



Governance and Priorities Committee Report

For the Meeting of December 18, 2014

To: Governance and Priorities Committee
From: Jocelyn Jenkyns, General Manager, VCC
Subject: Festival Investment Grant 2015 Allocations

Date: December 11, 2014

Executive Summary

Festivals and celebrations add to Victoria's vitality, vibrancy and diversity. The City's annual grant and in-kind funding support nurtures the development of high quality accessible events and creates significant economic activity in the city.

This report is presented in advance of the budget deliberations for 2015 because the federal "Building Communities through Arts and Heritage" (BCAH) grant program requires applicants to confirm local support (cash and/or in-kind) by the end of the year for their festivals or celebrations to qualify for this federal funding.

For 2015 there are thirty-three applications for Festival Investment Grants (FIG) with a total request for funding of \$359,795. Should Council choose to allocate the same amount of funding as in 2014 the funding available for this grant is \$156,000. Twenty-nine of the applications meet the criteria and are recommended for approval. Four applications do not meet the FIG criteria. Of the events recommended for FIG funding 21 have applied for funding through the BCAH program.

All applications are reviewed based on the approved FIG policy, which includes:

- Program criteria, including a free component
- Artistic and cultural merit of the event
- Economic impact
- Community support
- Organizational effectiveness

A comprehensive list of requests and recommendations is detailed in Appendix I.

The economic impact of these events can be measured by spending activity generated by festival goers in local restaurants and businesses, overnight stays in hotels by visitors and visiting performers, festival employment, and increased tourism for popular annual festivals.

The six largest events are estimated to generate a total economic impact of over \$10 million. With attendance for the recommended events estimated to exceed 725,000. The total operating budgets of the recommended events is estimated at over \$5.6 million in direct spending. This reflects a positive impact through employment (196 full and part-time positions), event production

sales and rentals, and the purchase of goods and services. Corporate investment by local, regional and national corporations total more than \$2 million.


Recommendation:

1. That Council approve the Festival Investment Grant allocations as recommended in Appendix I for a total of \$156,000 to be included in the 2015 Financial Plan.
2. That Council forward the recommendation to the Council meeting of December 18, 2014 for approval.

Respectfully submitted



Jeff Day
Coordinator,
Cultural Services


Jocelyn Jenkins
General Manager, VCC


Susanne Thompson
Director, Finance

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:


December 12, 2014

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval on the Festival Investment Grants recommendations for 2015.

Background

The Festival Investment Grant program was established to create and sustain a healthy community, vibrant downtown core and enhance economic development within the City of Victoria. Over the past sixteen years, the City has supported festivals and through the Festival Investment Grant Program. Additional in-kind support is provided based on need and the availability of departmental resources.

The Festival Investment Grant program was created to meet the following objectives:

- Increase the quality of life for our citizens
- Enable a vibrant downtown core
- Support economic development
- Offer exposure to new art forms

To qualify for funding, festivals and celebrations must meet the criteria outlined in the 2011 Council approved Festival Investment Grant Policy and Guidelines. See appendix 2 attached.

Issues & Analysis

Festival organizers are increasingly faced with funding and sponsorship challenges. Reductions in corporate sponsorship, decreases in provincial gaming grants and increased production costs make it difficult for organizers to successfully sustain and grow events.

Event organizers leverage their municipal support through provincial and federal funding bodies and secure credibility with corporate and community sponsors.

Last year, the City of Victoria awarded \$156,000 in grants and \$87,750 in in-kind support to 31 festivals and celebrations. This year there were 33 cash grant requests totalling \$359,795. Of these, four are new applicants and three more are festivals that have applied in the past and are returning, indicating both growth and vibrancy in the mix. Four applicants do not qualify under the funding guidelines, resulting in recommendations to fund 29 festivals and celebrations for a total of \$156,000 cash and up to \$97,250 in in-kind support. The 29 recommended Festivals and celebrations include:

Community Celebration Grant (1)

- First Peoples Festival

New Festival Grants (11)

- Victoria International Buskers Festival
- Victoria International Chalk Art Festival
- Creatively United for the Planet Festival
- Victoria Flamenco Festival
- Free B – Film Festival
- Victoria India MELA
- InterPlay
- Kaleidoscope Theatre's Family Theatre Festival

- Out Stages
- Puppets for Peace Celebration
- Victoria's Shakespeare By the Sea

Established Festival Grants (14)

- Victoria International Accordion Festival
- Vancouver Island Blues Bash
- Victoria Dragon Boat Festival
- Victoria Film Festival
- French Fest 2015
- Victoria Fringe Fest
- 152nd Victoria Highland Games and Celtic Festival/Tartan Parade
- TC Victoria International JazzFest
- Pacific Baroque Festival
- Victoria Pride Week
- ROMP in the Square
- Victoria's 16th Annual Ska Fest
- Theatre Skam's Bike Ride
- Uno Fest (18th Annual)

Signature Festival Grants (3)

- TD Art Gallery Paint-In, 28th Annual
- Island Farms Victoria Day Parade/Island Farms Santa Parade
- Victoria Symphony in the Summer

Four applications did not meet the criteria for FIG support:

- African Cultural Week & Africa Fest - Victoria African & Caribbean Cultural Society
- One Day Together - Victoria Integration Society
- The Selkirk Waterfront Festival - Burnside Gorge Community Centre
- Swiftsure International Yacht Race - Royal Victoria Yacht Club

With many requests for funds, staff recommendations consider evaluation criteria and support as many eligible events as possible. Three new festivals for 2015 are recommended for support including:

- Interplay
- OUTstages
- Shakespeare By The Sea

Three previous applicants who did not apply in 2014 have once again applied. Two are recommended for funding:

- Victoria Dragon Boat
- First Peoples Festival

Five festivals had their funding reduced. These were; Victoria Fringe Fest, Kaleidoscope Theatre's Family Theatre Festival, Island Farms Victoria Day Parade and Santa Parade, ROMP In the Square and Theatre Skam's Bike Ride. The reductions in funding were primarily based on an assessment of the organizations' free component and/or the potential for alternative revenue streams. Festivals that had significant ticketing opportunities or had proportionally less free public

components had their funding slightly reduced. In the case of the parades the reduction is related to a planned change in support for a specific area of their operating expenses (insurance).

Due to the volume of applicants, and the increased ask from these festivals, some organizations may find their cash award slightly decreased from previous years. Staff evaluated the festivals' free components, combined with the overall scope and merit of the festival, and made recommendations accordingly.

A comprehensive list of requests and recommendations is detailed in Appendix I.

Options & Impacts

Staff recommends that Council approve the Festival Investment Grant allocations of \$156,000 as presented in Appendix I and forward the recommendation to the Council meeting of December 18, 2014 for approval.

The Festival Investment Grant Program assists the creation of a more vibrant downtown through the traditional festival season, enhancing tourism, local business success and the local economy. The program also broadens the festival season to the shoulder months to attract residents and visitors to the downtown year round thereby supporting economic development in traditionally slower economic activity periods.

Delaying or denying some or all of the recommended allocations beyond the 2014 year end may prevent applicants from leveraging grant funding from senior levels of government.

Recommendations

1. That Council approve the Festival Investment Grant allocations as recommended in Appendix I for a total of \$156,000 to be included in the 2015 Financial Plan.
2. That Council forward the recommendation to the Council meeting of December 18, 2014 for approval.