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Item No. 9.1.1
Special Events Advisory Committee
August 14, 2024

TO: Chair and Members of Special Events Advisory Committee
SUBMITTED BY: Brad Anguish, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
DATE: July 12, 2024
SUBJECT: 2024/25 MLSER 2nd Intake Report

ORIGIN

Applications received pursuant to Administrative Order 2014-020-GOV - Respecting Marketing Levy Special Event Grants.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Funding for the Marketing Levy Special Events Reserve (MLSER) grant awards is provided from the Community and Events Reserve (Q621) and withdrawals are approved by Regional Council, in accordance with Administrative Order 2014-020-GOV Respecting Marketing Levy Special Events Grants (AO). This report outlines the recommended MLSER grant awards for applications submitted to the 2024/25 second intake for events occurring between October 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 and the recommendations can be found in Table 1.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Special Events Advisory Committee recommend Halifax Regional Council approve total funding in the amount of \$17,500 from the Community and Events Reserve (Q621), as shown in Table 1.

BACKGROUND

Funding for the MLSER grant awards is provided from the Community and Events Reserve (Q621) and withdrawals are approved by Regional Council, in accordance with MLSER AO.

The MLSER AO governs four programs: Signature Events, Distinguished Events, New (Emerging) Events and Major Hosting Events. The MLSER AO also outlines the option for HRM to provide multiple year funding to the New (Emerging) and Signature Events to assist with the sustainability of events. The Signature Events program offers one intake every three years and is currently closed. There is an open intake for events applying to the Major Hosting Events program.

Both New (Emerging) and Distinguished Events programs offer two intakes per year. This first intake

opened in the fall for applications to fund events taking place April 1 through to September 30, 2024. This report outlines the recommended MLSER grant awards for applications submitted to the 2024/25 second intake for events occurring between October 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

DISCUSSION

Intake

There were three applications in total submitted during the 2024/25 second intake. These applications include: two New (Emerging) Events and one Distinguished Event.

Ineligible

One New (Emerging) Event; The Halifax Black Film Festival was deemed not eligible.

The Halifax Black Film Festival received New (Emerging) Events MLSER funding from the municipality in 2020, 2021 and 2022 fiscal years and therefore is not eligible to reapply for New (Emerging) funding for a second time, as the event is no longer considered “new”. The MLSER AO defines a “new” event as “an event that has been held in Halifax for the first time within the past five (5) years”.

As background information on this event, the Halifax Black Film Festival considered applying to the New (Emerging) Events program in 2018/2019 however after discussion with staff regarding the lack of hotel nights it was suggested that the appropriate funding program for the event is the Cultural Events & Showcases in the Regional Special Events Grants program. There are several film festivals that receive funding in that program, however, the Regional Special Events Grants program was not open for applications until 2022/2023. The 2019 event took place with no further request for financial support from the municipality during the 2018/19 fiscal year. After further discussions with staff on the event, the organizer submitted an application to the New (Emerging) Events MLSER program during the November 2019 intake to fund events for the following three fiscal years.

After further review of this event, the low number of in person attendance, generation of hotel rooms nights resulting in low economic activity generated, staff continue to advise that Cultural Events & Showcases program funded through the Regional Special Events Grants is where the Halifax Black Film Festival is best suited. This intake will open for application November 1, 2024 to fund the following three fiscal years (2025/26, 2026/27, 2027/28). The deadline to apply for funding will be November 30, 2024.

Event organizers have been advised by staff the event is ineligible to receive MLSER funding and recommended to apply to the Cultural Events and Showcases program funded through the Regional Special Events Grants this fall.

Eligible

Based upon the eligibility criteria, one New (Emerging) Event and one Distinguished Event are deemed eligible for consideration.

Evaluation

As per the AO, all applications are evaluated based on tourism impact, economic impact, and media exposure.

- Tourism impacts are assessed based on room nights (guaranteed and estimated), along with seasonality and location (urban vs suburban vs rural).
- Economic impacts are assessed by applying an industry recognized economic assessment tool.
- Media impacts (enhanced visibility of the Municipality) are assessed using information outlined in proposed media plans representing live streaming, television broadcast and social media campaigns.

Other key elements that are considered include the financial stewardship and governance of the event organization, as well the prestige the event offers to enhance Halifax’s reputation as a successful event destination. In addition, events applying to the New (Emerging) and Major Hosting programs are assessed on funding commitments from other levels of government.

Staff calculate the economic impact using Discover Halifax's online economic assessment tool; the Destination International's Event Impact Calculator (EIC) and the information provided in the application from the event organizer. The EIC provides localized metrics on the value of sporting, festival, and cultural events in which the basic parameters of an event are translated into a full economic impact analysis. The system provides an economic impact analysis of an event focusing on business sales by industry and source, the impact of sales on jobs, wages, and local taxes, as well as the return on investment against hosting costs and incentives.

2024 U SPORTS Women's Soccer Championships

The top eight female university soccer teams will come to Halifax November 7-10, 2024 to play on Wickwire Field at Dalhousie University to compete for the championship title as the best female university soccer team in Canada. On the Wednesday prior to the games commencing, will be the awards banquet where the 250 players, coaches and sponsors will celebrate the season and hand out awards. Thursday, the first of 11 games in four days kick off with the gold medal game concluding the tournament on Sunday.

A community clinic and festival will be offered on Saturday targeting females from under privileged groups to play soccer on the field. Additionally, a free coaching course will be offered that morning as part of the community engagement festivities. Over the course of the tournament event organizers will be working closely with Soccer Nova Scotia to host professional development sessions for local female referees to learn from the top female officials and referee coaches in the municipality. 2024 U SPORTS Women's Soccer Championships plan to celebrate the best female soccer players and officials in Canada in advance of the professional women's soccer league starting the following year.

