

DATE OF MEETING    SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

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EVENTS

SUBJECT              **VANCOUVER ISLAND MILITARY MUSEUM OPERATING MODEL  
ALIGNMENT**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To recommend that the Vancouver Island Military Museum operating model be aligned with those of the City's co-managed cultural facilities.

### **Recommendation**

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve realigning the Vancouver Island Military Museum operating model by:

- Ending the requirement to pay annual rent for 100 Cameron Road beginning in 2025;
- Directing staff to assist the Vancouver Island Military Museum Board of Directors with establishing a general manager position;
- Directing staff to begin working to establish a Co-Management Agreement with the Vancouver Island Military Museum.

## **BACKGROUND**

On 2024-APR-08 Council received an update on operations at the Vancouver Island Military Museum (the 'Military Museum'). The Military Museum located in the Centennial Building at 100 Cameron Road, is open five days a week and is operated by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Military Museum is a regional (Vancouver Island-wide) museum and was incorporated on 1986-JAN-11.

On 2013-JAN-01, the City and the Military Museum entered into a 10-year lease agreement for the Centennial Building. The lease expired on 2022-DEC-31 and since then the agreement has continued under the same terms. The facility is maintained by the City and in 2024 has a maintenance budget of \$27,300. The Military Museum pays \$40,000 plus GST in annual rent and any net surplus, once maintenance costs are paid, is transferred to the Piper Park Reserve which provides funding for improvements to the park. The 2024 projected closing balance of the reserve is \$131,543.

The Military Museum Board members are aging and will soon require support to continue operating this cultural facility for the region. The President and Vice-President meet regularly with Parks, Recreation and Culture staff, as well as with the General Manager of the Nanaimo Museum, to explore potential future operating models.

## **DISCUSSION**

Parks, Recreation and Culture staff, the General Manager of the Nanaimo Museum and the President and Vice President of the Military Museum are in agreement that hiring a general manager for the Military Museum is the first step needed to ensure the success of a future operating model. Once the position is established, the recommended next step is to align the Military Museum's operating model with that of other City cultural facilities by establishing a Co-Management Agreement between the City and the Military Museum. Representatives from the City and the two Museums also envision a closer connection between the Nanaimo Museum and the Military Museum. A general manager would need to be in place at the Military Museum prior to undertaking the next two steps so that responsibility for liaising between organizations, providing continuity in Military Museum operations and effectively navigating the differences between a municipal and a regional museum, could rest with the individual in that position.

A Co-Management Agreement between the City of Nanaimo and the Military Museum would replace the previous lease agreement and would bring the Military Museum's operating model into alignment with those of the Port Theatre, the Nanaimo Art Gallery and the Nanaimo Museum. These three cultural partners operate out of City of Nanaimo facilities, receive operating grants paid in quarterly instalments and do not pay annual rent to the City.

The Nanaimo Museum's General Manager has developed an outline of suggested general manager duties and is collaborating with the Military Museum's President and Vice-President and with Parks, Recreation and Culture staff to develop a draft job description. The goal is to attract an individual with business and leadership skills who can work mindfully and respectfully with the Board of Directors and volunteers, and can serve as a respectful ambassador for Vancouver Island's military history. A curator, historian or interpretive programmer is not envisioned for this role – understanding in these areas would be an asset but is not part of the required skillset for the position. Offering a competitive salary will allow the Military Museum to attract and retain a candidate with the necessary background and skills to fill the role. It is anticipated that the general manager's salary would be in the \$60,000 range.

The Military Museum has the ability to fund the general manager role. Once the position is established, the general manager would be able to identify additional funding opportunities to help sustain the position. |

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The Military Museum currently pays \$40,000 plus GST in annual rent. Should the Finance and Audit Committee recommend approval of the staff recommendation rent would no longer be paid and maintenance costs of the facility would be fully funded by property taxation. Based on the proposed draft 2025 budget maintenance costs are estimated at \$32,650. As well, funds would no longer be transferred to the Piper Park Reserve. The \$40,000 would still be used to benefit the community as it would continue to be invested in the Military Museum and its programs.

The financial impact of a Co-Management Agreement has not been determined at this time and would be brought forward to Council at a future date. |

## **OPTIONS**

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve realigning the Vancouver Island Military Museum operating model by:
  - a) Ending the requirement to pay annual rent for 100 Cameron Road beginning in 2025;
  - b) Directing staff to assist the Vancouver Island Military Museum Board of Directors with establishing a general manager position;
  - c) Directing staff to begin working to establish a Co-Management Agreement with the Vancouver Island Military Museum.
    - The advantages of this option are that it provides support for the Military Museum to progress toward a Co-Management Agreement with the City of Nanaimo.
    - The disadvantages of this option are that the City would no longer collect rent for 100 Cameron Road.
    - Financial Implications: The immediate financial implication is the loss of the \$40,000 annual rent payment for 100 Cameron Road. Long-term financial implications would be determined by a future Co-Management Agreement with the Museum. The change would be included in the 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan for the draft budget.
  
2. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council not approve realigning the Vancouver Island Military Museum operating model by:
  - a) Ending the requirement to pay annual rent for 100 Cameron Road beginning in 2025;
  - b) Directing staff to assist the Vancouver Island Military Museum Board of Directors with establishing a general manager position;
  - c) Directing staff to begin working to establish a Co-Management Agreement with the Vancouver Island Military Museum.
    - The advantages of this option are that the City would continue to collect \$40,000 in annual rent from the Museum.
    - The disadvantages of this option are that it does not provide support to bring the Military Museum's operating model into alignment with the City's other Co-Managed cultural facilities.
    - Financial Implications: None.
  
3. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend an alternative option to Council. |
  - The advantages of this option are unknown.
  - The disadvantages of this option are unknown.
  - Financial Implications are unknown.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Parks, Recreation and Culture staff are recommending that the Vancouver Island Military Museum operating model be aligned with those of the City's Co-Managed cultural facilities.
- Parks, Recreation and Culture staff, the General Manager of the Nanaimo Museum and the President and Vice-President of the Military Museum are in agreement that hiring a general manager for the Military Museum is the first step needed to ensure the success of a future operating model.

- Once the position is established, the recommended next step is to align the Military Museum's operating model with that of other City cultural facilities by establishing a Co-Management Agreement between the City and the Military Museum.

**Submitted by:**

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