



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 21-015**

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Business, Environment & Projects

Resource Staff: Colin Wiginton, Cultural Director, Cultural Services

Date of Meeting: December 1, 2020

Subject: Approval to Sign a Grant Agreement with the Department of Canadian Heritage, Canada Cultural Spaces Fund Program to Stream Digital Content at the Grand Theatre

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: Corporate business

Goal: See above

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval to enter into a Grant Agreement with Canadian Heritage to receive a one-time grant of \$35,375 for the 2020-2021 fiscal year to purchase the specialized equipment needed to allow the Grand Theatre to stream digital content online.

Currently, the Cultural Services Department has the delegated approval and signing authority to submit grant applications that enable the Department to pursue funding from higher levels of government. However, Council approval is still required should those grant applications prove to be successful, as in this case.

Recommendation:

That Council authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign a Grant Agreement issued by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services, to secure funding up to

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\$35,375 for the purchase of specialized equipment through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund Program; and

That Council authorize the Commissioner, Business, Environments & Projects, or the Cultural Director as his delegate, to complete, sign and submit cash flow statements and any other reports that may be required by Canadian Heritage as part of the Grant Agreement.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner,
Business, Environment &
Projects**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	
Sheila Kidd, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

Performing arts venues have been profoundly impacted by restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and have had to find new and creative ways to deliver content and to engage audiences remotely.

Streaming digital content has become one of the primary ways to continue offering programming and, in October 2020, a virtual Grand OnStage program was launched to continue to deliver this well-established program online. This modified version of the Grand OnStage program has meant that artists are still able to perform and it has featured a combination of recorded content, live events and engagement opportunities with artists that are accessible to Kingston audiences and to anyone else with access to the internet via computer, tablet or other mobile devices.

It has become clear the ability to deliver performing arts content online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic will be required in the short-term and likely will become a longer-term expectation as well. Right now, the Grand Theatre is not equipped with the infrastructure needed to support streaming digital content online and staff have had to contract third-party vendors to support the development and delivery of online content.

In August 2020, the Department of Canadian Heritage announced the Federal government would be providing pandemic-related funding to support the cultural sector through a program called the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund. Applications were to be submitted in early September 2020 with a focus on one of the following areas:

- the construction and/or renovation of arts and/or heritage facilities, or creative hubs;
- the acquisition of specialized equipment; or
- the development of feasibility studies for the construction or renovation of arts and/or heritage facilities, or creative hubs.

Staff had already started the process of researching what would be required to stream digital content online from the Grand Theatre and the funds needed had been within existing capital budgets related to audio/visual equipment. The Canada Cultural Spaces Fund provides matching funds, so it made sense to submit an application in an effort to help defray the costs associated with equipping the Grand Theatre to support streaming digital content online.

Grand Theatre staff consulted with Information Systems & Technology and Facilities Maintenance & Construction Services staff to prepare the grant application and staff also obtained the supporting quotes required for the purposes of costing. The application was submitted in early September and staff were notified on November 16, 2020 that the application was successful.

In a letter from the Minister of Canadian Heritage, it was communicated that the City of Kingston would be awarded up to \$35,375 to acquire the technology needed to support streaming digital content online from the Grand Theatre. The funds awarded also support installation and training related to this technology. The City is required to sign a Grant Agreement and to match the funding awarded to secure the grant.

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Staff had previously identified the necessary funding existed within previously approved capital budgets and the funding to be awarded means the cost to the City is reduced by 50%. The ability to acquire, install and train staff will also reduce the need for the City to work with third party vendors to support the presentation of digital content online. It also means this additional infrastructure can be made available to all users of the Grand Theatre for a fee to generate revenue in the future. In the short-term, having access to this additional infrastructure will support the on-going development of the virtual Grand OnStage program and offers opportunities to explore the development of hybrid online and in-person presentations as circumstances allow.

At this juncture, Council approval is needed to execute the Grant Agreement issued by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and staff are also requesting that the Commissioner, Business, Environment & Projects, or the Cultural Director as his delegate, be authorized to complete, sign and submit cash flow statements and any other reports as may required by Canadian Heritage as part of the Grant Agreement.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

None

Notice Provisions:

None

Accessibility Considerations:

None

Financial Considerations:

The Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, administered through the Department of Canadian Heritage, operates as a matching grant program. The requested amount in the grant application totalled \$75,000 and staff identified the funds needed to purchase the required specialized equipment already existed within previously approved capital budgets managed by the Cultural Services Department. The amount being awarded by Canadian Heritage totals \$35,375 and the remaining balance needed to purchase and install the equipment and train staff is still available within existing capital accounts.

Contacts:

Colin Wiginton, Cultural Director, Cultural Services 613-546-4291 extension 1357

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Dianne Zemba, Manager, Grand Theatre, Cultural Services

Danika Lochhead, Manager, Arts & Sector Development, Cultural Services

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Jayson Duggan, Performing Arts Manager, Cultural Services

Exhibits Attached:

None