

DATE OF MEETING DECEMBER 13, 2023

AUTHORED BY JAIME-BRETT SINE, RECREATION COORINATOR – CULTURAL SERVICES

SUBJECT CULTURAL OPERATING, PROJECT AND DOWNTOWN EVENT REVITALIZATION GRANTS 2024 – FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To recommend Council's approval of the 2024 Culture & Event grant funds (Operating and Project) to support the activities of non-profit culture and heritage organizations

Recommendation

That the Finance & Audit Committee recommend that Council approve 2024 Cultural Grant Funding (Operating and Project) recommendations of \$366,427 as follows;

2024 Culture Operating & Project Grants

- **Applicant Name:** Crimson Coast Dance Society
 - **Recommended:** 3 Yr Operating (Year 2 of 3) \$30,732
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Conservatory of Music
 - **Recommended:** 3 Yr Operating (Year 2 of 3) \$20,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Festival Heritage Theatre Society (Theatre One)
 - **Recommended:** 3 Yr Operating (Year 2 of 3) \$49,000
- **Applicant Name:** Pacific Coast Stage Company
 - **Recommended:** 3 Yr Operating (Year 2 of 3) \$16,500
- **Applicant Name:** Vancouver Island Symphony
 - **Recommended:** 3 Yr Operating (Year 2 of 3) \$100,000
- **Applicant Name:** Western Edge Theatre
 - **Recommended:** 3 Yr Operating (Year 2 of 3) \$20,000
- **Applicant Name:** 8758999 Canada Society dba Artists' Collective Theatre
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$4,000
- **Applicant Name:** A Capella Plus Choral Society
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$2,000
- **Applicant Name:** Island Bel Canto Singers Society
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$2,538
- **Applicant Name:** L'Association des francophones de Nanaimo
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$9,500
- **Applicant Name:** Loyal Nanaimo Bathtub Society
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$5,000
- **Applicant Name:** Malaspina Choir Society
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$3,000

- **Applicant Name:** Mid Island Community Bands Society
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$1,250
- **Applicant Name:** Mid Island Metis Nation Association
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$9,500
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo African Heritage Society
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$8,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Arts Council
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$15,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Chapter of the SPEBSQSA (Nanaimo Tidesmen)
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$3,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Concert Band Society
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$2,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Fiddle Society
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$7,500
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo International Jazz Festival Association
 - **Recommended:** 1 Yr Operating \$8,000
- **Applicant Name:** Vancouver Island Short Film Festival Society
 - **Recommended:** 1Yr Operating \$5,500

- **Applicant Name:** Crimson Coast Dance Society
 - **Project Name:** DanceABLE
 - **Recommended:** Project \$4,000
- **Applicant Name:** Literacy Central Vancouver Island
 - **Project Name:** Local Author's Evening Workshops
 - **Recommended:** Project \$640.66
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo African Heritage Society
 - **Project Name:** Black History Month & Children's Event
 - **Recommended:** Project \$5,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Ballroom Dance Society
 - **Project Name:** Island Fantasy Ball Showcase and Competition
 - **Recommended:** Project \$5,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Chamber Orchestra
 - **Project Name:** Orchestra 2023/ 2024 Program Season
 - **Recommended:** Project \$2,300
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Conservatory of Music
 - **Project Name:** Island Notes Chamber Music Festival
 - **Recommended:** Project \$1,800
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Festival Heritage Theatre Company
 - **Project Name:** TheatreOne
 - **Recommended:** Project \$7,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Fiddle Society
 - **Project Name:** West Coast Youth Fiddle Summit
 - **Recommended:** Project \$3,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Sings! Choral Festival Society
 - **Project Name:** Singing With Your Ears
 - **Recommended:** Project \$1,500
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Ukulele Festival Society

- **Project Name:** Nanaimo Ukulele Festival
- **Recommended:** Project \$1,000
- **Applicant Name:** One in Spirit Healing Arts Society
 - **Project Name:** Multicultural Festival
 - **Recommended:** Project \$1,864.34
- **Applicant Name:** Pacific Coast Stage Company
 - **Project Name:** The Flame Youth Storytelling Event
 - **Recommended:** Project \$3,000
- **Applicant Name:** Vancouver Island Short Film Festival Society
 - **Project Name:** Youth Showcase
 - **Recommended:** Project \$1,265
- **Applicant Name:** Western Edge Theatre
 - **Project Name:** New Waves Festival
 - **Recommended:** Project \$3,000
- **Applicant Name:** Wordstorm Society of the Arts
 - **Project Name:** Resource Development
 - **Recommended:** Project \$1,500
- **Applicant Name:** Reconciliation Theatre
 - **Project Name:** Writer's Workshop
 - **Recommended:** Project \$2,537

