

MEETING NOTES
SPECIAL GRANT INTERVIEW MEETING OF THE CULTURAL COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE BOWEN PARK COMPLEX CONFERENCE ROOM
THURSDAY, 2011-NOV-17, COMMENCING AT 3:30PM

PRESENT: Eveline O'Rourke, Chair

Members: Commissioner Diana Johnstone
Commissioner Fred Pattje
Commissioner Lynda Avis
Commissioner Shirley Lance
Ms. Julie Bevan
Ms. Gerda Hofman
Ms. Joanne Husband
Ms. George McGladrey
Ms. Kamal Parmar

Staff: B. Kuhn

J. Farrell, recording

1. CALL THE OPEN MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting of the Cultural Committee was called to order at 3:34 p.m.

2. GRANT INTERVIEWS

a) EMPIRE DAYS EVENT

- The Empire Days Society was represented by Sheila Thompson, Scott Thompson, and Elena Knappett.
- Could you explain the Society's expenditure of funds, in terms of how money is raised and how funds are spent? The Society receives funds from the City, the Bingo Hall and the Great Canadian Casino. They receive less from the Bingo Hall than in the past. In 2010, they received and spent \$30,000. In 2011, they received and spent \$28,000. The events include selecting a May Queen, the May Queen Pageant, the Parade and visiting other cities for certain events. Insurance is now up to \$8,000, due to several increases over the past few years. Storage costs are now \$2,400 a year. No paid staff but costs for facility use for meetings every month. This year, the Society found a space for free at St. John's Ambulance. Other expenses include jackets, crests, office expenses and a post office box. Every year, the society outfits the May King and Queen.
- The Nanaimo event is the oldest May Queen festival in Canada, dating back to 1874.

- Do you have a sponsor for the fireworks display? The fireworks display is the biggest expense of the event. The Casino gives money and occasionally the Legion gives money. No specific sponsor.
- Does the Society do anything on the day of the parade to raise money? In the past, they have looked into food vendors but it would require special licensing. The Society recently held a Beer & Burger Event and it brought in \$2,500. Commissioner Avis said it would be nice to see food vendors at the event. Sheila Thompson would like to see the event remain family-oriented and for that reason would like to not see a Beer Garden. Food vending would be fine.
- Does the Lions Club raise money for the Society as they are listed as board members? They are listed as board members because they are responsible for parade set up and they provide prizes for events.
- Research around the event brought up the issue that small protests had arisen around the concept of an Empire Days weekend. How does the organization position itself in the contemporary context? The Multicultural Society wanted their funds. Not everyone loves it but it is an important part of our history.
- How many members do you have? Currently have 40 volunteers with 25 regularly attending meetings.

b) BALLROOM DANCE SOCIETY

- The Ballroom Dance Society was represented by Stephen Gower, Treasurer.
- Has the Society ever conducted an economic study on how much revenue is generated around the Island Fantasy Ball event? The economic spinoff is huge. People from all around the world come to the event, Nanaimo's event is renowned.
- Are you a registered society as it did not come through on the application? Yes, we are, there was a problem with the document when we transferred it to a different program.
- Asking for \$1000 for the operating grant and \$5000 for the event grant. The Bowen Auditorium is very important to the society. It is where they get their new clients after they have taken their first classes with PRC. They invite the class attendees to the monthly dances. The convenience and central location of the auditorium make it accessible to new dancers. After that, dance becomes part of their life.
- Why are you applying for the operating grant this year? The venue cost has gone up to \$330. Monthly dances are operating at a loss to keep them affordable. The food and decorations are all subsidized by organizers. The workshops are made affordable by only paying instructors \$75. The Bowen venue is at the top of what they pay, but Bowen is the best place to have it.

- How much are the membership fees? Membership costs \$20. They currently have 175 Members, with a 20% attrition rate a year. Demographics are fascinating, all ages.
- Have the day camps been successful? Summer camps were cancelled this year due to low registration. The ones in the Spring were successful.

c) FESTIVAL OF BANNERS

- The Festival of Banners was represented by Chris Kuderle, Administrative Director of the Nanaimo Art Gallery.
- How long has the Festival of Banners been running? This year is the 25th anniversary.
- Do you have a strong volunteer base? We work with Volunteer Nanaimo to recruit volunteers and use the artists who paint at the gallery.
- Who is responsible for coordinating volunteers? We have a paid coordinator.
- Do you have professional painters helping out? Professional painters paint some of the banners. Looking to have professional painters demonstrate how to do it and what to do in the future. They hope to expand this. Pay the artists to do that.
- We are hoping to bring it out into the street to attract more people. Have it downtown, where's there a lot of traffic. Banners are attached to spans, move the spans outside with the supplies to make it as public as possible.
- Have you considered a space on Commercial Street? Do you mean for the outside painting? We are looking into it and are in negotiations.
- Are you going to sell the banners again? It costs \$100 to produce the banner. We only charge \$25 for the banner. Some of the banners are used by Thrifty's to give the banner as a gift to underprivileged kids.
- How do you account for the huge difference in operating costs? It becomes more difficult to produce the festival. Numbers have varied from 160 banners to 450. Extra money would help them expand to try and attract more people.
- How much would you pay the professional artists? We would like to pay \$25 an hour, which is the standard rate for the workshops we run.

d) WOMEN'S RESOURCE SOCIETY

- No representatives attended.

e) NANAIMO BLUES FESTIVAL SOCIETY

- The Blues Society was represented by Keith Davenport, President.
- How was the new venue at Maffeo Sutton this year? It was remarkable. Moved from Diana Krall Plaza and because of that had to do ticketing for the very first time this past year. Magical weekend, because of the great venue.

