

Amesbury Cultural Council - Poet Laureate Support Committee Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: January 15, 2026 at 6:30pm

Location: Cedar Street Studios (1st floor meeting space) 14 Cedar St. Amesbury, MA 01913

Attendance:

In person: Ellie O'Leary, Elizabeth Wolf, Lisa Usani Phillips, Clare Dombrowski,
Matthew Cockreham

On Zoom: Anne Ferguson, Bryan Riley

Call to Order: Ellie O'Leary 6:33pm

Agenda:

1. Appoint someone to take notes
 - Matthew Cockreham volunteered.
2. Review and approve minutes of previous 2 meetings
 - Approved by all members in attendance.
3. Current financial status update
 - Lisa Usani Philips sent an email to the treasurer of the Amesbury Cultural Council, Joanne Barnes, asking about payments for the featured speakers at recent poetry readings.
 - Bryan Riley confirmed that the invoice template was included in the handoff packet from Lisa.
 - Ellie O'Leary will ask Joanne Barnes about Bryan's stipend.
 - An invoice may need to be submitted.
 - Anne Ferguson reported that a donation check was sent to the Whittier Home specifically for the poetry program.
 - Anne will send the check to the Amesbury Cultural Council.
4. Review of Poet Laureate Support Committee Guidelines to reflect Whittier Home Involvement
 - The committee voted to table this discussion until the next scheduled meeting.
5. Planning the New Poet Laureate Inauguration/Reception
 - The committee confirmed the location and time of the event.
 - Amesbury Public Library
 - Sunday, January 25, 1:00-4:00pm
 - The committee discussed and agreed upon the details of each of the following with respect to the event:
 - Publicity
 - Invited guests
 - Program
 - Speakers/readers
 - Emcee
 - Refreshments
 - Lisa Usani Philips will organize a walkthrough with members of the library staff prior to the start of the event.

6. Retirement of Ellie O'Leary from the Amesbury Cultural Council and the Poet Laureate Support Committee effective January 26, 2026.

- Ellie O'Leary emailed the city liaison to the Amesbury Cultural Council to get information on protocol.
- Bryan Riley is co-chair of the Poet Laureate Support Committee and is on the Amesbury Cultural Council, so there is no immediate need to find someone to fill Ellie's role to satisfy the PLSC guidelines.
- Lisa Usani Philips will ask the Amesbury Cultural Council members if anyone is interested in chairing the Poet Laureate Support Committee.

7. Public comment

- None

8. Matters not reasonably anticipated in advance of the meeting

- None

Adjourn: 7:47pm