

## NEWS RELEASE

Distributed April 17, 2015

### **Nanaimo to Participate in Mayor's Poetry City Challenge**

*Poet Laureate takes on the challenge at April 20 Council meeting*

#### **Summary**

To celebrate National Poetry Month (April 2015), the City of Nanaimo will participate in the 2015 Mayor's Poetry City Challenge. Calgary Mayor, Naheed Nenshi, challenged other Mayors in communities across Canada to have a local poet read a poem at the opening of a Council meeting. The purpose of the challenge is to recognize poetry, writing, small presses and contribution of poets and all writers to the quality of life in our communities. It also celebrates schools, libraries and the work of so many mayors and municipalities to promote arts, culture, literacy and reading.

Nanaimo's inaugural Poet Laureate, Ms. Naomi Beth Wakan, accompanied by David Fraser and Ursula Vaira, will take on the challenge by reading poems at the April 20, 2015 Council meeting. Videos of Nanaimo City Council meetings are recorded and can be viewed on the City's website.

*Strategic Link:* National Poetry Month furthers the goals of the City's Strategic Plan of by promoting local poetry as part Nanaimo's cultural vitality.

#### **Key Points**

- The City of Nanaimo has proclaimed April 2015 as National Poetry Month. Nanaimo's Poet Laureate, Ms. Naomi Beth Wakan, will make a series of appearances in April to promote poetry. View her list of appearances on the City's website.
- For the last year, Naomi has partnered with the Nanaimo Daily News to create a monthly poetry column "Calling All Poets" to promote local poetry and encourage residents to submit their poems. Read past poems of the month (and get full submission details) on the City's website.
- Residents can sign up to receive the City of Nanaimo's Culture & Heritage eNewsletter to receive updates on future poetry-related projects by subscribing to <http://cnan.ca/1GYq2sN>.

#### **Quotes**

"The City of Nanaimo recognizes the importance of language as the primary means of conveying knowledge. This month I encourage all our residents to participate in the events being held to celebrate poetry and to support the idea of promoting literature in our community"

Bill McKay  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

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