunch
2. Do not receive the poetry reading from Poet Laureate Ashly McBunch.
3. Receive the poetry reading from Poet Laureate Ashly McBunch at another time.

**Financial Impact:**

There is not financial impact associated with this item.

**Attachments:**

None