

Commentator for the City of Hartford

The Commentator for the City of Hartford acts as a representative for the City, its residents, and the value we place on social/cultural commentary, perspective, and civil discourse in the community. The Commentator encourages appreciation of social and cultural commentary, inspires thoughtful reflection on social and cultural affairs and encourages future commentators and their audiences in the City of Hartford. The artistic medium of the commentator may be essays, comedy, and other forms of written or performative commentary.

Duties

The responsibilities of the Commentator include, but are not limited to:

- Providing public readings, projects, and/or performances
- Appearing at public events
- Encouraging thoughtful discourse within the City of Hartford
- Submitting 1 -3 commentaries to the City each year

The Commentator promotes thoughtful social and cultural commentary and discourse, works with the Hartford Public Library and local schools to promote creative learning through commentary, social and cultural observation and expression of thought, and endeavors to instill pride in the community.

Eligibility

A nominee for Commentator must:

- Be a current resident of the City of Hartford
- Be at least 18 years old
- Have original works of commentary in at least one regionally-recognized publication and/or have performed or shown original commentary in a regionally-recognized venue or juried show
- Be available to serve a 3-year term

Criteria

The City of Hartford seeks to encourage and engage the community in thoughtful social and cultural commentary by identifying and honoring successful and insightful commentators residing in the City.

Certain criteria will be given consideration in the selection process, including:

- Excellence as evidenced by the submitted work sample
- Professionalism as evidenced by an established history of publication, performances, honors, awards, fellowships, and/or other recognition such as contributions to community culture
- Demonstrated advancement of thoughtful social/cultural commentary and discourse in the community as well as other forms of commitment to community involvement

Term Conditions

- A term for Commentator is for 3 years, from the date of confirmation
- A person can only hold the position of Commentator for the City of Hartford once
- A term may be temporarily extended until a new Commentator is confirmed

A person may lose the title of Commentator for the City of Hartford if they:

- No longer reside in the City of Hartford
- Misrepresent or abuse the position of Commentator
- Fail to fulfill the duties of the position of Commentator

In any of these cases, the Court of Common Council may revoke the title through a majority vote.

Selection Process

- A commentator or group (like a troupe of performers) may apply for the position
- A Selection Committee will be formed to review Commentator applications. The Committee will be organized and directed by the Commission on Cultural Affairs
- The Committee will submit three finalists and a recommended choice to the Commission on Cultural Affairs. The Commission will then select one finalist and make a recommendation to the Mayor for approval
- With approval from the Mayor, the selection is submitted to the Court of Common Council for a confirmation through majority vote

Process to Revoke

- If the Commentator is no longer a resident of the City of Hartford, they are required to report the information to the Commission on Cultural Affairs and resign from the position
- In the case of misrepresentation or abuse of, or failure to fulfill the duties of the position, the Commission on Cultural Affairs may make a recommendation to the Court of Common Council to revoke the position of the Commentator
- The Commentator will have the opportunity to appear before Council and present their case
- Council reserves the right to revoke the title of Commentator at any time through a majority vote

Application

Required Materials for Applying

- An application form
- A letter of interest
- Resume or CV, including achievements and awards
- At least 2, and a maximum of 4, exemplary samples of the applicant's work with citation of the source of publication or location of venue when applicable (for performances, a video sample is required)
- Three recent letters of reference (may include professional, community, and academic references)

Applicants may be contacted by the Committee for further interview, references, or material. Applications are not carried over for future years. Prior applicants must re-apply for consideration. An applicant cannot be a member of the Commission on Cultural Affairs or the Committee to select the Commentator.

About the Committee to Select the Commentator

The Selection Committee will consist of at least one person selected by the Mayor, at least one member of the Court of Common Council or appointed by the Court of Common Council, at least two people with a demonstrated expertise in commentary or literature who reside in the City of Hartford, and two other seats determined by the Commission on Cultural Affairs. The Selection Committee reviews all applications and may interview the candidates. The Committee deliberation reflects upon the values and goals of the role of Commentator, as well as the community of the City of Hartford. The selection committee then acts as an advisory committee to the Commentator to provide support throughout their term.

Timeline of Selection Process

Month 1: Establish Selection Committee. Hold initial meeting. Circulate Call for Submissions.

Month 2: Issue reminder for Call for Submissions.

Month 3: Applications with all necessary materials are due and vetted for completion and standards.

Month 4 + 5: The Selection Committee reviews applications, deliberates, and submits three finalists and one recommended choice to the Commission on Cultural Affairs.

Month 5: The Commission on Cultural Affairs recommends a finalist to the Mayor for approval. The Mayor has the opportunity to dispute the recommendation or request more information. Their selection is submitted to the Court of Common Council for final confirmation through a majority vote.

Month 6: City of Hartford Commentator will be decided by this date, as approved by Council. The date for a confirmation ceremony is set.

Month 7: The 3-year term of the Commentator begins on the date of confirmation. Commission holds a meeting with Commentator to discuss vision/mission of

Commentator and to determine means of supporting the work of the
Commentator for the coming years.