

# **CMS23-042 - Attachment 1**

## **Aurora Cultural Centre at Aurora Town Hall**

### **Introduction**

The relationship between the Aurora Cultural Centre (ACC) and the Town of Aurora (Town) will change in 2024 in response to decisions made by Town Council about how Aurora Town Square (Town Square) will operate. These changes are contained in the Aurora Town Square business plan and this document. Discussions regarding use and management of Town Square have been ongoing since 2019 when the project was initially approved by Council. Throughout the last 4 years, Council also made decisions affecting operations in Town Square.

Town Square is ACC's home. As a mission driven, grassroots organization, we regularly poll and respond to the community to deliver cultural programming. Through a recent community-wide arts survey, residents identified the appetite and interest to grow cultural programming in Aurora. Town Square's success is linked with this community interest, and efficient, professional operations that drive a strong reputation in the industry to encourage return rental clients.

ACC has built an audience of patrons enjoying performing arts events, visual arts gallery exhibits, a school for arts learners, and a client base for renting a cultural venue. ACC also has specific producing acumen within our staff gained through years of experience and training that will benefit the community participating and renting Town Square.

### **A New Relationship Between the Aurora Cultural Centre and the Town of Aurora**

The optimal operating structure optimizes the professionalism of the customer experience, effectively produces rental clients' events, and streamlines operations to find efficiencies and cost-savings. The Aurora Cultural Centre is excited for the new opportunities available through the Hybrid Governance model, including the ability to participate in creating exceptional experiences for clients and audiences at Aurora Town Square.

Town Council determined that Town staff will now be managing areas in Town Square that used to be managed by ACC, and ACC has been asked to take on additional roles using ACC's expertise.

New Town responsibilities include:

- Permitting all spaces in Town Square, including Brevik Hall, previously managed by ACC,
- Venue management,
- Customer Service, including ticket sales for ACC shows and registrations for ACC's programs.

ACC built our audience through excellence in all aspects of customer service. This connection starts with marketing and communications, moves through the box office experience, and

concludes with in-person activations where the community feels welcome, safe, and valued in a professional setting. The loss of customer service roles in Town Square removes ACC's direct access to our audience by separating the purchase location, process, and conversations.

ACC responsibilities in the new model include:

- Technical Production Services for all events in Town Square
- Audience Management Services for all events in Town Square

These new areas of responsibility for ACC require staffing to fulfill these roles. ACC has operational staff in place with the skills to effectively manage these roles for approximately 20 ACC events currently produced offsite. There are efficiencies to move these staff into roles that manage the larger Town Square facility. Additional staff are required to operate the events themselves. Further, as the volume of activities increase, there will be a need for additional administrative support to ensure the efficient reporting, reconciliation, payroll, and accurate chargebacks to rental clients.

### **Staffing for ACC's New Responsibilities**

#### Audience Development

As previously noted, the new relationship and structure separates ACC from our audience by requiring the community to use the Town's website, Town customer service, and software tied to Town processes to purchase ACC services. This streamlines the resident's experience as there is one place to call to get services at Town Square. However, our viability relies on the relationships we have developed with their audience, so we need to find another way to connect with our audience to support audience development and growth.

This work includes the ability to gather and process audience information for events and programs, encourage buying patterns, solicit support and feedback, and encourage participation in a wide selection of cultural activities. Audience development activities could be achieved through a Development Associate role.

The *Development Associate* is a fulltime position which takes ACC's data from the Town's two software systems that capture audience information to build audience development opportunities. These activities have many positive outcomes including, encouragement of greater participation in our programs, opportunities to speak to patrons about their experiences and solicit feedback for improvement, asking patrons for support for our not-for-profit activities, and to welcome the patrons back to Town Square at their next event.

#### Production and Front-of-House

These additional staffing levels are required to build professional production and front of house departments for Town Square. These roles streamline operational effectiveness to create a safe

and welcoming environment for residents while providing excellent customer service to clients with clear communication and accurate billing for rentals in Town Square.

### Technical Production Department

The technical production department manages all the backstage needs for an event, including producing each event in the most efficient process with an experienced and skilled team of technicians. The department is also responsible for backstage safety for clients, artists, and staff, including power safety, working at heights, pyrotechnics, audio levels, green room management, dressing room assignment and management, communication tools etc.

#### *Production Manager/Technical Director (PM/TD)*

This fulltime production administrative role is responsible for managing partner and rental events and managing departmental and equipment needs. They manage production technicians to facilitate each event. Tasks include:

- providing feedback on technical questionnaire for booking agents to assemble quotes for each event,
- advancing the event for the client including:
  - discussing the event with the client in advance if required,
  - ensuring appropriate production equipment availability to meet the needs of each event,
  - communicating facility equipment needs for each event,
  - scheduling technical staff required for each event,
  - preparing production reports for each event including dressing room and green room requirements, and
  - arranging logistics for rental/removal of production rentals if needed.
- supporting calendar management to manage overtime, cleaning time, catching overlaps or issues in advance, deploying equipment as needed to reduce conflicts and extra costs,
- recruiting, training, managing, and scheduling technicians,
- payroll reporting, and
- assessing and maintaining technical production equipment needs.

