

DATE OF MEETING FEBRUARY 19, 2025

AUTHORED BY JAIME-BRETT SINE, COORDINATOR OF CULTURAL SERVICES

SUBJECT 2025 Culture Project Grant Additional Allocation

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To recommend that the Finance and Audit Committee approve the addition of Crimson Coast Dance Society to the list of 2025 Culture & Event Grant standby organizations, and approve the allocation of additional 2025 Project Grant Funds.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve the addition of Crimson Coast Dance Society to the list of 2025 Culture & Event Grant standby organizations, and Project Grant reallocation as follows:

- Applicant Name: Crimson Coast Dance Society
 - Recommended: \$3,476
- Applicant Name: Vancouver Island Symphony
 - Recommended: \$965

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 \$663,768 in 2025. The Project Grant budget for 2025 is \$48,848.

As per the 2025 – 2029 provisional budget adopted by Council in January 2025, Project Grant funding will see a 10% annual increase for five years (2025 – 2029), bringing the Project Grant budget from \$44,407 to \$48,848.

Culture & Events 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). These priorities include supporting 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. |

DISCUSSION

On 2024-DEC-16, Council approved Staff's 2025 Culture and Event grant funding recommendations. During the initial grant allocation process, Staff compiled a list of standby organizations, projects and events that would be prioritized for additional funding in the event of additional, returned, and/or declined funds (ATTACHMENT A).

Three-year Operating grant recipients applying for funds through the Project Grant stream were allocated 0% - 50% of funds requested, falling short of the 65% average in recognition that these organizations were already well-funded through the Operating Grant stream. The organizations that were declined Project funding or received the lowest funding percentage were then prioritized for additional and/or reallocated Project funds.

During the Project Grant allocation review, Vancouver Island Symphony was among the three-year Operating Grant recipients to be denied Project Grant funding due to a lack of available funds. The Vancouver Island Symphony was instead made a priority as a standby organization.

In January 2025, Staff were notified of an additional Project Grant application submitted by the deadline by Crimson Coast Dance Society. Due to a system error, this grant application was not considered in initial grant allocations, despite being submitted by deadline. Crimson Coast Dance Society's funding request was \$13,650. Crimson Coast Dance Society receives a three-year Operating Grant, so this Project Grant application would not initially have been recommended for funding. If Staff had been aware of this application, however, Crimson Coast Dance Society would have been included alongside the Symphony on the list of standby organizations prioritized for additional, returned, and/or declined funds.

Following the adoption of the 2025 – 2029 provisional budget, \$4,441 in Project Grant funds are now available for allocation. Staff reviewed Project Grant allocations and identified Vancouver Island Symphony and Crimson Coast Dance Society as the two projects that would most benefit from these available funds. Both grant applications are deemed strong, scoring highly in assessment criteria that included: merit, relevance/feasibility, and potential impact. The strength of the Crimson Coast Dance Society and Vancouver Island Symphony grant applications and scheduled Programs of Work justify the allocation of these funds to these two projects.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Funds for the Culture & Event grant streams addressed in this report have been earmarked in the 2025 financial plan. |

OPTIONS

1. | That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve the addition of Crimson Coast Dance Society to the list of 2025 Culture & Event Grant standby organizations, and Project Grant reallocation as follows:
 - Applicant Name: Crimson Coast Dance Society
 - Recommended: \$3,476
 - Applicant Name: Vancouver Island Symphony
 - Recommended: \$965
 - 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: None.

- Financial Implications: There is \$4,441 available in the Project Grant stream.
2. That the Finance and Audit Committee not approve the addition of Crimson Coast Dance Society to the list of 2025 Culture & Event Grant standby organizations, and Project Grant reallocation.
 - The advantage of this option: None.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Choosing this option would impact Crimson Coast Dance Society and Vancouver Island Symphony's operations and Program of Work in 2025 and their ability to serve the community.
 - Financial Implications: This option would have financial impact on individual organizations and the services they provide to the community.
 3. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council provide alternate direction.

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 addition of Crimson Coast Dance Society to the list of 2025 Culture & Event Grant standby organizations, and the allocation of additional 2025 Project Grant Funds to Crimson Coast Dance Society and Vancouver Island Symphony.
- The strength of Crimson Coast Dance Society and the Vancouver Island Symphony's grant applications and scheduled Programs of Work, justify the allocation of these funds to these two projects.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: 2025 STANDBY ORGANIZATIONS

ATTACHMENT B: 2025 CITY OF NANAIMO GRANT RECIPIENTS SUMMARY

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