



DATE: April 21, 2026

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Director of Library Services

SUBJECT: Affirm the Appointment of a New Hayward Poet Laureate for the Period of April 2026 - March 2028

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council adopts a resolution (Attachment II) to establish Mo Kim-Tong as the Hayward Poet Laureate from April 21, 2026, through March 31, 2028.

SUMMARY

Based on the success of the Hayward Poet Laureate Program (Program) since its inception in 2015, Hayward Public Library staff was directed by the Mayor to create a competitive process by which future Poet Laureate appointments would be made with the approval of the City Council. Following the application process and the review of written and video material, Mo Kim-Tong ("Mo") has been selected to be the next Poet Laureate of Hayward and shall serve in this capacity through March 31, 2028. Mo shall receive a stipend in the amount of \$1,000 for the entire 2-year tenure.

FISCAL IMPACT

The appointed Hayward Poet Laureate receives a \$1,000 stipend for their 2-year tenure to help defray the cost of travel and materials and to recognize the significant contribution of time and service the Poet Laureate makes to the Hayward community. This stipend is included in the adopted FY 2026-27 operating budget, so no additional appropriation is needed.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The City Council established the Hayward Poet Laureate Program in 2015 to raise awareness of the power of poetry and other forms of literature. The title of Poet Laureate of Hayward has been held by two poets since the inception of the program. An application process to find the next Poet Laureate of Hayward was open from February 24, 2026 through March 17, 2026.

The application process was open to poets 18 years of age or older, who live within the city limits of incorporated Hayward. Each applicant was asked to submit between three (3) and five (5) original works of poetry demonstrating commitment to, and mastery of, the art and craft of poetry in any style or form; submit a brief paragraph describing why the applicant wants to be Hayward's Poet Laureate and who or what inspires them to write poetry; and submit a video no longer than five (5) minutes of one poem read aloud as if to a large audience.

The selected poet laureate is expected to promote creativity and the appreciation of poetry and the literary arts, write at least two (2) poems annually dedicated to Hayward or major occasions or current events affecting Hayward residents, as and when mutually agreed upon, and attend between one (1) and four (4) City of Hayward and/or literary events annually and read or otherwise perform their poetry at these events. They may be invited to other events also.

Selected Candidate: Mo Kim-Tong

Mo Kim-Tong was selected from a field of applicants to be the next Poet Laureate of Hayward because of the quality and depth of his poetry, his enthusiasm and the potential for inspiring future poets and youth, as well as the passion of delivery in the video that was submitted.

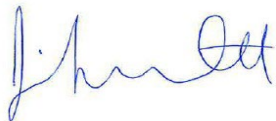
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

This agenda item relates to the Council's Strategic Initiative to Enhance Community Safety and Quality of Life by Implementing Community Enrichment.

Prepared by: Melissa Burkley, Management Analyst I

Recommended by: Jayanti Addleman, Director of Library Services

Approved by:



Jennifer Ott, City Manager