



JM DRAMA REPORT - STRATEGIC REVIEW OF NEEDS AND SPACE

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

JM Drama is interested in understanding if they are operating most effectively not only as a non-profit charitable arts organization and a theatre operator, but also within the context of the arts community they are serving and within the City of Kitchener (the owner of the building). We aimed to answer these five key questions with this report;

What is needed by the local performing arts community?

How do Kitchener facilities support the needs of the local performing arts community?

How does JM DRAMA/REGISTRY THEATRE support the needs of the local performing arts community?

What else can JM DRAMA/REGISTRY THEATRE do to meet the needs of the local performing arts community? How might other Kitchener facilities meet the needs of the local performing arts community?

How does JM Drama plan appropriately for succession on both a board and staff level, to continue to meet the needs of the community, and responsibly manage a non-profit charitable organization and operate a facility, moving forward?

OUR APPROACH

The City of Kitchener, over the past two years, has collected data around the needs and wants of the community through community engagement exercises related to the Kitchener Economic Development Strategy; Make It Kitchener and the Centre in the Square (CITS) mandate project. In addition, ArtsBuild Ontario (ABO) conducted their own community consultation, Sustainable Creative Spaces, in 2013 to learn more about the needs and plans for arts spaces in the Region of Waterloo. JM Drama also holds valuable data regarding the booking and usage of the building every year. These findings combined provide valuable insight into the space needs of the broader performing arts community.

ABO interviewed 43 key stakeholders of JM Drama/Registry Theatre to better understand how they operate/manage the facility, who they serve and how they wish to see JM Drama operate moving forward, from the following groups;

- Staff, 9
- Board, 7
- Audience Members, 5
- Volunteers, 4
- Renters of Registry Theatre, 9
- Artists (musicians, playwrights, actors) 9

Surveys were also circulated to audience members of the Registry Theatre.

The information gathered through interviews, document reviews, surveys and data analysis will allow us to provide JM Drama with a consensus on a 'way forward'.

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1983, JM Drama encourages and supports the development of the performing arts in the Region of Waterloo. In addition to managing Kitchener's Registry Theatre, JM Drama produces an annual community production and supports programs which are designed to allow individuals to develop their acting and directing skills.

Vision Statement

JM Drama is vital, active and recognized as a leader in the development and health of the performing arts within the Region of Waterloo and the province of Ontario.

Organizational Structure

JM Drama is managed by an eight member Board of Directors and operated by one full-time staff, contract staff and volunteers. Volunteers are primarily used to work Registry Theatre performances to reduce operating costs.

JM Drama produces community programming while also managing and operating the Registry Theatre.

The Facility

The facility, Registry Theatre, is owned by the City of Kitchener and operated by JM Drama. JM Drama spearheaded the capital campaign and renovation to convert what is now the Registry Theatre. It is a 166 seat venue that hosts a variety of performing arts from dance to jazz to folk to musical theatre. The lobby boasts local art that is displayed and often available for sale, at no cost to the artist. Registry Theatre is rented for community, national and international use. JM Drama has over the years invested in updating equipment and facility improvements so that it can continue to meet the needs of its users.

This includes:

1) Capital investment - \$349,000

- JM Drama raised \$200K in a capital campaign
- City of Kitchener provided a loan of \$224K on a capital renovation of \$426K in 2000
- JM Drama repaid \$149K over 5 years.
- In 2005, the City forgave the last \$75K because of the success of the Registry to date

2) Equipment investment - \$172,483

- JM Drama has invested funds and has sourced theatre equipment valued at \$172,483 for use by the community that accesses the Registry Theatre

From their most recent Annual Report, JM Drama identified that the Registry Theatre held 68 performances with 5,774 patrons in attendance. However in the same year over 200+ rental requests were turned away, as the theatre was fully booked.

3) Subsidized Rental rates

Through their Registry Series, JM Drama uses ticket sales, grants and sponsorships to help subsidize rental rates, so that the space remains affordable to users. As a charity with revenues under \$250,000 JM Drama has not as of yet been required to charge HST on these rentals, but with a fully booked theatre and increased programming, JM Drama has reached the \$250,000 revenue threshold (CRA) and will likely be required to charge HST to renters moving forward.

This report will explore the five key questions identified above to better understand how JM Drama can best serve the community while remaining a viable operation that is able to compensate and support staff and meet the needs of the community. While answering these questions based on community consultations, we will provide recommendations for both the City of Kitchener and JM Drama on ways to move forward.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABO through this report endeavors to answer these five key questions as well as provide recommendations for both the City of Kitchener and JM Drama.