BACKGROUND

Three City of Nanaimo grant streams (Operating, Project, and Downtown Event Revitalization Fund) are administered through the Culture & Events section for a combined total budget of \$616,427 in 2024. The Project grant budget in 2024 is \$44,407. From 2015 to 2019, the Project grant budget increased annually by 10%. Since 2019, the Project grant stream has remained unchanged at \$44,407. The Operating grant budget in 2024 is \$322,020, an amount based on \$3 per capita and therefore adjusted with population changes. Together, the Project and Operating grant streams make up a combined total budget of \$366,427 in 2024.

At the 2023-DEC-4 Council meeting, Council approved the 2023-DEC-1 Finance and Audit Committee recommendation to add \$100,000 to the provisional budget for the Downtown Event Revitalization Fund in addition to the \$150,000 currently available. The interdepartmental staff committee is reviewing the allocation of funds for 2024 incorporating the additional \$100,000 in available funding. Staff will present Downtown Event Revitalization Fund allocations to Finance & Audit in January following approval of the provisional budget.

Culture Operating and Project grants are essential in supporting the activities of the professional arts, culture and heritage organizations that play a significant role in contributing to the cultural profile and economic vitality of Nanaimo (*Nanaimo Integrated Action Plan: C4.5.9*). Financial support of these organizations aligns with strategic priorities related to a Healthy Nanaimo, an Empowered Nanaimo, and a Prosperous Nanaimo (*City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined*). This includes integrated actions plans such as the ongoing support of community events, facilitating lively visitor experiences with vibrant streets and waterfront areas, and reinforcing the role culture plays in supporting the production and delivery of arts and culture activity, as well as raising awareness in this respect.

Organizations seeking funding from the Operating and/or Project grant streams are invited to apply for up to 25% of their overall project and/or operating budget. Each year, the demand for both the Operating and Project grant streams greatly exceeds funding available, reflecting the success and vitality of Nanaimo's arts and cultural community, as well as increasing financial need.

DISCUSSION

At the deadline of 2023-OCT-10 the following were received:

- 15 Culture Operating applications (Attachment A)
 - 15 successful applications
- 15 Culture Project applications (Attachment B)
 - 1 application was moved to Project from the Downtown Event Revitalization Fund
 - 16 successful applications

An interdepartmental staff committee reviewed of all applications based on grant program eligibility and assessment criteria (Attachments C & D) and have recommended allocations of \$366,427 to support a range of activities in the City of Nanaimo in 2024.

Of note this year is a considerable increase in requests. The total available funding saw a slight increase for 2024 as Operating Grant funds are assigned on a per-capita basis and changes in population impact the amount available.

- Project grant budget for 2024 is \$44,407
- Operating grant budget for 2024 is \$322,020
- Total monies available in Project and Operating Grants for 2024 is \$366,427
- Combined funding requests in these two grant streams was \$273,797.60
- Funding allocated to 3-year Operating Grant recipients was \$236,232
- Total combined funding request is \$510,029.60 leading to a shortfall between funds available and funds requested of \$143,602.60

Due to the enormity of demand on each grant stream and the indicated shortfall in available funds, almost all applicants saw a reduction in funding from previous years. Staff noted that as the demand on the Culture Grants increases, the allocation of funds is not an accurate representation of the strength of an application, nor the value of an organization or their services/programming, but a reflection of disproportionate demand (requests vs. funds available). As a result, the distribution of Operating and Project funds for 2024 can be summarized as follows: Only a small percentage of the amount requested by any given organization has been granted.

Project Grants saw applications from familiar organizations, many of whom have received grant funding in past years, and a number of applications from organizations new to our grant streams. While a number of organizations' proposed projects were diverted to the Downtown Event Revitalization Fund during the intake process, the demand on Project Grants remained far greater than the funds available with \$79,323.16 requested of a \$44,407 budget. Due to the strength of applications and the value of the prospective projects, the adjudication panel felt that projects were worthy of funding, even if the amount allocated was reduced and/or only a small percentage of the requested amount due to demand. The number of applications received and demand on available funds speaks to a strong, thriving, and continually growing arts and culture community.

