

DATE OF MEETING DECEMBER 16, 2020

AUTHORED BY JULIE BEVAN, MANAGER, CULTURE & EVENTS

**SUBJECT CULTURE & EVENTS GRANTS 2021 – FUND RECOMMENDATIONS
TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY VIBRANCY AND RESILIENCE**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To recommend Council approval of the 2021 Culture & Event grant funds (Operating, Project and Downtown Event) to support the activities of non-profit culture and heritage organizations, and contribute to the success of events and initiatives planned for downtown.

Recommendation

That the Finance & Audit Committee recommend that Council:

- a) approve 2021 Cultural Grant funding (Operating, Project and Downtown Event) recommendations of \$478,166 as follows; and
- b) direct Staff to administer a special rapid response program for 2021 (Resilience Grant), with the remaining funds of \$28,559, to support resilience in Nanaimo's arts and culture sector.

2021 Culture & Heritage Operating Grants

- **Applicant Name:** A Cappella Plus Choral Society
 - **Recommend:** \$5,300
- **Applicant Name:** CineCentral Filmmakers Society
 - **Recommend:** \$12,000
- **Applicant Name:** Crimson Coast Dance Society **
 - **Recommend:** \$24,137
- **Applicant Name:** Friends of Nanaimo Jazz Society
 - **Recommend:** \$4,000
- **Applicant Name:** Island Bel Canto Singers
 - **Recommend:** \$1,500
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 - **Recommend:** \$830
- **Applicant Name:** L'association des francophones de Nanaimo
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 - **Recommend:** \$44,165
- **Applicant Name:** Vancouver Island Symphony **
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- **Applicant Name:** Western Edge Theatre **
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- **Applicant Name:** Wordstorm Society of the Arts
 - **Recommend:** \$3,500

*** Recommended for continued three-year funding (2019 / 2020 / 2021)*

2021 Culture & Heritage Project Grants

- **Applicant Name:** Brechin United Church, Mission & Outreach Team
 - **Project Name:** Building Bridges and Paddling Together
 - **Recommend:** \$1,922
- **Applicant Name:** Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society
 - **Project Name:** Anti-Racism Arts Festival
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 - **Project Name:** JazzFest
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- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre

- **Project Name:** National Indigenous Peoples Day 2021 Nanaimo Celebration
- **Recommend:** \$3,500
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Arts Council
 - **Project Name:** R&D: A Capital Plan for an Arts Centre
 - **Recommend:** \$0
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Sings! Choral Festival Society
 - **Project Name:** Nanaimo Sings! Community Through Song
 - **Recommend:** \$4,500
- **Applicant Name:** Pacific Coast Stage Company
 - **Project Name:** Theatre of the Oppressed Workshop Series & Site-Specific Presentation
 - **Recommend:** \$3,000

2021 Downtown Event Revitalization Grants

- **Applicant Name:** A Cappella Plus Choral Society
 - **Project/Event Name:** A Cappella Plus Spring Concert
 - **Recommend:** \$460
- **Applicant Name:** Friends of Nanaimo Jazz Society
 - **Project/Event Name:** Jazz Affair on the Coast
 - **Recommend:** \$3,997
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 - **Project/Event Name:** Emerging Voices
 - **Recommend:** \$4,771

BACKGROUND

Three City of Nanaimo grant streams are administered through Culture & Events for a combined total budget of \$506,725 in 2021.

The City of Nanaimo's Culture & Heritage Grants (Project and Operating) are essential to support the activities of the professional and community-based arts, culture, and heritage organizations who contribute significantly to the cultural, social and economic vitality of Nanaimo. Groups are invited to apply for up to 25% of their overall project or operating budget. The total available budget for allocation of these two grant streams in 2021 is \$356,725.

In 2017, Council established a Downtown Event and Revitalization Funding Program (also known as Downtown Event Grants) to support events and initiatives that attract residents and visitors to downtown, support the vibrancy of downtown and stimulate business activity. Groups are invited to apply for up to 35% of their overall event/project budget. The total available budget for allocation in 2021 is \$150,000.

Prior to the deadline of 2020-OCT-15, the following were received:

- 21 eligible Operating Grant applications (including 5 groups with three-year funding commitments) (Attachment A);
- 11 eligible Project Grant applications (Attachment B); and
- 16 eligible Downtown Event Grant applications (Attachment C).

Staff undertook a rigorous review of all applications based on grant program eligibility and assessment criteria (Attachment D, E and F) and have provided funding recommendations for 2021 in the amount of \$478,166 to support a range of activities in Nanaimo. This report recommends that the remaining \$28,559 be allocated to a new one-time grant fund, to contribute to resilience in a sector that has been hard-hit by COVID-19.

COVID-19 Impacts

In 2020, Nanaimo's arts and culture sector, and the individuals, businesses and organizations that create and deliver signature community events, were significantly challenged by COVID-19. While some could pivot to offer programs and services in a changing context, others had to suspend activity and cancel programs. In many cases, this has resulted in lost revenue and has put further strain on a sector already challenged with scarce resources. At the same time, many culture organizations have been able to connect with their communities in innovative ways by creating new avenues for programming.

For 2021 activities, fewer funding applications were received by the City. In some cases, groups submitted decreased request amounts, which is reflective of lower operating budgets due to decreased activity and revenue generation.

Applicants were asked to address COVID-19 impacts and how they plan to adapt and scale their operations, programs, and/or events, to comply with the health regulations of the day and ensure public safety.

