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REPORT TO CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2024

SUBJECT **The History and Possible Future of the Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To review the work completed by the past Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee (PAFSC) and to examine the possibility of a scope of work for a new version of this committee.

BACKGROUND

On December 13, 2023, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board approved a motion with notice:

“That staff report back to the Capital Regional District Board on the work completed by past select committees on establishing a regional performing arts facilities service and recommend a scope of work for re-establishing a new Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee.”

The 2019-2022 CRD Corporate Plan included the action to “Facilitate a discussion of the region’s art facility needs and explore partnerships to support 100% participation in the CRD arts function.” This was advanced in 2020 through the formation of the Regional Arts Facilities Select Committee (RAFSC), which hired a consultant to produce the *Stage One* report (Appendix A).

On April 7, 2021, the PAFSC was formed as a continuation of the RAFSC. The PAFSC’s mandate was to act on the recommendations of the *Stage One* report to establish a new full regional performing arts facilities service (Appendix B).

In the end, the PAFSC and RAFSC accomplished two main actions: a study of the region’s performing arts infrastructure, the *Stage One* report and the design of a new full regional service that would support performing arts facilities with regional impact (Appendix C) with estimated costs (Appendix D).

Proposed Full Regional Performing Arts Facilities Service (2021-2022)

In 2021, the proposed full regional Performing Arts Facilities Service responded to the *Stage One* report, recommending a more coordinated approach to supporting performing arts facilities with regional impact with functions to plan, develop and support.

- Plan: A planning grants function to support feasibility studies or other planning activities
- Develop: \$1M/year would be allocated to a reserve fund for major capital projects
- Support: Three existing facilities would be included in the proposed policy for operating and minor capital support (renovation and maintenance) - the Royal Theatre (CRD-supported), the McPherson Playhouse (CRD-supported) and the Charlie White Theatre (supported by inter-municipal agreement between North Saanich and Sidney)

On September 8, 2021, the previous CRD Board considered a four-part motion to establish a new full regional Performing Arts Facilities Service, recommended by staff and the PAFSC. The motions to approve the establishing bylaw carried but the motion to proceed by full regional alternative approval process (AAP) failed, leaving no path forward. The proposal could not proceed by council consent for municipalities and electoral area AAP due in part to letters from Salt Spring Island and Langford, indicating they would oppose the establishment of the new service. The proposal was sent back to PAFSC, and staff were directed to provide a timeline and costs of approval by full regional referendum (see *Legislative Implications* below for more on approval processes).

On February 9, 2022, the proposed full regional Performing Arts Facilities Service was reconsidered by the previous CRD Board with the possibility of proceeding by way of a full regional referendum as an approval process. This motion was not voted on and instead was referred by the previous CRD Board to the strategic planning process of the current CRD Board, where it could be decided whether this initiative would be a board priority for the next corporate plan.

Current CRD Board - Key Actions

The issue of performing arts facilities was not raised as a priority during the strategic planning process of the current CRD Board. Instead, a more flexible approach was included in the CRD Corporate Plan as initiative 10b-2 to “Scale up regional support for performing arts facilities in the region.” (see *Alignment with Board and Corporate Priorities* below)

In 2023, as one way of advancing initiative 10b-2, the Royal and McPherson Theatres Services Advisory Committee (RMTSAC) directed staff to draft amending bylaws, which, if adopted, could provide more support for the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse. This action was in response to a letter sent by the Royal and McPherson Theatres Society in April 2023 requesting these changes.

On July 12, 2023, the CRD Board approved amending bylaws for the Royal Theater Service (No. 4560) and the McPherson Playhouse Service (No. 4561). They have been sent to participating jurisdictions for council consent (see Table 1 for status as of February 9, 2024).

Table 1: Council Consent Status for Amending Bylaws

Amending Bylaw	Saanich	Oak Bay	Victoria
4560 (Royal Theatre)	Approved	Not yet considered	Not yet considered
4561 (McPherson Playhouse)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not yet considered

If adopted, these amending bylaws would remove the fixed maximum contribution amount for each service. This would enable the CRD to scale up support for these two performing arts facilities through greater budgeting flexibility and allow more accurate cost estimates for jurisdictions that may consider joining these services.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

That CRD Initiative 10b-2 to “scale up regional support for performing arts facilities within the region” be evaluated in terms of its scope and level of priority along with consideration to establish

a new select committee at the next annual check-in of the 2023-2026 CRD Corporate Plan in late spring 2024.

