

CITY OF NANAIMO

BUSINESS CASE – Recreation and Culture Department: Assistant Coordinator Positions

CURRENT OVERVIEW

The Recreation and Culture Department is a large and diverse department providing facilities, programs, events and services to the community in the following key areas and facilities:

AQUATICS - Nanaimo Aquatic Centre, Beban Pool, Weight Rooms, Westwood Lake, Kin Outdoor Pool.

ARENAS – Nanaimo Ice Centre, Frank Crane, and Cliff McNabb Arenas, Harewood Covered Sports Court.

COMMUNITY RECREATION – at aquatic and arena facilities, Beban Social Centre, Bowen Complex, Oliver Woods Community Centre, Kin Hut, Rotary Fieldhouse, and in parks, trails, outdoor sports courts, open spaces, and throughout the community.

CULTURE AND EVENTS – support for the Nanaimo Art Gallery, Nanaimo Museum, Military Museum, Port Theatre, OV Arts Centre and 40+ organizations funded by various grant opportunities, as well as all public art programs.

CO-MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS, LEASES, LICENCES, and GRANT FUNDED ACTIVITIES – well over 100 community groups and organizations are supported by the Department and range from the operation of facilities such as the Judo Club, Curling Rink, etc., to the support of organizations such as the Clippers, Buccaneers, Night Owls, VI Exhibition, Crimson Coast Dance, VI Jazz Festival Association, and large-scale community events including, but not limited to, Canada Day, Truth and Reconciliation Day, Marine Festival, Thursday Night markets, etc.

Annually, the City delivers over 1,000 programs, events and activities (with over 6,000 individual sessions) to all ages and stages (children, youth, adults, seniors), in aquatics, arenas, outdoors, sports, health and wellness, arts, culture, specialized recreation, and special interest areas. These programs are planned and coordinated by 13 full-time Recreation Coordinators. Arenas programs are supported by two part-time Program Leaders. Summer programs offered to young children, are supported by up to 50 temporary Recreation Leaders. These temporary leaders are generally high school and university students engaged in summer employment.

In any given season, activities can range from A to Z: acrobatics to zumba. They offer opportunities to learn new skills, maintain or develop fitness, socialize with friends, be active, teach others, give back to the community, steward the environment, or celebrate arts and culture.

This robust slate of activities helps to support Council’s priority of Livability and Section C.3.6 in City Plan which states that “Everyone in Nanaimo should have access to supportive recreation, culture, and wellness services and the opportunity to engage in meaningful experiences that foster individual leisure and community wellbeing” (p. 85).

Through the ReImagine process, community members confirmed that they place a high priority on recreation, culture and wellness services and that there is a desire for these services to expand and adapt to proactively meet current community needs. This is also supported by the BC Recreation and Parks Association Strategic Plan, and Canadian Parks and Recreation Framework which highlight that people are concerned about many current trends and issues that affect individual and community health including, but not limited to:

- Truth and Reconciliation
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Health and Wellness
- Physical Inactivity
- Climate Change

Over the past two years, recreation, sport and culture services were impacted dramatically, with closed facilities and cancelled and reduced sports activity, community programming and events. While services were unavailable, and even as they are reintroduced and returning to pre-COVID levels, it has become apparent how important these activities are in strengthening and maintaining individual and community well-being.

City staff currently sit on an interagency Pandemic Recovery Committee, led by Dr. Sandra Allison, Medical Health Officer for the Central Island. Members from Island Health, the City, RDN, and SD68 recognize the importance of supporting individual and community health and well-being, with a variety of programs and services, as the community recovers from more than two long years of a pandemic.

BUSINESS ISSUE

More recreation programming capacity is needed to enhance the delivery of recreation and culture services by responding to current community needs as indicated by City Plan and through the pandemic recovery committee. Enhanced programs, services and activities will serve to support healthier individuals and community. The current team of Recreation Coordinators and Recreation Leaders is not able to meet this increased capacity.

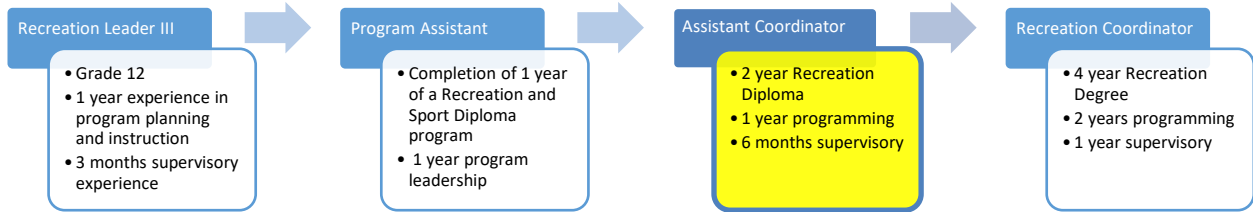
Prior to the pandemic, it was already predicted that there would be a shortage of workers due to various factors. The pandemic has expedited these issues and employers everywhere are experiencing critical shortages of qualified employees.

