

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Member of City's Culture Staff receives "Above & Beyond" award**

*Influx of new talent creates enhanced capacity to serve the community*

#### **Summary**

The City of Nanaimo is pleased to announce that a member of Staff is the recipient of a 2020 Nanaimo Business Award. Manager of Culture & Events, Julie Bevan, is recognized for her work in a category called "Above & Beyond." According to the Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce, who presents the annual program, the award is given to a person who "most exemplifies excellence in the performance of their service. Excellence is defined as being a role model for others, inspiring others to work collaboratively and creatively, and promoting a work environment that is respectful, collegial and highly supportive."

Now in its 20th year, the Nanaimo Business Awards were originally scheduled to take place in April; however, the program was adapted to be presented virtually from the Port Theatre. The Nanaimo Chamber engaged Steve Patterson, CBC show host and comedian to headline the September 18 show, and awards were announced in 21 categories. Winners were determined by vote.

Julie Bevan was formerly the Executive Director at Nanaimo Art Gallery and left the position to take up a newly created role with the City in March of this year. She joined when organizational restructuring led the City's cultural services section to move and form Parks, Recreation and Culture.

Several other professionals have also joined the team this year, increasing its capacity to serve the community. Lynn Wark relocated from Campbell River for the role of Director, Recreation and Culture in March. She brings experience from the City of Campbell River where she played a lead role in cultural initiatives including a public art plan and heritage restorations. A new position focused on coordinating events in City venues was taken up by Michele Duerksen, who has previously worked in community recreation roles. Allison Collins, a curator, administrator, and writer who had been based in Vancouver, moved to Nanaimo for the position of Cultural Services Coordinator. Rebecca Buckler, who knows the Culture portfolio well, is continuing to provide administrative support and a high level of service to the individuals and organizations that participate in Culture services and programs.

With these organizational shifts and an influx of talent, the Culture team is well positioned to provide leadership and support on arts and culture, nurture relationships, build new collaborations, and evolve City programs like public art and grant funding while advancing the strategic priorities of the City. Over the summer, the team liaised with local non-profits to help them creatively adapt their events and projects in the context of COVID-19, and were responsible for the installation of over 10 public art projects at locations downtown, as well as a program that brought live music to local senior's residences. This fall the Culture team remains outwardly focused, touring and meeting staff at City-owned culture facilities, launching new channels of communication including a newsletter called LOVE ARTS NANAIMO, administering three grant funding programs, and facilitating other public art projects, including a significant new installation at Beban pool. The team is also mapping out October focus groups on arts and culture as part of REIMAGINE NANAIMO, the results of which will inform updates to City plans and guide action.

*Strategic Link:* Recent changes support Livability and Economic Health by "supporting arts, culture and recreation as an integral part of everyday life" and "creating a vibrant culture of innovation, stewardship and partnership to encourage a diverse and healthy economy now and into the future."

## Key Points

- Julie Bevan, the City's Manager of Culture & Events, has been recognized for her work with a 2020 Nanaimo Business Award in the category "Above & Beyond."
- Bevan is one of several new professionals who have joined the City's Culture team since organizational restructuring. This influx of talent has enhanced the capacity of the Culture & Events team and the Parks, Recreation and Culture department.
- To better connect with and serve the community, the Culture & Events team is currently touring and meeting staff at City-owned culture facilities, attending community meetings and cultural events, launching new channels of communication and designing focus groups on arts and culture as part of REIMAGINE NANAIMO towards an update of City plans.

## Quotes

"I extend my heartiest congratulations to Ms. Bevan on this well-deserved recognition. It's apparent to me that because of the character of our community, and it's arts and culture, we're able to retain top talent in Nanaimo and attract the best from other places. We are delighted to have an enhanced Culture department to contribute to the success of a great workforce at the City. I also congratulate every recipient of a 2020 Nanaimo Business Award."

Leonard Krog  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

"I'm grateful to be part of a passionate and supportive community, and a circle of colleagues who are generous with their expertise and invested in positive change and impact through arts and culture. What I learned in my previous role about collaboration, leadership and love, translates directly into this work at the City. Already, we've realized a number of projects together, and we're poised for big work, particularly as we undertake strategic conversations as part of REIMAGINE NANAIMO."

Julie Bevan  
Manager, Culture & Events  
City of Nanaimo

"A strong culture program creates a sense of place, belonging, and community pride, and we're fortunate to have a team of leaders here in our department and a vibrant cultural community in Nanaimo. I'm impressed by what I've learned about Nanaimo already and looking forward to the work ahead."

Lynn Wark  
Director, Recreation and Culture  
City of Nanaimo

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