- What happens in inclement weather? Not much we can do. The main contingency plan is a lot of tents to provide cover. Downside in not having the whole park, some folks sitting outside the fence and getting it for free.
- What is the cost of daily admission? Daily was \$40, three-day was \$95. Early bird promotions were as low as \$75.
- Would you consider doing a different rate for the night? We have decided that the last act would be its own fee. It is a fine line so you do not upset the daily customers.
- Ms. Hofman asked if she could paint this year. Yes, she is definitely invited to paint.
- You are asking for event grant that is three times more than last year, why? The event is based all on volunteers who pushed themselves really hard to pull off event. These extra costs listed would help improve the event. Insurance costs a lot. Social media: possibly needing a new webmaster and we may have to pay someone to do it. Whatever help we could get is critical. Almost broke even last year. The Beer Gardens saved them, the added revenue that made the difference.
- Is this grant narrative from last year? Do you have dates and performers confirmed? Yes, narrative is from last year. Dates are set. Trying to book performers now, trying to book two international stars. Maximum of two that will repeat from last year, both mid-island based. Dates are August 24, 25, and 26, 2012. Narrative was transferrable.
- Are you looking at doing a Children's stage? We are looking to have something for youth, still in discussion.
- How much of operating grant would go to production of the festival? Majority of the funding is to make it happen again. The objective is to have a couple of dances. Create a connection to the youth.

f) SCHMOOZE PRODUCTIONS

- Schmooze Productions was represented by Dean Chadwick, Artistic Producer, and Diane Chadwick, Business Manager.
- How much of your attendance is from within the City? Based at Nanaimo Centre Stage, getting more people from South Nanaimo. Attendance is actually City of Nanaimo numbers, not regional district, error in wording in the document.
- Is this a Season you are applying for? Should it not be an operating grant? Yes it is the season we are applying for. B. Kuhn commented it would be more feasible as a operating grant rather than a festival grant.
- Do you run workshops during your season? Yes, we do.
- Are you a registered non-profit? Not a registered non-profit. Looking into that for the future.
- What is your structure? Family company, based on married couple with a team of support. Based on a family vision.

- How do you handle accountability? How does your money get handled? Operated similar to a private business.
- Are you incorporated? The name is incorporated.
- Do you use any evaluation tools for workshops, etc? Word of mouth, schmoozing
- How do you like the Centre Stage venue? Great venue, love it there, warm and welcoming.
- Do you have an independent review of your finances? No.

g) AFRICAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

- The African Heritage Society was represented by Shalema Gantt, Executive Director and Devlon Wyatt, Production Manager.
- You are asking for just about double the grant this year. Why? Our budget gets greater each year, ask for a bit more because last year was not adequate. It is a month-long celebration.
- Looking at your event's application, could you give us a brief description of the events for February? Events run February 1 – 26, 2012, group of events, gospel concert, events at the museum from black contributors, programs at the library, book display, Black History Month, concerts and then the finale, entire community is invited. Ballet Nacional de Cuba has been confirmed. Entertainers are confirmed. Most dates are confirmed except the Gospel concert will move to the Sunday possibly. Currently booked on the Monday at the Port Theatre.
- Commissioner Pattje commented that the gospel concert at Brechin United was great. Atmosphere will not be the same at the Port Theatre.
- Yes, we agree. The date was not available at the Brechin venue. It is important to us to have the Christianity behind it and would like to return to the Brechin venue in future. We will see how the Port goes this year.
- What is the operating grant for? Office expenses. Have to employ someone sometimes to operate the office. We are hoping it would offset our office costs. We have never asked before. It would cover a lot of our overhead costs, utilities, etc.
- The Society has received \$30,000 in government grants. Can you foresee any fundraising activities to fund events? Fundraising goes on during the month of February. Looking at maybe doing fundraising on culturally significant days throughout the year.
- How are the sales going for the Ballet? The Port Theatre is taking control of ticket sales so we do not receive any funds from that event.
- How was the summer event? We were pleased it did not rain. We had lots of viewers. For the first year it was very successful. We only charged vendors a small fee for the rental. Budget was not very high for it.
- What is the projection for memberships? Your application seems to list only 15 members. That number is based on projected funds. Currently have 100

members. Paid members are less, because not everyone has paid. We are having an AGM soon so hopefully we will settle up then.