Alternative 2

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board and Corporate Priorities

In the current CRD Corporate Plan (2023-2026), initiative 10b-2 states the CRD will “Scale up regional support for performing art facilities within the region.”

The mandate for a PAFSC is less evident in the current plan than in the previous CRD Corporate Plan (2019-2022) when the action was to “Facilitate a discussion of the region’s art facility needs and explore partnerships to support 100% participation in the CRD arts function.”

If the CRD Board wants to change the level of priority for this initiative (10b-2) and consider establishing a new select committee, the annual review of the CRD Corporate Plan would be the ideal time for such a discussion when this possible priority could be considered in relation to other existing Board priorities. A new iteration of the PAFSC would only be warranted if this initiative, or a similar one focused on arts facilities, is designated as a strategic priority of the CRD Board.

Alignment with Existing Plans and Strategies

The relaunch of a PAFSC would not directly advance any of the goals or actions contained in the 2024-2027 CRD Arts and Culture Support Service Strategic Plan. This plan is focused on community outreach, convening activities and grant programs that focus on support for arts programming.

Financial Implications

The RAFSC, which preceded the PAFSC, allocated \$40,000 for a consultant to conduct engagement and produce a report, which resulted in *Stage One*. Also, the previous PAFSC included requisition for a feasibility fund of \$150,000 to support costs associated with research, community engagement and staffing necessary to support the committee and its objectives.

In the feasibility fund, not all funds allocated to support the PAFSC were spent by the committee. The remaining surplus of \$114,832 will be returned by way of a negative requisition in the 2024 Financial Plan.

Legislative Implications

During the deliberations concerning a new full regional Performing Arts Facilities Service, approval processes were a key consideration and major topic of discussion. The establishment of a full regional service must proceed through one of three approval processes. (see Table 2)

Table 2. Overview of Approval Processes for a New Full Regional Service

Approval Method	Cost	Staffing	Threshold to Advance
Council Consent + AAP in Electoral Areas	Low	Medium	Unanimous (and not opposed by AAP)
Full Regional AAP	Medium	High	Fewer than 10% of electors opposed
Full Regional Referendum	Very High	Very High	More than 50% respondents in favour

Each of these approval processes were examined in depth by the previous CRD Board and none of them were found to be feasible at that time.

Service Delivery Implications

If established, a new PAFSC would require significant staff support from legislative services and the Arts and Culture Division. In turn, this could delay the policy development necessary to advance the 2024-27 CRD Arts and Culture Support Service Strategic Plan or the boardroom redesign, which have been designated as priorities of this current Board.

CONCLUSION

The previous PAFSC had two main accomplishments: the production of the *Stage One* report and the design of a proposed full regional performing arts facilities service. The previous CRD Board did not endorse an approval process necessary to advance the proposed service. The current CRD Board continues to examine the issue of performing arts facilities and how best they can be supported in alignment with the current CRD strategic plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That CRD Initiative 10b-2 to “scale up regional support for performing arts facilities within the region” be evaluated in terms of its scope and level of priority along with consideration to establish a new select committee at the next annual check-in of the 2023-2026 CRD Corporate Plan in late spring 2024.

Submitted by:	Chris Gilpin, MPA, Manager, Arts & Culture
Concurrence:	Nelson Chan, MBA, FCPA, FCMA, Chief Financial Officer
Concurrence:	Kristen Morley, J.D., General Manager, Corporate Services & Corporate Officer
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: Stage One Report on Performing Arts Facilities in the CRD (December 2020)
- Appendix B: Terms of Reference for 2021 Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee
- Appendix C: Service Plan for 2021 Full Regional Performing Arts Facilities Service
- Appendix D: Estimated Costs for 2021 Full Regional Performing Arts Facilities Service