

DATE OF MEETING JANUARY 15, 2024

AUTHORED BY MEGAN LUM, RECREATION COORDINATOR – SPECIAL EVENTS

**SUBJECT DOWNTOWN EVENT REVITALIZATION FUND GRANTS 2024 – FUNDING OPTIONS**

## OVERVIEW

### Purpose of Report

For Council to review funding allocations for the 2024 Downtown Event Revitalization Fund in support of events that activate Downtown Nanaimo.

### Recommendation

That Council approve 2024 Downtown Event Revitalization Fund allocations of \$250,000 as follows:

#### 2024 Downtown Event Revitalization Grants

- **Applicant Name:** Crimson Coast Dance Society
  - **Event Name:** REBO(U)ND
  - **Recommended:** \$8,472
- **Applicant Name:** Downtown Nanaimo Business Association
  - **Event Name:** Picnic in the Plaza
  - **Recommended:** \$16,162
- **Applicant Name:** Downtown Nanaimo Business Association
  - **Event Name:** WinterFest
  - **Recommended:** \$24,000
- **Applicant Name:** Friends of Nanaimo Jazz Society
  - **Event Name:** 2024 Concert Series
  - **Recommended:** \$11,000
- **Applicant Name:** Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce
  - **Event Name:** 2024 Commercial Street Night Market
  - **Recommended:** \$40,000
- **Applicant Name:** Island Consort Society
  - **Event Name:** A Choral Cornucopia (Spring Program)
  - **Recommended:** \$1,560
- **Applicant Name:** Island Consort Society
  - **Event Name:** Joy of Christmas (Fall Program)
  - **Recommended:** \$2,500
- **Applicant Name:** L'Association des francophones de Nanaimo
  - **Event Name:** Voices in my body
  - **Recommended:** \$5,000
- **Applicant Name:** Loyal Nanaimo Bathtub Society
  - **Event Name:** Marine Festival
  - **Recommended:** \$22,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Ballroom Dance Society

- **Event Name:** Summer Dance Festival
  - **Recommended:** \$4,500
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Blues Society
  - **Event Name:** Nanaimo Blues Festival
  - **Recommended:** \$30,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Chapter, Federation of Canadian Artists
  - **Event Name:** Fall Fine Arts Show
  - **Recommended:** \$2,200
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Chapter, Federation of Canadian Artists
  - **Event Name:** Spring Fine Arts Show
  - **Recommended:** \$2,200
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo International Jazz Festival Association
  - **Event Name:** Jazz Festival 2024
  - **Recommended:** \$25,000
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo Pride Society
  - **Event Name:** Pride Festival
  - **Recommended:** \$5,700
- **Applicant Name:** Nanaimo RibFest Ltd.
  - **Event Name:** Nanaimo RibFest
  - **Recommended:** \$8,000
- **Applicant Name:** Old City Quarter Association
  - **Event Name:** Sounds of Summer in the OCQ
  - **Recommended:** \$7,638
- **Applicant Name:** Old City Quarter Association
  - **Event Name:** Winter in the OCQ
  - **Recommended:** \$3,500
- **Applicant Name:** Pacific Coast Stage Company
  - **Event Name:** Fringe Hub
  - **Recommended:** \$4,000
- **Applicant Name:** Positively Vegan Society
  - **Event Name:** Vegan Night Market
  - Recommended:** \$3,500
- **Applicant Name:** Positively Vegan Society
  - **Event Name:** VegFest
  - Recommended:** \$5,250
- **Applicant Name:** Reconciliation Theatre Society
  - **Event Name:** Canada Day
  - Recommended:** \$5,140
- **Applicant Name:** Reconciliation Theatre Society
  - **Event Name:** Spooktacular 2024
  - Recommended:** \$3,062
- **Applicant Name:** South End Community Association
  - **Event Name:** South End Day Heritage Picnic
  - Recommended:** \$4,500
- **Applicant Name:** The Mom Market Collective Inc.
  - **Event Name:** VICC Christmas Market
  - Recommended:** \$4,000
- **Applicant Name:** Victoria Crescent Association

- **Event Name:** Victoria Crescent Banner Festival  
**Recommended:** \$1,116

## **BACKGROUND**

Three City of Nanaimo grant streams are administered through the Culture & Events section for a combined total budget of \$616,427 in 2024. This report focuses on the Downtown Event Revitalization Fund (DERF) allocations for 2024.

