

How would you approach the issue of the Performing Arts Centre request for funding? What solutions or ideas do you have?

Being a Councillor means considering the needs of the community as a whole, whether or not you personally agree with the project. With a major project such as the Performing Arts Centre (PAC) – like any major facility – Council must undertake an out-of-the box approach.

One tool that could help our community is exploring more Public – Private Partnerships (P3s) for capital projects. For a PAC, a P3 with a local developer could create a wonderful community-focused centre that perhaps also offers housing, retail and commercial space, or a hotel and conference facilities. This is not a strange idea. The City currently has a partnership with local school boards for gymnasium “up sizing,” something Council should explore for sports-specific opportunities, which would minimize the need for another City-run fieldhouse. There are partnership opportunities out there. We must be open to exploring them. Council must always explore partnerships that can benefit the community and spark local investment especially for our long-term facility needs.

Being a Councillor means understanding the importance of having projects like the PAC in the Capital Budget. If a partnership can be found, if other-source funding becomes available, or if a creative opportunity arises, good planning and preparation makes us “opportunity ready.” Good business practice and governance is to be prepared for these opportunities.

Council is the place to debate ideas, visions, and values. Ultimately, Council has a discussion on community projects based upon what we need, want, and can afford. We should always remain open to possibilities!