What is needed by the local performing arts community?

How do Kitchener facilities support the needs of the local performing arts community?

How does JM DRAMA/REGISTRY THEATRE support the needs of the local performing arts community?

What else can JM DRAMA/REGISTRY THEATRE do to meet the needs of the local performing arts community?

How does JM Drama plan appropriately for succession on both a board and staff level, to continue to meet the needs of the community, and responsibly manage a non-profit charitable organization and operate a facility, moving forward?

Through 43 interviews and referencing previous community consultations, it is evident that the arts community is in **immediate need of affordable rehearsal and performance space**.

The City of Kitchener has a key role to play in understanding how existing spaces can be made more accessible and which current city-owned spaces that are underutilized might begin to be utilized by the arts community.

There are a number of theatres/performing arts spaces in the community but based on feedback from renters and local artists interviewed it is clear that most of these spaces are inaccessible to many of our arts organizations, mostly due to cost.

The Registry Theatre remains the most affordable space for both its size and allows organizations to maintain creative control, with access to technical resources when needed.

JM Drama operates and manages the Registry Theatre and has been able to manage this space keeping the community top of mind. While JM Drama effectively manages this performance space, the Registry Theatre cannot meet all the needs of the organizations with regards to performance nor rehearsal, the requests exceed the time and space available. With a track record of effective community space management JM Drama should be considered if/when rental space opportunities arise.

JM Drama has also explored the renovation of the existing Registry Theatre to, among other purposes; create a new rehearsal space within Registry Theatre. JM Drama and the City of Kitchener must work in partnership to understand the investment available to move forward with this renovation project.

JM Drama has invested in the Registry Theatre through capital and equipment costs and subsidizing rental costs to support the community. While this community minded approach is one to commend it is also difficult to sustain. Providing proper compensation to current staff could ensure the ability to rehire

appropriately for existing positions when applicable, but also to properly compensate current staff and maintain the expertise that currently exist in the organization.

The Board of Directors of JM Drama will see a number of board members leaving in the next two years. In order to prepare for their imminent departure, JM Drama must begin to recruit new board members immediately within the JM Drama community as well as external qualified board members from the community.

We believe that the City of Kitchener has a role to play alongside JM Drama in ensuring the space needs of the community are met, without compromising the sustainability of JM Drama, and ensuring the longevity of the Registry Theatre, JM Drama and community based organizations.

1 WHAT IS NEEDED BY THE LOCAL PERFORMING ARTS COMMUNITY?

This question has been asked in several consultations over the past few years of the local arts community. For the purpose of this report ABO will use the data from the consultations identified below to support the findings in our 43 stakeholder interviews.

- Make It Kitchener consultation
 - 400 individuals were consulted through public consultation and interviews
- CITS mandate review (reviewed open comments relating to space)
 - There were over 1,700 comments provided in the CITS survey that was circulated in January 2015.
- ABO's Sustainable Creative Spaces sessions
 - This session was centered on open conversation on the topics of building, managing and financing creative spaces in the KW community. 32 members of the KW community attended the session. Participants in groups of 5 or 6 discussed challenges and successes in these three topic areas in their community.
- Bricks&Mortar
 - This is a province-wide inventory of the needs and plans of arts spaces. To date this inventory has collected the needs and plans of over 440 arts facilities province wide.

Kitchener boasts an extremely active performing arts community including but not limited to dance, music, theatre, and comedy. Professional, amateur or community based, all of our local artists require safe and affordable space to perform.

ABO asked each interviewee what type of space is needed most in the community.

We interviewed a total of 43 members of the arts community that included renters, artists, staff, board members, volunteers and long-time attendees of Registry Theatre. Interviewees indicated that **performance space**, followed by **rehearsal space**, were the most needed spaces by the performing arts community.

1.1 PERFORMANCE SPACE

Arts organizations and artists need access to **affordable** performance space. For most arts organizations and artists, the Registry Theatre is the only affordable option in Kitchener and the Region. More information about performances spaces in Kitchener is provided on page 13. In 2014 the Registry Theatre had to turn down over 200 requests for space by community artists and organizations. This statistic in and of itself demonstrates the need for performance space of this kind. The needs of the performance community are being affected by the high demand of the Registry Theatre in that there are not enough dates available for all community arts organizations. This was noted in the Make it Kitchener consultation "...some cultural spaces are underutilized and therefore prove to be commercially unviable, other spaces, such as the Registry Theatre cannot meet demand and must turn away potential

clients/renters.”¹ In addition, participants further acknowledged the pressing need² as the Registry Theatre is booked at least a year in advance. Booking a performance space at least one year in advance is common practice in the performing arts world, but for artists new to the community, those putting on works outside their typical yearly schedule or for those wishing to experiment or simply try something new, a very limited number of performance dates are available.