Initially, the PM/TD and approved funding for the fulltime Technical Production Specialist will be used to cover the technical hours required for events until the volume of activities requires hiring additional staff.

#### *Technical Production Specialists (technician)*

These full and parttime roles facilitate events for clients including setup and tear down of equipment needed for an event, running technical lighting and audio systems, running specialized equipment including video, broadcasting, projectors, hazer etc. as needed, backstage safety meeting, and reporting back to PM/TD on each event. The technician is not in

contact with the client in advance of the event, they are scheduled to read the production report for the event, setup and prepare for the event. They are trained to facilitate the needs of the client, support backstage artists and client personnel, adjust needs to expectations of the event on the spot with the most efficient processes. This ensures optimal results in load-out and event success and issues management reporting back to the PM/TD. This role provides key backstage customer service and health & safety oversight for clients and artists. All technicians are trained specialists in either lighting or audio and have a working knowledge of other technical roles. Fulltime staff are most knowledgeable of the equipment, operation of the space, and will flag and fix maintenance issues as needed throughout the year. Parttime staff are brought in to mitigate overtime costs and support Town Square when multiple events are booked across the venues.

#### Audience Management (Front of House)

The audience management department is primarily responsible for audience safety and compliance with the emergency, health, and fire safety plans. Duties include staffing events with trained, competent staff and volunteers who understand their roles and responsibilities, supporting ticketing, seating, and customer service needs for each event, and delivering specialized requests of the client to serve their patrons (reception needs, specialized bar services, hearing-assist, response to health crisis, latecomers). The department also manages the volunteer program to build community involvement and effectively support each event.

#### *Audience Services Supervisor*

This fulltime administrative role is responsible for managing the volunteer program and front of house (FOH) needs to make sure all events are safe and welcoming. All performing arts venues have a specific fire safety plan that designates the number of personnel (staff and volunteers) required to safely operate the venue. This position ensures that adequate support is available for the events. They manage staff Front of House Coordinators to facilitate the audience needs of each event. Tasks include:

- providing feedback on front of house questionnaire for booking agents to assemble quotes for each event,
- advancing the event for the client including;
  - discussing the event with the client in advance (if required),
  - communicating facility equipment needs for each event,
  - scheduling a Front of House Coordinator for each event,
  - scheduling appropriate number and skill set of volunteers for each event,
  - preparing FOH reports for each event including specialized bar and ticking requests, reception needs, accessibility awareness for wheelchair needs, hearing-assist requirements (if known), and any other details provided by the client, and
  - arranging logistics for rental and removal of FOH rentals if needed.

- responsibility for maintaining audience safety and security by preparing policies and procedures, training all involved, maintaining fire safety plan requirements,
- First Aid, CPR, and AED certification,
- recruiting, training, managing, and scheduling Front of House Coordinators,
- payroll reporting, and
- volunteer program management including recruitment, training, policy management, personnel management, and scheduling into suitable roles.

Initially the Audience Services Supervisor will run events until the volume requires hiring parttime Front of House Coordinators.

#### *Front of House Coordinators*

These parttime roles facilitate the audience needs for each event to ensure public safety. They are scheduled a minimum of 2 hours prior to public access to the event to read the prepared FOH report, organize the lobby and other public venue areas to receive the patrons, and stay for at least 1 hour after the event concludes and all audience members depart. Work includes receiving the ticketing information, preparing for accessibility needs, blocking off seating as requested by the client, cleaning, testing and preparing hearing-assist equipment, setting up tables/chairs with linens, cleaning (or preparing for cleaning service) linens at the end of the event, communicating concession/bar specialities to the concession vendor, assigning volunteer positions, safety instructions to volunteers, retraining or reminders for those who need it on the night of the event, supporting latecomer access to the event, and releasing the house to the backstage crew once it is safe to allow the event to start.

#### Administration

With the new tasks and reporting requirements, compliance and additional payroll needs, the ACC requires a parttime *Finance Assistant* to support the operations of Town Square. ACC payroll is currently managed by me, which will be less possible in this new relationship with a larger complement of parttime staffing and reconciliations required to Town booking agents. The Finance Assistant will reconcile reporting on production and front of house requirements for chargeback to the client, reconcile equipment/tuning/material rental costs to be charged back to the clients, and facilitate payroll for a larger staff complement. This role would be implemented first as a parttime role, with a recommendation to increase to fulltime should volume require.