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**To:** Mayor and Council

**From:** Amanda Murray, Community Culture & Tourism Coordinator

**Date:** April 24, 2023

**Subject:** Report #PR-007-2023 – Small Halls Festival Series 2022

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## Recommendation

Be It Resolved That Report #PR-007-2023 (Small Halls Festival Series) dated April 24, 2023, be received.

## Background

The Small Halls Festival was created as the “signature event” in 2014 with the primary goals to establish a new tourism event that would attract visitors to Clearview Township, promote Clearview Township as a unique rural destination and support the viability of the halls and community centres. In 2017, the Small Halls Festival hosted over 40 individual events that included concerts, live theatre, authors, comedy, dance, art exhibits and many family-friendly activities. It was named a Top 100 Festival in Ontario starting in 2017 and has consistently made the Top 100 list ever since. In 2018, the Small Halls Festival Committee, which was a board of council, was dissolved. Since that time, PCR staff have undertaken all activities associated with planning, development and event management in partnership with the Hall Boards and selected Community Partners. Between 2020-2021, the Small Halls Festival was cancelled due to COVID19 pandemic; however, staff and volunteers used that time to reimagine the one-weekend event into a Festival Series. From September 10 to November 5, 2022, the new Small Halls Festival, as festival series, included 21 events at all the halls and community venues. Avening Community Centre did not participate in any events in 2022.

## Comments and Analysis

In 2022, the Small Halls Festival was a partnership between the Township, the Hall Boards, Community Partners including Singhampton Community Centre and Purple Hills Arts & Heritage. A simplified MOU is signed by each partner. There are 4 large meetings annually and then individually, the halls meet/communicate with the PCR Department. All of the revenue is reinvested into the Festival or reimbursed directly to the Hall Board/Community Partner hosting the events. In 2022, the Hall Boards and Community Partners made a profit on each of the successful events. Over the past few years, we have defined the roles and responsibilities so that there are clear expectations.

The roles and responsibilities are divided between the Township and the Partners:

<b>Clearview Township</b>	<b>Hall Boards &amp; Partners</b>
<p><b>REVENUE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsorship (cash &amp; inkind) – greater than \$500</li> <li>• Online ticket sales – process, collection, and reimbursement</li> <li>• Manage and promote “SmallHalls10” for advance ticket sales</li> <li>• Merchandise – design and sales</li> <li>• Opening Night</li> <li>• Back Roads Rally</li> </ul>	<p><b>REVENUE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsorship (cash &amp; inkind) – less than \$500</li> <li>• Online ticket – reimbursement only</li> <li>• Misc. Revenue including cash bar, silent auction, individual donations</li> <li>• Opening Night – ticket sales only</li> <li>• Back Roads Rally - % of ticket sales per hall that participates</li> </ul>
<p><b>EXPENSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion &amp; Advertising Contracts</li> <li>• SHF print materials</li> <li>• SHF website &amp; digital ads</li> <li>• SHF merchandise and swag</li> <li>• Volunteer “Hallunteer” Program</li> <li>• Roadside Signage</li> <li>• Banners</li> <li>• Professional photographer</li> <li>• Bartenders</li> <li>• Portable Toilets</li> <li>• Opening Night</li> <li>• Back Roads Rally</li> <li>• Reimbursement based on Event Plan Submission for Performance Fees, Artists, Event Supplies</li> </ul> <p>Insurance, staff costs, and associated costs are not identified in the Small Halls Festival budget, but rather absorbed into overall Township operating budget.</p>	<p><b>EXPENSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance &amp; Artists Fees</li> <li>• Sound &amp; Lighting Production</li> <li>• Catering/Food &amp; Beverage</li> <li>• Permits ie: SOP, Tent etc.</li> <li>• Mis. Event Supplies</li> </ul> <p>The Hall Board annual budget may include other additional expenses, such as janitorial services and utilities etc., which are not included in the Small Halls Festival budget, but rather absorbed into the overall operating budget.</p>

The 2022 Festival highlights include Dan Needles & Ian Bell and Murder Mystery Dinner at the Station on the Green, Hot Pants Concert & Food Pairing at Sunnidale Corners Hall, The Pigeon King: A Staged Reading at Dunedin Village Hall, and the Not Ottawa Dinner and Dance at Nottawa Hall. Family friendly activities included the return of the

Chicken Races + Trivia Night at Duntroon Hall and in partnership with the Purple Hills Arts & Heritage Society, the Creemore Festival of the Arts. This was our first year to expand the Back Roads Rally to include 75 ATVs, as well as 25 motorcyclists and classic cars.

The Township also compiles online ticket sales demographics, conducts the visitor survey which is distributed to all online ticket purchasers and completes the “Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM)”. The Visitor Survey results indicated that 88% of attendees rated the new Festival Series format as Excellent and 91% of respondents will try to make it the event or will definitely purchase tickets in 2023. Only 1 response indicated that they would want the festival to go back to the one weekend only format.

The economic impact of the Small Halls Festival 2022 in Simcoe County was \$350,630 in total visitors’ spending.

Some of the highlights from the online ticket sales demographics include:

City	Qty	Sales
Creemore	119	\$7,130.00
Collingwood	91	\$4,390.00
Stayner	73	\$3,385.00
Toronto	42	\$2,770.00
Singhampton	15	\$1,310.00
Duntroon	18	\$1,130.00
Wasaga Beach	20	\$1,040.00
New Lowell	20	\$770.00
Nottawa	18	\$740.00
Mulmur	6	\$600.00

Table: Sales by Top 10 Cities

Sales	Gender
\$19,660.00	♀ Female (355)
\$5,560.00	♂ Male (109)
\$1,855.00	👤 Unknown (42)

Table: Sales by Gender

We use the above data to help develop the marketing and publicity campaign which includes print, radio, and digital advertising and to select and confirm the programming elements at each Hall and within the Township.

The Small Halls Festival Series meets several recommendations within the Clearview Sustainable and Strategic Tourism Plan, including:

- Focus tourism development and marketing on best bet tourism markets that align with Clearview's tourism strengths and brand;
- Enhance the tourism social media presence;
- Improve resident understanding, awareness and acceptance of tourism;
- Continue to support and expand the Small Halls Festival;
- Develop themed driving tour(s), aimed at the daytrip market.

Overall, the Small Halls Festival 2022 was deemed a success. With over 175 volunteers and the commitment from our corporate sponsors, Clearview Township has been able to support opportunities for residents and visitors to take part and visit the Small Halls Festival. We also know that the spin off benefits from the Festival means that there is an increase in bookings and interest at the individual halls. Clearview Township is known in the region as a community that supports our Halls, supports volunteers and strives to promote new cultural and art programming as well as a destination for food and live music.

## **2023**

The Hall Boards and Community Partners have already started to plan for the 2023 Small Halls Festival as a festival series from September to November. Our goal is to announce the full festival line up and launch online ticket sales in July.

### **Clearview's Strategic Plan**

The above initiative supports the following strategic pillars:

- Recreation and Culture
- Identity-Marketing-Promotion
- Economic Activity
- Quality of Life
- Governance

### **Financial Implications**

The Small Halls Festival receives an annual budget of \$79,000. In 2022, there was \$55,852 collected in revenue, of which, \$28,455 was given back to the Hall Boards and Community Partners and \$27,397 is retained by the Township to off-set marketing, programming and other event operations.

## **Report Appendices**

None.

## **Approvals**

**Submitted by:** Amanda Murray, Community Culture & Tourism Coordinator

**Reviewed by:** Terry Vachon, Director of Parks & Recreation

**Financial Implications  
Reviewed by:** Treasurer

**Approved by:** CAO