Affordability was a reoccurring theme among the consultations. Affordability is subjective, depending on the capacity of each organization and artist but all of the users of the Registry Theatre interviewed considered Registry Theatre to be an affordable venue for their performances and the majority were not as concerned about the financial risk when using the Registry Theatre. For most organizations they assume production costs up front (space rentals, equipment rentals, staff etc.) with the assumption that ticket sales will cover all costs expended. In some cases not all costs are recovered, putting them at a financial risk. Most interviewed were concerned about the financial risk when renting the alternative venues within Kitchener and the Region of Waterloo.

In addition to affordability, organizations repeatedly mentioned the need for control and autonomy when renting performance space.

This for many means;

- Ability to use their own technicians and staff for FOH/ushers etc.
- Access to the facility during booked times, without additional costs to access after hours
- Freedom to use the ticketing system of their choice and management of ticket sales

These options allow organizations to manage their expenses responsibly and provide a level of creative freedom expected by artists and organizations.

“... an organization in Kitchener that has repurposed the Waterloo County Registry Building, into office, rehearsal, and theatre space, is a great example of reinventing an existing facility and using its space to accommodate a variety of needs.”³

1.2 REHEARSAL SPACE

Arts organizations are unable to access affordable rehearsal space that is adequate for their needs. These needs included size, proper amenities (heat, water, and washrooms), accessibility (including public transportation routes) and physical accessibility.

Some interviewees acknowledged that they are using massage parlor lobbies, classrooms of universities (in Waterloo), and board rooms to meet their needs. While not ideal in terms of size and layout, many of these spaces are the only affordable and available options.

¹ Deveau, Danielle. Background, Inventory, and Consultation for the Arts and Culture Strategy. page 9.

² Deveau, Danielle. Background, Inventory, and Consultation for the Arts and Culture Strategy, page 15.

³ ABO Ontario. Sustainable Creative Spaces Sessions, page 11.

Obvious community spaces such as school gyms and churches have not been used by arts organizations due to cost and/or availability (this can include schools no longer renting to groups and an inability to reach the necessary contact at schools or churches to negotiate agreements etc.). One interviewee noted that they were unable to rent church space due to the content of their work. In some cases places of worship may not permit artistic content that they consider to be controversial. Interviewees described the need for many more rehearsal spaces to be made available in the community. These new rehearsal spaces must be affordable in order to be used by the groups. Affordability is subjective to each group, but the rates mentioned by the interviewees ranged from \$10-\$15 per hour.

In addition to affordability and basic safe conditions, a properly sized rehearsal space is essential to the quality of the performance. There are no performances without rehearsals.

It was noted that it is important that these spaces be dedicated rehearsal spaces for the arts community (opposed to offices that are being cleared out when needed to make space when needed). Mindful dedicated space is impactful on the performers, particularly in the professional performing arts community.

“We need to value the creation space...this can snow ball into the experience and how the artists are feeling...it all starts with the space.”⁴

1.3 STORAGE SPACE

Storage space was mentioned by a few of the renting organizations of the Registry Theatre. While most have storage space of their own, many of the organizations within the community often borrow and share costumes/props with each other and in some cases use each other’s storage space. This inferred a bigger question about need in the community for storage space. If there was a communal storage space could that be useful for the organizations?

“We would consider shared storage space. KWMP has stored our stuff/same with Registry Theatre, because it is something that they could have used. A lot of our stuff is rented / borrowed.”⁵

1.4 WORKSHOP SPACE

It was also mentioned that workshop space is needed to support organizations building sets for their productions. While KWMP and the Registry Theatre have such space their ability to share the space and tools with other organizations is limited due to safety concerns and proper access. Sharing of these types of spaces and tools could impact costs expended on sets and set construction.

⁴ Artist, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

⁵ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

2 HOW DO KITCHENER FACILITIES SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL PERFORMING ARTS COMMUNITY?

In interviews, there were three theatres mentioned repeatedly that the interviewees considered to be “their” performing arts theatres in this community.

