

DATE OF MEETING | MARCH 20, 2024 |

AUTHORED BY | JAIME-BRETT SINE, RECREATION COORDINATOR – CULTURAL SERVICES

**SUBJECT | 2024 CULTURAL GRANT FUNDING REALLOCATION RECOMMENDATION**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To recommend Council approval of the reallocation of declined 2024 Culture & Event Project Grant funds to Artists' Collective Theatre (ACT Theatre) to support continued operation and programming.

### **Recommendation**

That the Finance & Audit Committee recommend that Council approve the reallocation of available 2024 Culture & Event Project Grant funds as follows:

- **Applicant Name:** 8758999 Canada Society dba Artists' Collective Theatre (ACT Theatre)
- **Recommended:** \$6,000

## **BACKGROUND**

Three City of Nanaimo grant streams are administered through the Culture & Events section for a combined total budget of \$616,427 in 2024. The Project and Operating grant streams make up a combined total budget of \$366,427 in 2024.

Culture Operating and Project grants are essential to support the activities of the professional and community-based arts and culture 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.

## **DISCUSSION**

On 2023-DEC-18, Council approved Staff's 2024 Culture & Event grant funds (Operating & Project) recommendations. In December 2023, the Nanaimo Festival Heritage Theatre Society (TheatreOne) notified Staff that they would be postponing their Wild Geese production and declined the Culture Project Grant funds awarded totalling \$7,000. In February 2024, Western Edge Theatre notified Staff that they were cancelling the New Waves Festival and declined the Culture Project Grant funds awarded totalling \$3,000. As a result, Staff are responsible for reallocating \$10,000 of unused Project Grant funds.

During the initial grant allocation process, Staff compiled a list of standby organizations and projects that would be prioritized for additional funding in the event of returned/ declined funds. Standby organizations included Nanaimo Ballroom Dance Society and the Nanaimo African

Heritage Society. A secondary list of standby organizations was also compiled by Staff, in the event the initial list of organizations had been funded by reallocated Grant funds. Included on the secondary list of standby organizations not previously approved by Council, is ACT Theatre.

Staff have reallocated unused Project Grant funds to the initial standby organizations in the amount of \$1,000 to Nanaimo Ballroom Dance Society and \$3,000 to Nanaimo African Heritage Society. This brings the funds awarded to these two organizations in line with what Staff would have allocated during the initial grant review process, should sufficient funds have been available. With the reallocation of \$4,000 of unused Project Grant funds to these two organizations, Staff have \$6,000 additional funds to award to the next priority standby organization.

Staff previously highlighted the demand on the Culture Grant Program, in addition to the strength of the applications received, and the shortfall between funds available and funds requested as the primary reasons funding requests were only partially fulfilled in both Project and Operating Grant streams. ACT Theatre's funding request was \$16,500 (ATTACHMENT A). Staff's initial allocation of funds to ACT Theatre totalled \$4,000 or 24% of the funding request. This amount fell below average distribution of eligible funds granted to the majority of other organizations, thereby making ACT Theatre a priority for reallocated funds. During evaluation by the grants panel, ACT Theatre's application was deemed very strong, scoring highly in assessment criteria that included: merit, relevance/ feasibility, and potential impact. The strength of ACT Theatre's grant application and scheduled Program of Work, in addition to initial allocation of funds being below the median average, justifies the organization being a priority for the reallocation of funds.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Funds for the Culture & Event grant streams addressed in this report have been earmarked in the 2024 budget.

## **OPTIONS**

1. That the Finance & Audit Committee recommend that Council approve the reallocation of available 2024 Culture & Event Project Grant funds as follows:
  - **Applicant Name:** 8758999 Canada Society dba Artists' Collective Theatre (ACT Theatre)
  - **Recommended:** \$6,000
  - 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 funds available for reallocation will be fully committed.
  - Financial Implications: There will be no impact to the 2024 budget as \$10,000 of declined Project Grant funds are available to be reallocated.
  
2. That the Finance & Audit Committee recommend that Council provide alternate funding recommendations.
  - The advantage of this option: Other organizations receive reallocated funds.
  - The disadvantages of this option: Would impact ACT Theatre's operations 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 Culture & Events, the City of Nanaimo invests in arts, culture, and downtown events by providing funding to eligible organizations.
- Staff recommend the reallocation of declined 2024 Culture & Event Project Grant funds to ACT Theatre to support continued operation and programming in the amount of \$6,000.
- The strength of ACT Theatre’s grant application and scheduled Program of Work, in addition to initial allocation of funds being below the median average, justifies the organization being a priority for the reallocation of funds.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**ATTACHMENT A:** ACT Theatre Operating Grant Application

**Submitted by:**

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**Concurrence by:**

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Darcie Osborne  
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