

DATE OF MEETING June 16, 2021

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PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE

SUBJECT 2021 RESILIENCE GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To recommend Council approval of the 2021 Resilience Grants to address the needs of Nanaimo's arts and culture community in response to emerging opportunities, pressures and changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. |

Recommendation

That the Finance & Audit Committee recommend that Council:

- a) approve the 2021 Resilience Grant funding recommendations to allocate existing funds of \$28,559 as follows:

- **Project: Weaving Nature Ceremony and Ancestors**
Applicant Name: Dave Bodaly
 - **Recommend:** \$4,500
- **Project: Musicians Forum**
Applicant Name: Elise Boulanger
 - **Recommend:** \$4,379
- **Project: Riverbed Programs**
Applicant Name: Heather Kai-Smith
 - **Recommend:** \$4,500
- **Project: Digital Issue of Sad Girl Review**
Applicant Name: Amber R. Morrison
 - **Recommend:** \$3,730
- **Project: EMPATHY: Care for Collective**
Applicant Name: Sara Robichaud
 - **Recommend:** \$4,400
- **Project: Apples: A Very Gustatory and Cultural Review**
Applicant Name: Rachelle Stein-Wotton
 - **Recommend:** \$3,300
- **Project: Hul'q'umi'num Course**
Applicant Name: Eliot White-Hill
 - **Recommend:** \$3,750

- b) approve the recommended reallocation of additional unclaimed funds from the 2021 Downtown Event Revitalization Fund and the 2021 Culture and Heritage Project grants to support the 2021 Resilience Grant recommendations of \$22,987 as follows:

- **Project: Digital Music Video Creation**
Applicant Name: Nicole Arendt

- **Recommend:** \$3,800
- **Project: The Sun and the Moon – Online Dance**
Applicant Name: Holly Bright
 - **Recommend:** \$3,800
- **Project: Nanaimo Mastering Service**
Applicant Name: Arlen Thompson
 - **Recommend:** \$3,800
- **Project: Visual Arts Workshops**
Applicant Name: Yvonne Vander Kooi
 - **Recommend:** \$3,750
- **Project: Forum Theatre Workshops**
Applicant Name: Pacific Coast Stage Company
 - **Recommend:** \$4,000
- **Project: Digital Theatre Initiative**
Applicant Name: Western Edge Theatre
 - **Recommend:** \$3,837

and;

- c) direct Staff to return to the Finance & Audit Committee to report on recommendations for additional 2021 Resilience Grants funding, should further money be returned to the City or unclaimed from the 2021 Downtown Event Revitalization Fund and/or 2021 Culture and Heritage Project grants.

BACKGROUND

The arts and culture sector is an important driver of the Canadian economy, with a national impact of \$59 billion. As of 2017, the overall Canada-wide economic impact of the culture industries outpaced that of agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (\$39 billion), accommodation and food services (\$46 billion) and utilities (\$46 billion).¹ In British Columbia, the impact of culture is 6.75 times that of sport, taking 2.7% share of the provincial economy.²

The City of Nanaimo's Official Community Plan (2008) and the Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo (2014) both address the need to provide investment to arts and culture for the purpose of strengthening the city's economic base, improving the quality of life and enhancing community identity and pride. To understand culture's impact in creating a prosperous community, the Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation undertook an Economic Impact Study for the arts and culture sector in 2013. The study indicated a direct impact of \$93 million with indirect and induced impact adding an additional \$60 million to the provincial economy, combining for a total impact of \$153 million."³

For a more current picture of the impact of arts and culture in the local economy, this year the City of Nanaimo, as a member of the Creative City Network of Canada, is participating in the Cultural Statistics Strategy which is a partnership program with the Department of Canadian Heritage and Statistics Canada that sources and compiles data on Culture's economic and

¹ (<https://canadianart.ca/news/culture-industries-have-58-9-billion-impact-in-canada>)

² (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190425/dq190425b-eng.htm>)

³ (<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57ab61a51b631bb0ce757ca9/t/587938feb3db2b62000d36d4/1484339456962/PUB+-+ARTS+ECONOMIC+IMPACT+2013.pdf>)

qualitative impacts within Canada. This fall, the City will receive GDP and employment data sets relevant to Nanaimo.

Early data collected on a national scale to assess economic impacts of COVID-19 on the sector indicate that arts and culture have been hard hit. Of all Canadian jobs lost in 2020, 11% were arts, entertainment and recreation jobs. A total of 25% of workers in the Arts and Culture sector lost their job in 2020, resulting in unemployment or employment in other sectors of the economy.⁴

In response to this need, and in line with community feedback gathered through REIMAGINE NANAIMO focus groups, Staff presented a report to the Finance & Audit Committee regarding the creation of a new one-time rapid response fund for 2021 called the Resilience Grant. Deploying remaining funds from the 2021 Downtown Event Revitalization Fund, this program responds to the needs of Nanaimo's arts and culture community with flexible, rapid, one-time funding from \$1,000 to \$5,000. The goal of this one-time program is to foster resilience in the sector by supporting local initiatives that contribute to the stability of the arts and culture ecosystem, create public value, and take advantage of strategic opportunities.

At the Finance & Audit Committee Meeting held 2020-DEC-16, a motion was passed:

"That the Finance & Audit Committee recommend that Council 1. approve 2021 Cultural Grant funding (Operating, Project and Downtown Event) recommendations of \$478,166 as follows; . . . and 2. 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.

This motion was approved by Council at their meeting held 2020-DEC-21.