The recommended 2021 grant funds will position organizations to deliver programs and contribute to community recovery. However, should proposed activities not be able to take place as planned, as in any other year, groups will return funds to the City. Staff from Culture & Events will continue to liaise regularly with funding clients to provide support.

3-Year Operating Funding

In 2019, five organizations were recommended for three-year funding allocations (2019, 2020 and 2021). Criteria for three-year funding is attached (Attachment G).

The recommendations in this report reflect a supplement of 2% annually for 2020 and 2021, to reflect rising costs in operating expenses and pressures experienced due to COVID-19. Groups receiving three-year funding have not had a significant increase in operating funds from the City of Nanaimo over the past six years. This one-time supplement will be allocated to three-year operating groups in 2021 to meet demonstrated need and is accounted for with existing fund resources.

| ORGANIZATION | YEAR 1 2019 | YEAR 2 (2%) 2020 | YEAR 3 (2%) 2021 | 2021 AMOUNT RECC. |
|--|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Crimson Coast Dance Society | \$23,200 | \$464 | \$473 | \$24,137 |
| Nanaimo Conservatory of Music | \$18,400 | \$368 | \$375 | \$19,143 |
| Nanaimo Festival Heritage Theatre Society (TheatreOne) | \$42,450 | \$849 | \$866 | \$44,165 |
| Vancouver Island Symphony | \$89,244 | \$1,785 | \$1,821 | \$92,849 |
| Western Edge Theatre | \$13,850 | \$277 | \$283 | \$14,410 |
| ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS: | | \$3,742 | \$3,817 | |

Responding to Community Need: Resilience Grant 2021

For 2021, fewer requests for funds through the Downtown Event Grant were received. After grant awards are allotted to applicants, \$28,559 remains in the fund.

To respond to community need and address issues articulated through REIMAGINE NANAIMO focus groups, Staff recommend a new one-time rapid response fund for 2021. This proposed program, called the Resilience Grant, addresses some of the needs of Nanaimo's arts and culture community. Eligible applicants will be able to apply in Spring 2021, mid-way through typical grant cycle. The proposed Resilience Grant offers funding in the range of \$1,000 to \$5,000, in response to emerging opportunities, pressures and changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to support local initiatives that contribute to the stability of the arts and culture ecosystem, contribute to community resilience, create public value, and take advantage of strategic opportunities.

The proposed grant intends to support the following: new, one-time programs, events, or initiatives taking place in 2021; organizational activities designed to adapt or respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, by addressing capacity issues, managing transition, (including opportunities related to human resources, governance, community engagement, outreach, revenue diversification, mentorships, pursuing goals of equity, diversity, accessibility and inclusion); and, projects by new applicants seeking funds from the City of Nanaimo for the first time.

A draft of the proposed Resilience Grant guidelines and application form has been included (Attachment H). The following are proposed eligibility criteria:

- Individual artists, collectives and non-profit organizations
- Organizations must have an arts or culture mandate, or a mandate to provide services to the arts and culture sector
- Organizations and collectives must be based in Nanaimo, individuals must be a full-time resident of Nanaimo

Staff recommend implementing the Resilience Grant in early 2021 with the unallocated grant funds.

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance & Audit Committee recommend that Council:
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 - The advantages of this option: Aligns with the goals of *the 2014-2020 Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo* and with City strategic priorities related to the local economy, downtown vibrancy, and liveability. The proposed Resilience Grant will create another opportunity in 2021 for eligible applicants to apply and undertake timely projects that help them adapt to change and take advantage of opportunities.
 - The disadvantages of this option: All of the Culture & Events grant funds will be committed for 2021.
2. That the Finance & Audit Committee provide alternate funding recommendations.
- The advantages of this option: None
 - The disadvantages of this option: Would result in a delay to the process and impact organizations' operations, projects and events.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Three City of Nanaimo grant streams are administered through Culture & Events for a combined total budget of \$506,725 in 2021, to support operating, projects and events delivered by community organizations.
- A total of 21 eligible Operating Grant applications (Attachment A); 11 eligible Project Grant applications (Attachment B); and 16 eligible Downtown Event Grant applications (Attachment C) were received prior to the deadline of 2020-OCT-19. The total amount of funding recommended for approval over all three grant streams is \$478,166.
- Five organizations were granted three-year funding (2019/2020/2021) in 2019, and Staff recommend that funding for these groups be approved with an annual 2% supplement for 2020/2021. Criteria for three-year funding is attached (Attachment G).
- To respond to the impacts of COVID-19, Staff propose that the remaining \$28,559 be distributed in 2021 through a new, one-time rapid-response grant stream called the Resilience Grant (Attachment H).

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: 2021 Operating – Applications Received
ATTACHMENT B: 2021 Project Grants – Applications Received
ATTACHMENT C: 2021 Downtown Event Grants – Applications Received
ATTACHMENT D: 2021 Operating Grant – Guidelines & Criteria
ATTACHMENT E: 2021 Project Grant – Guidelines & Criteria
ATTACHMENT F: 2021 Downtown Event Grant – Guidelines & Criteria
ATTACHMENT G: Three-Year Operating Grant Funding Criteria
ATTACHMENT H: Resilience Grant 2021 – DRAFT Guidelines & Application

Submitted by:

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Concurrence by:

Lynn Wark
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Richard Harding
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