



## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 22-124, **Version:** 1

---

### **TITLE:**

Carrboro Poet Laureate and Carrboro Music Festival Musicians Honoraria

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this agenda item is to request that the Town Council increase the honorarium for the Carrboro Poet Laureate and to adopt an honorarium for musicians performing at the Carrboro Music Festival.

**DEPARTMENT:** Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Resources

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** Anita Jones-McNair, ([amcnair@carrboronc.gov](mailto:amcnair@carrboronc.gov) [<mailto:amcnair@carrboronc.gov>](mailto:amcnair@carrboronc.gov)) and Charles Harrington, ([charrington@carrboronc.gov](mailto:charrington@carrboronc.gov) [<mailto:charrington@carrboronc.gov>](mailto:charrington@carrboronc.gov))

### **INFORMATION: Carrboro Poet Laureate Honorarium**

The Carrboro Poet Laureate position is a two-year appointment that receives an annual honorarium to promote poetry throughout the community. The Carrboro Arts Committee, working with the Carrboro Poets Council, is responsible for the selection of the Poet Laureate and the honorarium is funded through the Arts Committee budget.

Originally, the position did not receive an honorarium. A couple of years after its inception, an annual honorarium of \$1,000 began in 2017. In 2021, this amount was increased to \$1,500.

Following a discussion on the Carrboro Poet Laureate position initiated during the 10/12/21 Town Council meeting, staff was directed to consider an increase to the current honorarium of \$1,500. Given that the duties and time commitment of the Poet Laureate have increased the Arts Committee and the Poets Council support that the honorarium should be increased to \$2,500.

The honorarium for the Chapel Hill Poet Laureate is \$3,000. The Durham Poet Laureate has a pilot program budget of \$5,000 that includes poet laureate/artist fees, community engagement, learning sessions, and documentation of the pilot project.

### **Carrboro Music Festival Musicians Honorarium**

When the event began in 1998, it was a citizen-led event that was not associated directly with the Town. At that time, no funding was available, and organizers had to rely on donations to offset costs associated with the event. Additionally, organizers wanted to associate with the worldwide event, Fête de la Musique. Included in the event criteria, artists were not allowed to receive monetary compensation.

A few years after the event began, it was moved from the Fête de la Musique date in June to a date in late September to avoid the North Carolina summer heat. Due to this move away from the June date, the event was no longer associated with the Fête.

From that time, performers continued to apply to perform in the event. Those selected have generously volunteered their time in celebration of local music. As tokens of appreciation the festival has provided musicians with either a meal voucher or a festival t-shirt.

In recent years, there has been a growing desire among many musicians, residents, festival attendees, etc. to move to paid compensation for the performers. Town staff and members of the volunteer Carrboro Music Festival Planning Committee, including some of the original festival organizers, have been very involved in many of these conversations regarding potential compensation. The consensus is that monetary compensation is preferred vs. vouchers, gifts, etc. While performers have been able to receive gratuities from festival attendees, feedback has indicated a minimum guaranteed amount provided by the Town would be a better way to support the artists.

As such, the Carrboro Music Festival Planning Committee recommends that performers be compensated at a rate of \$250 per act starting the Fall of 2022 and would continue each year. It is important to the Committee that acts be compensated uniformly as opposed to some groups being paid higher rates than others. This fall also marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the festival.

Based on this recommendation, funding in the amount of \$25,000 would allow for the festival to compensate musicians while still being able to offer a large number of acts and an eclectic mix of music.

**FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT:** For FY 2022, increase of Poet Laureate honorarium from \$1,500-\$2,500 which will be absorbed by unspent Arts Committee funding related to event cancellations. For the honorarium for performers in the Carrboro Music Festival, a request of \$25,000 has been requested as part of the FY23 budget.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the Town Council approve attachment A, increasing the honorarium for the Carrboro Poet Laureate to \$2,500 and adopting an honorarium to pay musicians performing at the Carrboro Music Festival \$250 per act.