In the Operating Grant stream, all groups who applied were deemed successful. Due to the demand on Operating Grants, almost all groups saw a reduction in funding. Six groups who are

recipients of a previously allocated 3-year grant (currently in year 2) accounted for \$236,232 of Operating Grant funds, leaving \$82,788 available, with requests for 2024 totaling \$194,474.50. As a result, most groups saw only 30-50% of their total funding request met.

After the allocation of both grant streams, Staff compiled a list of standby organizations and projects that will be prioritized for additional funding in the event of returned funds. For the Operating Grant stream, these include: Island Bel Canto, Vancouver Island Short Film Festival, and Nanaimo Fiddle Society. For the Project Grant stream, these include: Nanaimo Ballroom Dance Society, and the Nanaimo African Heritage Society. Should funds be returned due to, for example, the cancelling of a project or event, funds will be reallocated to prioritized organizations.

A new mandatory requirement was introduced as part of 2024 grant eligibility criteria and required that a representative from the organization applying for grant funding attend an online (Zoom) grant information session. These information sessions reviewed grant requirements, eligibility, offered grant writing tips, and were intended to better ensure the correct completion of grant applications, as well as answer common questions and concerns. Feedback on the information sessions was overwhelmingly positive, and staff felt these sessions contributed to stronger applications, as well as helping to ensure all required materials were included in applications. Due to this being the first year attendance in information sessions was required, groups who did not attend were not deemed ineligible but instead saw a reduction of 10% in their request for possible funding.

For both grant streams, staff noted where applications were incomplete and requested the required information from each organization. Funds allocated are not to be released without all grant criteria being met. The proposed allocation of funds is based on each group satisfying the grant criteria in its entirety.

The grant review process demonstrated how vital Culture Grants are to the ongoing operation and success of Nanaimo's arts and culture organizations. As our arts and culture community continues to thrive and grow, so too does the need for financial support. There is no doubt of the tremendously positive impact of these organizations on the broader community, and no better evidence of this fact than in the comprehensive, ambitious, and meaningful grant applications received.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Funds for the two grant streams addressed in this report have been earmarked in the 2024 financial plan.

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance & Audit Committee recommend that Council approve 2024 Culture Grant funding (Operating and Project) recommendations of \$366,427 as follows;

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- **Applicant Name:** Crimson Coast Dance Society
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 - **Project Name:** Orchestra 2023/ 2024 Program Season
 - **Recommended:** Project \$2300
 - **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Conservatory of Music
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 - **Recommended:** Project \$2,537
 - The advantages of this option: Aligns with the goals of *City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined* with strategic priorities related to a Healthy Nanaimo, an Empowered Nanaimo, and a Prosperous Nanaimo.
 - The disadvantages of this option: All of the Culture & Events 2024 grant funds will be fully committed.
 - Financial Implications: There is \$366,427 allocated for the Operating and Project Grant streams in the 2024 Financial Plan.
2. That the Finance & Audit Committee recommend that Council provide alternate funding recommendations.
- The advantages of this option: None.

- The disadvantages of this option: Would result in a delay in process and impact organizations' operations, projects and events in 2024 and their ability to serve the community.
- Financial Implications: Would have financial impact on individual organizations and the services they provide to the community. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- Each year the City of Nanaimo invests in arts, culture, and downtown events by providing funding to eligible organizations.
- By the 10-OCT-2023 deadline the City received 31 Operating and Project applications.
- In 2024, a combined total of \$366,427 in Operating and Project allocations is recommended to support a range of activities in Nanaimo which will have broad cultural and community impact.

ATTACHMENTS:

- ATTACHMENT A: 2024 Culture Operating Grant Applications Received
- ATTACHMENT B: 2024 Culture Project Grant Applications Received
- ATTACHMENT C: 2024 Application Eligibility Operating and Project Grants Matrix
- ATTACHMENT D: 2024 Assessment Matrix Project and Operating Grants

Submitted by:

Jaime-Brett Sine
Recreation Coordinator – Cultural Services |

Concurrence by:

Darcie Osborne
Director, Recreation & Culture

Laura Mercer
Director, Finance

Richard Harding
General Manager, Parks, Recreation &
Culture

Dale Lindsay
CAO |