- Mr. Wyatt asked the committee what is your feedback about how the African Heritage Society stands in the community? Ms. Bevan says it would be nice to have more information about your events, especially online.

h) CRIMSON COAST DANCE SOCIETY

- The Crimson Coast Dance Society was represented by Holly Bright, Artistic Director and Michael Wright, General Manager.
- Where is Wen Wei Wong from? He is from China. He defected when his company was here.
- Dynastic sounds like a wonderful event. It is shaping up to be a great event. The Chinese Cultural Society connected them with a group of Chinese International students who are getting involved. Sharing their cultural aspects in the event including a Chinese Tea Ceremony.
- Is the grant money strictly for February? Festival grant is for February. February is a much more community-focused event.
- How does it differ from event in March? Bodytalk is run by a group of youth. It is easy to get funding for this as it is for youth.
- The May event: 4 Quartets, is new since the grant application went in. Events are poetry based on T.S. Elliot's quartets. Not sure if a weekend event will be successful. Hope everyone shows up. Success for the Society is turnout and the buzz created by the event.
- So the \$18,000 grant is for operating costs? Operating grant is crucial. It would be covering production costs.
- Is the contemporary dance audience growing? Contemporary dance is a challenging art form. We do well in engaging our audience. Find ways to help people understand the work and enjoy it. It is interpreted in different ways.
- Could you elaborate on the 4 Quartets event? Plan is based on T.S. Elliot's four quartets. Deborah Dunn started with the first quartet and then created a work that she speaks the four quartets while dancing. Create workshops about integrating movement with poetry. Engage other local poets for reading.

i) NANAIMO COMMUNITY CONCERT BAND

- Represented by Shari Barker.
- The group is asking for double the grant amount of last year, why? We would like to do maintenance on our instruments which is overdue. We are currently dealing with financial losses for the first time. We have had to up our ticket prices to \$15. We would like to do a bit more publicity. Never had to push marketing in the past, but now we need to.

- Do you use social media to attract younger people? We have a web designer looking at the website. We would like to get into the schools and meet with children before tackling social media.
- Do you have contacts in the schools? We have teachers in the group who have connections to schools. We would like to attract more students.
- Do you plan on raising your ticket prices? We have. \$15 is the new price. Port takes a percentage so we only gained a small amount.
- Do you use networking skills to connect students and schools? Not yet. Looking at doing it.
- What other fundraising activities are on the horizon? The Tidesmen are making \$8000 per performance so we intend to learn from their example. The band doesn't need a lot to stay functional.
- Age of your band is getting on, how do you attract younger members? We cannot ask members to leave, can only take so many members in total so we have to wait for folks to leave.
- Are you relying too heavily on the City funding? What would you do if you don't get it? We would cut back on certain things. The maintenance on instruments would have to wait.
- Why do the musicians not maintain their own instruments? The band owns most of the instruments. 30% of the instruments are owned by the band. Large instruments, like percussion instruments, are typically owned by bands. It allows members who cannot afford instruments to play.
- Do you purchase the instruments or are they donated? Bought outright for the most part, some are donated by members in legacy after they pass away.

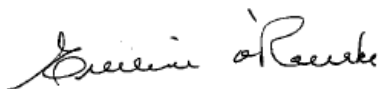
j) THEATREONE

- Represented by Garry Davey, Artistic Director and Wendy Smitka, President.
- Your year looks like it is shaping out to be one main stage event, Tamarack, three actors and three workshops. Yes it is a play centered around three actors, a three-person play.
- When is it? Towards the end of April at the VIU theatre
- Were there operational problems last year? We are not sure where this perception came from. We were in deficit a few years ago, last year we paid off the deficit. We lost the gaming funding. We have an accountant working one day a week. We received BC Arts Council and Canada Council funding this year. We workshop plays by Canadian playwrights. Funding from Canada Council is hard to get. Second time applying we were successful.
- How is Fringe Flicks going? People are not planning in advance. Subscriptions not selling but single seats are selling out.
- Why are you applying for a grant for three years at \$34,000 a year? It is what we used to receive. We are asking that much because of the loss of gaming funding.

- Why is there such a discrepancy in municipal funding? Very hard to sustain at a low level of funding. Everything costs more.
- Did you do a BC Arts Application this year? We just received funding for Tamarack, and applications for next year go in the spring.
- Are you getting BC Arts Council operating funding? You have to have a season of at least three plays. We are just receiving project funding right now. Film series is a revenue generator for us. Emerging Voices have been running for a few years now.
- Have you ever given thought to a Summer Festival? We used to do it. We may decide to do it again. A lot of competition in the summer with other events going on. Nice to be in the park in the summer. It is in discussion. We are doing a production in June.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 6:26 p.m. that the meeting adjourn, with the next Special Grant Interview meeting of the Cultural Committee to be held on Tuesday, 2011-NOV-29, at 3:00 p.m., in the Bowen Park Complex Conference Room. The motion carried unanimously.



Eveline O'Rourke, Chair
Cultural Committee

CERTIFIED CORRECT:



B. Kuhn for:
S. Samborski, Senior Manager
Recreation and Culture Services

APPROVED FOR DISTRIBUTION:



Richard Harding, Director
Parks, Recreation and Culture