



At the next HIRRA meeting on September 8th, the Hornby Island Arts Council will ask for a letter of support to establish municipal funding for the new community arts centre's maintenance and access costs once doors open to the public.

What does the arts centre mean for taxpayers?

This community arts centre is a public facility that will have year-round open hours of operation, just like the library. It will be the only large indoor public space that anyone can gather with friends no matter the season. There will be something for everyone through the course of the year. Something delightful, something challenging, something surprising you never imagined. There will be workshops and classes, gatherings, festivals, and much more, all year long, for all ages.

What is being voted on at HIRRA on September 8th?

A letter of support from HIRRA in favour of tax support for the annual maintenance of the new arts centre once it opens.

Haven't you raised close to 2 million in funding for the arts centre? Why not use these?

The donations and grants that we have are restricted to construction costs. They cannot be used for maintenance, operations, or programming. Our construction funding involves binding legal contracts and expectations: they are not discretionary funds.

How much is being asked for?

After the construction of the arts centre is complete and doors are opened to the public, we propose \$30,000/year for three years on a trial basis strictly for maintenance and access costs. The individual cost to homeowners will be about \$20 for every \$500K in property value.

How much guaranteed annual municipal tax funding does the Arts Council receive now?

\$0. Zero. We don't.

What exactly will these funds be used for?

Approximately \$23,200 will be for cleaning, alarm and security, heat pump maintenance, water system, hydro, snow removal, and grounds maintenance costs. \$6,800 will cover evening shift access so that kids, workers, and the general public can enjoy open hours at night.

What discretionary annual municipal tax support does the Arts Council receive?

Over the last decade we have received less than \$5K annually from the CVRD and HICEEC combined. Our proposed support would replace these annual competitive and insecure funds.

Is it normal for public arts organizations to receive secure municipal funding?

Absolutely. Reliable municipal support is part of almost every fiscally balanced, responsible, and established public arts organizations' annual financial portfolio, especially for public buildings. When an arts organization and facility reports good municipal funding, the provincial and federal government respond with good assistance, and as a result, merit-based programming revenues intended for public enjoyment aren't eaten up by maintenance costs. Most arts bodies aim to source 20% of their annual revenues from their municipalities. Our trial proposal asks for a conservative 15% or less of our annual budget in the first year and less each consecutive year.

What does the Arts Council do?

We're here to support the depth and longevity of the island's arts and culture heritage through thick and thin, including the pandemic. Some 2021 highlights: we hired Zsofin Sheehy and began developing a host of video content (a memorable performance from Tony, Dana, and Darryl for example), we put on a virtual exhibition and performance with Herring Fest in our aim to end the fishery, we hired three local interns and a new Arts Programmer who is moving with her young family to the island, we ran our fourth and best year of the Studio Tour, we partnered with the Hornby Festival to continue our work to build Indigenous relations and connections on Hornby, and we partnered with Water Stewardship to communicate Hornby's aesthetic and ecological priorities to the summer public amidst the current drought with film, poetry, a kids' camp, cistern basics, and so much more. We've done all this while simultaneously advancing construction of the arts centre, and the year is only 2/3rds done.

Why aren't you calculating now for the cost of maintaining the building within your existing revenue streams?

Historically our financial planning has reflected seasonal operations from within a 40 foot 1960s Atco Trailer with programming catered to visual artists. Today we have a robust plan, complete with contingency operations for our growth into a public facility with a mandate for diverse and inclusive arts programming. The arts centre will include new streams of revenue and costs when it opens. We are proposing to secure municipal support now, restricted to maintenance and access, to ensure that the quality of our programming and service delivery does not suffer when we absorb new "lights on" open door expenses. We are planning ahead for a stable transition.

You promised that the Arts Centre would find a tax neutral solution for accessing municipal funds. What happened?

With ample support from HIRRA and HICEEC last summer, we took our case directly to the CVRD. We identified Comox Valley cultural infrastructure that Hornby Island tax dollars subsidize that few if any of us enjoy and can access. The removal of those tax services from the Hornby Island tax roll would offset our proposal. However, having given it our best shot, it is not within the power of the CVRD to reallocate funds at the request of an arts council armed with letters of support. Seeing the merits of our aims, CVRD Staff worked with our detailed financial plans to produce and ultimately support the new proposal we are asking HIRRA to endorse.

Looking for more information? Go to www.hornbyarts.com/cvrdproposal

Questions? Reach out to us! We're happy to speak with you about your concerns and priorities:

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Will you attend the HIRRA Zoom meeting and support us? Write to office@hirra.ca

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