The Downtown Event and Revitalization Fund (DERF) supports events that attract residents and visitors to downtown, enhance the vibrancy of downtown and stimulate business activity. Groups are invited to apply for up to 35% of their overall event budget. Following Council's recent decision to allocate an additional \$100,000 to the Downtown Event Revitalization Fund, a total of \$250,000 is available for DERF grants in 2024. |

## **DISCUSSION**

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

- 28 Downtown Event Revitalization Fund applications (Attachment A)
  - 26 successful applications
  - 1 unsuccessful application
  - 1 application received in the wrong stream (moved to Culture Projects)

An interdepartmental staff committee undertook a review of all applications based on grant program eligibility and assessment criteria (Attachment B) and have recommended allocations of \$250,000 to support a range of events in Nanaimo in 2024.

Applications for DERF funding this year saw a considerable increase in requests, both in the number of organizations requesting funding and the dollar amounts associated. DERF saw a record-high request of \$313,824. This can be partially attributed to the creation of new events, and partially attributed to an increase in costs associated with hosting events.

- Total DERF grant funds available for 2024 is \$250,000
- Funding requests for DERF was \$313,824
- The shortfall between funds available and funds requested is \$63,824.

Staff notes that many organizations have commented on the increase in the cost of hosting events post-COVID with fewer sponsorships, grants and in-kind contributions available.

As requests for this grant stream were \$63,824 more than the available budget, fully funding all applications is not possible. Despite this, staff believes this allocation of funds provides adequate support for both established and emerging events in Nanaimo.

Only one application was unsuccessful in the DERF stream (Attachment A) as the adjudication panel had concerns around the location and its ability to meet revitalization goals. One application was moved to the Culture Project stream as it more closely met that criteria.

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

The grant review process demonstrated once again that Nanaimo has an exciting variety of events, all of which contribute to making Nanaimo a vibrant community. The applications received are a reflection of the tremendously positive impact these organizations have on the broader community.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Funds for Downtown Event Revitalization Fund addressed in this report have been earmarked in the 2024 financial plan. |

## **OPTIONS**

1. That Council approve 2024 Downtown Event Revitalization Fund allocations of \$250,000 as follows;

### 2024 Downtown Event Revitalization Grants

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- 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 2024 grant funds will be fully committed.
- Financial Implications: There is \$250,000 allocated for the DERF grant stream in the 2024 Financial Plan.

2. That Council provide alternate direction to staff.

- 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 through the Culture & Event grants, the City of Nanaimo invests in arts, culture, and downtown events by providing funding to eligible organizations.
- By the 2023-OCT-10 deadline the City received 28 Downtown Event Revitalization Fund grant applications totaling \$313,824.
- On 2023-DEC-01, Council added \$100,000 to the 2024 provisional budget DERF, making the available budget \$250,000.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

ATTACHMENT A: 2024 Downtown Event Grant Applications Received With Funding Options

ATTACHMENT B: 2024 Downtown Event Revitalization Grant Fund Guidelines, Criteria & Assessment Matrix

ATTACHMENT C: 2024 Downtown Event Grant Applications Received

**Submitted by:**

Megan Lum  
Recreation Coordinator – Special Events

**Concurrence by:**

Darcie Osborne  
Director, Recreation & Culture

Wendy Fulla  
Director, Finance

Richard Harding  
General Manager Community Services and  
Deputy CAO

Dale Lindsay  
CAO