

From: Burnett, Thomas

Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 3:05 PM

To: Budget Committee <BudgetCommittee@london.ca>; Lehman, Steve <slehman@london.ca>; City of London, Mayor <mayor@london.ca>

Cc: Thomas R Burnett; Evan Klassen; George Kerhoulas; Rachel Peake; Heather Siskind-Levite;

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request: City of London on behalf of the Grand

Attention Elizabeth Pelozo, Chair,

Regarding: In Support of the Grand Theatre's Business Case (P-39, Page 571)

Dear Members of Budget Committee, City of London.

I am writing as it is now time for the City of London budget deliberations and considerations for the upcoming period.

I am a lifetime Londoner – almost 64 years, residing in the West End of the City, and long-standing member of the Grand Theatre Foundation. I have had the benefit of experiencing the Grand from a child attending with my mother as a tot, countless school trips, and now as an adult.

I note that The Grand is requesting the City of London to increase our annual operating funding from \$500,000 per year to \$750,000 per year. The Grand has not seen an increase since the operating funding model was created some **23 years ago**. Over that period the theatre organization expanded its offerings and grown to be representative of our city with artistic options that are more varied, while keeping traditional presentations on the roster as well. We have operated in a fiscally responsible manner for the period and strive to continue with that record. It should be noted that Covid 19 decimated a LARGE number of other community/ municipal theatres across Canada and North America. Some are on the mend, but many are not. We survived and all should be proud.

As you are most certainly aware the cost of operating an organization has increased greatly over the past few years and over the past 23 it is a large number. Suffice it to say the current grant doesn't have the same purchasing power as it did two decades ago. I realize we are dealing with a multi-year budget process hence the request for an increase to get closer to a more substantial amount.

The community is supportive, and donors do step up. We are a partner of the City as well, with relationships throughout the community. We are an anchor in the downtown area and as a result 100,00+ people not only visit the area but the city...and its restaurants and places of accommodation. This is a significant impact. This relationship should garner an increased financial commitment.

The Grand is a London institution that has touched many over the years. It continues to deliver great experiences through its programs to both performers, students, staff and patrons. Please help us continue the good work!

Thomas Burnett
London Ontario
January 24th 2024

On behalf of myself **AND** MANY other Grand Supporters, Board Members & the Staff Team of the theatre.