DISCUSSION

Following Council's approval, a call for applications for the 2021 Resilience Grant was launched alongside program guidelines closing on 2021-MAR-01. A total of 41 applications were received with a total request of \$162,153.31 (Attachment A). Staff undertook a rigorous review of all applications based on approved grant program eligibility and assessment criteria (Attachment B). Criteria for the grant aimed 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); or
- projects by new applicants seeking funds from the City of Nanaimo for the first time.

A review process was implemented to assess the relative merits of applications based on four criteria: Artistic Merit, Community Impact, Feasibility and Demonstrated Need.

Artistic merit is determined following principles such as originality, clarity of vision, and how it advances practice in its given discipline. Community impact is measured by the possibility that a

⁴ (<https://capacoa.ca/en/2021/01/2020-the-year-one-in-four-art-worker-lost-their-job/>)

project will promote local arts and culture in Nanaimo, and its potential for a community outcome in the form of specific outreach, educational benefit to the community, audience development, economic impact or volunteer participation. Feasibility is assessed based on evidence of accurate budget projections, clarity and detail of project goals, and a demonstrated capacity to undertake the work proposed through evidence of skills or previous related undertakings. A final criteria of demonstrated need category assess whether the proposed project had demonstrated a need of funds requested, and was measured by assessing budgets presented.

In a year when public-facing events are more difficult to plan and undertake, this one-time program offered an opportunity for applicants seeking funding to undertake modest projects that could increase their capacity for years to come, including individual artists. Feedback from strategic conversations during REIMAGINE NANAIMO phase 1 identified an extension of funding to new applicants, and the support of arts and culture projects and programs by artists of diverse origins as a community need. In line with this feedback, and in response to A Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo, part 5.1 Strategies for Strengthening the Cultural Sector, Strategy c) Integration and Sustainability, "Find ways to ensure sustainability for artists and artisans who are essential for a vibrant arts and culture scene," criteria was established to first direct support to high meriting programs by new applicants (defined as applicants who are seeking funds from the City of Nanaimo for the first time), followed by returning applicants. The 2021 Resilience Grant program aligns with City of Nanaimo's Official Community Plan goal to create a vibrant culture of innovation, stewardship and partnership to encourage a diverse and healthy economy now and into the future, and by supporting arts and culture as an integral part of everyday life.

The available funds referred by Council on 2020-DEC-16 will support seven (7) grants, (as detailed in Attachment A – existing funds), for a total of \$28,559. Cancellations of other sector events and projects due to COVID-19 has resulted in an additional combined amount of \$22,987 in unclaimed funds from the 2021 Downtown Event Revitalization Fund and 2021 Culture & Heritage Project grants. Staff are recommending utilizing these funds for a further six (6) grants (as detailed in Attachment A – Table 2 – funding proposed using unclaimed funds). If approved by Council, the combined funding recommendations presented in this report will support 13 projects, representing a 31% success rate.

Outcomes of the funding will include activities such as the creation of new original musical compositions, new dance performances online, small-scale community presentations/performances, the completion of literary manuscripts, the commissioning of a new theatre work, the undertaking of music workshops, skill-sharing visual arts dialogues, online visual arts marketing initiatives, and the online publication of work by local writers and artists. These results will include activities, both large and small, that help to raise the overall capacity of the Arts & Culture sector in Nanaimo. Each will contribute directly to the local economy, and will fulfill the goal of offering support to the sector.

Grant recipients will be required to submit a final report on their activities and the community impact of their projects by 2022-MAR-31.

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance & Audit Committee recommend that Council:
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c) direct Staff to return to the Finance & Audit Committee to report on recommendations for additional 2021 Resilience Grants funding, should further money be returned to the City or unclaimed from the 2021 Downtown Event Revitalization Fund and/or 2021 Culture and Heritage Project grants.

- Advantages: 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 2021 Resilience Grant has created an opportunity for eligible applicants to apply and undertake timely projects that help them adapt to change and take advantage of strategic opportunities.
- Disadvantages: Not all meriting applicants are awarded funds because the funds requested exceed amount of money available.
- Financial Implications: Existing funds in Downtown Events Revitalization Fund and Culture & Heritage Project Fund will be fully disbursed in 2021. A further 15 applicants rated as meriting allocations would require additional funds in the amount of \$45,521. A portion of this could be achieved if further unclaimed or returned grants are identified from the Downtown Event Revitalization Fund or Culture and Heritage Project grants.

2. That the Finance & Audit Committee provide alternative direction.

- Advantages: That Council has the opportunity to provide alternate recommendations.
- Disadvantages: A delay in awarding the recommended grants, additional staff time, costs or other resources, may be required to support alternate direction.
- Financial Implications: Additional costs may be incurred depending on the alternate recommendations.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The 2021 Resilience Grant is a funding stream approved by Council to address some of the needs of Nanaimo's arts and culture community by offering funding from \$1000 to \$5,000 in response to emerging opportunities, pressures and changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A total of thirteen (13) Resilience Grants, totaling \$51,546 are recommended from two sources, seven (7) from \$28,559 of approved funds and six (6) from the \$22,987 in further unclaimed funds from the 2021 Downtown Event Revitalization Fund and 2021 Culture & Heritage Project grants.
- Should further event and project cancellations occur, Staff will provide additional recommendations to fulfill unmet needs identified through this one-time funding program.

ATTACHMENTS:

- ATTACHMENT A: 2021 Resilience Grant – Applications Received
ATTACHMENT B: 2021 Resilience Grant – Guidelines & Application Form, Eligibility & Assessment Matrix

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