Like other organizations, the City is finding it difficult to fill higher level positions. In order to respond to community needs, the Recreation and Culture Department needs to increase capacity by addressing the lack of qualified employees available to work in Recreation and build a succession pathway that will create successors to fill key roles.

Currently, between Recreation Leader III and Recreation Coordinator, there exists only two part-time Program Leader positions in Arenas. This presents a large gap between the qualifications required for the Recreation Leader and the Recreation Coordinator position, with key differences in qualifications as follows:



Creating an expanded succession pathway within the Recreation and Culture Department would include the addition of part-time Assistant Coordinator positions as follows:



The Assistant Coordinator position would require less education and supervisory experience than a Recreation Coordinator and would rotate through Arenas, Aquatics, Community Recreation, and Culture and Events. An advantage of providing part-time work in this case is that this would enable post-secondary students, who already have a recreation diploma, to continue courses towards their degree while working. This provides the opportunity to help fund their studies at the same time as gaining valuable work experience. Rotating Assistant Coordinators through the various areas of recreation, culture and events will also support students to develop a diverse portfolio of experience.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Creating two part-time Assistant Recreation and Culture Coordinator roles in the Recreation & Culture Department will increase capacity within the department allowing it to proactively address:

- Current trends and issues and implement recommendations in City Plan.
- The community’s desire for enhanced recreation, culture and wellness services.
- The community’s transition through the pandemic.
- The need to animate underutilized spaces, such as Harewood Covered Sports Court, and to provide proactive activities for targeted populations.
- The need to establish more collaborative partnerships, and support for community-led programs such as, the Salish Storm Indigenous Hockey initiative, or the Nature Nanaimo Interpretive Program at Buttertubs Marsh.
- The need for more programs and services that are accessible and inclusive.
- The need to be able to hire less qualified employees, who can be coached and mentored to eventually be eligible for higher-level positions.

OPTIONS

Option #1 – Add one Part-Time (20 hours/week) Recreation & Culture Assistant Coordinator in 2023 and one in 2024

Adding two permanent part-time Assistant Coordinators, over two years.

Benefits:

- Supports the portfolios of Arenas, Aquatics, Community Recreation, Culture and Events,
- Supports maintaining current levels of service and potentially refocus, or expand offerings, to address current trends and issues,
- Supports the creation of healthier individuals and community, and
- Provides a more substantial succession pathway that prepares employees for higher-level positions thus enabling the department to avoid long periods with vacant positions.

Weaknesses:

- Requires a permanent increase to annual operating costs.

Financial Analysis:

- Each position is anticipated to be a CUPE level 9, subject to JEC.
- Estimated budget impact for 2023 for wages and benefits is \$40,400 based on an April 1st start date. Estimated budget impact for 2024 for wages and benefits is \$111,100 based on a January 1st start date.
- Additional annual costs are estimated at \$2,400 in 2023 and \$5,200 in 2024 for training, mileage, telephone and network charges.
- One-time costs upon the creation of the position are projected at \$5,400 in 2023 and \$5,600 in 2024 for the purchase of office furniture and equipment.

Option #2 - Add two Part-Time Recreation & Culture Assistant Coordinators in 2023

This is an expedited version of Option 1.

Benefits:

- Provides for a faster response to addressing current trends and issues and, implementing recommendations in City Plan.

Weaknesses:

- Permanent increase to annual operating costs are within one year.

Financial Analysis:

- Each position is anticipated to be a CUPE level 9, subject to JEC.
- Estimated budget impact for 2023 for wages and benefits is \$80,900 based on an April 1st start date.
- Additional annual costs are estimated at \$4,700 in 2023 for training, mileage, telephone and network charges.
- One-time costs upon the creation of the positions are projected at \$10,500 in 2023 for the purchase of office furniture and equipment.

Option #3 – Status Quo

No Change.

Benefits:

- No increase to annual operating budget.

Weaknesses:

- Less able to respond to community trends and issues
- Lack of clear succession pathway

RECOMMENDATION

Option 1 – to add one part-time (20 hours/week) Assistant Coordinator in 2023 starting April 1st and another one in 2024 starting January 1st.