The request for funding to the Halifax Regional Municipality is for \$20,000.

A summary of the 2024 U SPORTS Women's Soccer Championships is as follows:

- The event will attract approximately 1,865 people throughout the competition;
- The event will require 20 volunteers who will provide over 200 volunteer hours over the course of the event;
- The event guarantees that 135 hotel rooms located in HRM will be booked for a minimum of seven nights and estimates that, including spectators, 1,470 room nights would be generated;
- The event is a combination of free and ticketed events;
- The estimated budget for the event is \$117,500; and
- The calculated EIC for the event is \$695,471.

Media Exposure / Destination Recognition

Dalhousie University will promote the 2024 U SPORTS Women's Soccer Championships through their various social media platforms beginning this summer. Advertising space on billboards will be purchased throughout the city, as well as radio and newspaper ads promoting the event. This coming fall during Dalhousie University home games, the event will be advertised both in stadium and on the webcast. Event organizers partnered with the Halifax Wanderers to advertise via their email distribution list. Local female soccer players will travel to soccer events throughout the municipality to set up information booths and talk to female soccer players promoting the event. Soccer Nova Scotia has confirmed to advertise the 2024 U SPORTS Women's Soccer Championships at their events in the BMO Soccer Centre. Additionally, all games will be live streamed on CBC Sports.

For all of the above noted reasons, it is recommended that the 2024 U SPORTS Women's Soccer Championships be provided with an event grant in the amount of \$12,500.

NOWADAYS Music and Culture Festival

2023 was NOWADAYS Music and Culture Festival inaugural year that came to life by combining the organizers creative ideas of the festival concepts with resources from sponsors, donors, in kind donations and partnerships. With a successful 2023 event, organizers are looking to the future to build NOWADAYS Music and Culture Festival into an annual Dartmouth event and have registered as a non-profit society.

NOWADAYS 2024 is a new, three-day arts and culture festival showcasing artists, songwriters, authors and comedians advocating for a reinvention of the live experience. Thirty local, national and international artists will come to Halifax to perform October 10-12, 2024 in various locations in Dartmouth all within walking distance of one another. NOWADAYS 2024 has taken the Keychange Pledge to ensure 50% representation of women and gender-diverse individuals among its programmed artists, staff, volunteers and board members.

The request for funding to the Halifax Regional Municipality is for \$25,000.

A summary of the NOWADAYS Music and Culture Festival is as follows:

- The event will attract approximately 820 people throughout the festival;
- The event will require 20 volunteers who will provide over 40 volunteer hours over the course of the event;
- The event guarantees that eight hotel rooms located in HRM will be booked for a minimum of three nights and estimates that, including attendees, 84 room nights would be generated;
- The event is a combination of free and ticketed;
- The estimated budget for the event is \$103,875; and
- The calculated EIC for the event is \$107,891.

Media Exposure / Destination Recognition

Where the festival is new, the marketing campaign will rely heavily on social media engagement, online presence and word of mouth. Event organizers have plans to connect with local television morning shows and radio for interview specials and festival promotion. As well, future discussions are proposed with CBC Gem to live stream the festival.

Currently NOWADAYS Music and Culture Festival is proposing a relatively small, community event with low visibility media impacts & low tourism impacts based on the lack of room nights resulting in a low economic impact to the municipality.

For the above noted reasons, and to support this new cultural event to continue in downtown Dartmouth, it is recommended that the NOWADAYS Music and Culture Festival be provided with an event grant in the amount of \$5,000 for one year only and that the event organizers be recommended to apply to the Regional Special Events Grants funding program under the Cultural Event & Showcases category for future funding requests. The Regional Special Events Grants program is currently closed for funding events this 2024/25 fiscal. The intake will open for applications in November 2024 to fund events for the next round of three-year sustainable funding in the Cultural Events & Showcases program.

Table 1: 2024/2025 MLSER 2nd Intake Grant Recommendations		
	Funding Request	2024/2025 Proposed Grant
New (Emerging) Events		
NOWADAYS Music and Culture Festival	\$25,000	\$5,000
Distinguished Events		
2024 USPORTS Women's Soccer Championships	\$20,000	\$12,500
TOTAL 2024/2025 MLSER 2nd Intake Grant Recommendations		\$17,500

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Reserve budget, the funding available in Community and Events Reserve (Q621) with no additional increased withdrawal required.

Budget Summary: Community and Events Reserve, Q621

Net Projected Reserve Balance, as of April 1, 2024	\$5,115,952
Contribution 2024/25	\$3,369,437
Operating Withdrawals 2024/25	(\$3,400,359)
Capital Withdrawals 2024/25	(\$749,771)
Projected Net Available Balance 2024/25	\$4,335,259

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report. The risks considered rate low. To reach this conclusion, consideration was given to financial and reputational risks. A contribution agreement, using HRM's standard form of contribution agreement, will be negotiated between the event organizers and the Municipality prior to the release of funding. The agreements will include details regarding the rights and benefits outlined including media coverage and advertising opportunities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Special Events Advisory Committee includes members of the public.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

The Special Events Advisory Committee may choose to make a different recommendation to Halifax Regional Council with respect to the event grant application or recommend that Halifax Regional Council amend the value of the award.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008. c. 39

29A(5) The marketing levy collected pursuant to this Section may be only used by the Council to promote tourism.

79A(1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;

Administrative Order 2014-020-GOV – *Respecting Marketing Levy Special Event Reserve Grants*

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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