They are, in alphabetical order:

1. CONRAD CENTRE (CCPA), managed by Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony (KWS)
2. REGISTRY THEATRE, managed by JM Drama
3. THE STUDIO at Centre In The Square

In addition to the theatres above, there were other theatres more infrequently mentioned by the interviewees, but still worth including.

They are:

1. KW LITTLE THEATRE
2. CAMBRIDGE CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
3. HUMANITIES THEATRE (University of Waterloo)
4. MAUREEN FORRESTER RECITAL HALL (Wilfrid Laurier University)
5. THEATRE AUDITORIUM (Wilfrid Laurier University)
6. STUDIO 180 (University of Waterloo)

For quick comparison we have pulled data collected from the Duncan Webb report written in August 2014 that provides a high level comparison of the venues. Based on feedback from the interviewees, we have also included some venues that might not have been included in the Webb report. The descriptions of the categories are as follows:

2.1 Availability

The Webb Report assessed availability on the ease with which a potential renter could book the facility on a prime day of the week (Thursday through Saturday). Webb Management Services assessed this through interviews with facility managers or by looking at a facility's events calendar. If every weekend is booked regularly, then it has low or no availability. If one or two weekends are booked a month, then it has medium availability. If the calendar is mostly empty, it has high availability. For the purposes of this research, online facility calendars were considered where possible. The period of June 2015-December 2015 was reviewed and availability was determined based on Webb’s criteria. Availability is annotated with a * to indicate that is cited from the Webb Report.

2.2 Basic Rental Costs

Unless otherwise indicated, basic rental costs include one performance and eight hours of access to the facility. Additional performances are subject to increase costs. Where other services and/or equipment are included in the basic rental costs, this is indicated.

2.3 Additional Services & Costs

This is categorized into required and optional additional services and costs. Primarily, these additional services and costs are applied to labour (technical crew, Front of House (FOH) staff, ticketing, and equipment. Where staff members of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), this is indicated, as are hourly wage ranges for technical and FOH staff. In all cases, technical support is determined by the General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama or equivalent on a case-by-case basis.

THE STUDIO, CITS

Facility	Seats	Availability*	Basic Rental Costs	Additional Services & Costs
Studio, CITS	200	Not available	\$175/ 8 hours	Required: IATSE Crew (\$31.54-\$38.60 per hour + 40% benefits), FOH (\$11.75-\$25.00 per hour + 24% benefits), security & stage door costs (\$20.75-\$22.25 per hour + 24% benefits), merchandise commission, box office Optional: Equipment (spots, piano, projector, dance floor)

CONRAD CENTRE (CCPA)

Facility	Seats	Availability*	Basic Rental Costs	Additional Services & Costs
Conrad Centre	226-400	High	\$1040/ 10 hours not-for-profit \$1248/ 10 hours for-profit Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Director (8 hours) • Front of House Manager for 1 show • Standard Cleaning • Promotional package • Standard lighting plot • Standard sound equipment 	Required: Door person (\$18.00 /hour), Patron Services (\$18.00/hour), Stage Hands (\$22/hour), Optional: Security (\$18.00/ hour), ticketing services, lighting consumables, additional sound equipment, video projection equipment, piano, stage decking

REGISTRY THEATRE

Facility	Seats	Availability*	Basic Rental Costs	Additional Services & Costs
Registry Theatre	166	Low	\$250 not-for-profit \$300 for-profit / 24 hours \$1400 weekly Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning costs • Standard lighting plot • Lighting board and access to the lighting system • 2 speakers, the sound board and a snake • No merchandise commission • May be required to have sound and lighting crew 	OPTIONAL SERVICES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations can choose the ticketing service of their choice such as; CITS, Eventbrite, Ticket Scene etc. • Sourcing technicians through JM Drama • Lighting/audio equipment • Piano rental

KW LITTLE THEATRE

Facility	Seats	Availability*	Basic Rental Costs	Additional Services & Costs
KW Little Theatre	70	Low	\$125 / 8 hours, \$ 600/ week Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation to equipment • Connection to technicians, • Access to equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional Services: Assistance setting up • Advertising/ promotion

CAMBRIDGE CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

Facility	Seats	Availability*	Basic Rental Costs	Additional Services & Costs
Cambridge Community Players (formerly Galt Little Theatre)	220	Low (Especially busy in May/June. Booked 1 year out)	\$400 not-for-profit/ 8 hours \$600 for profit/ 8 hours Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning costs • Standard lighting plot 	Optional: Tech crew (not IATSE), projector

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting board and access to the lighting system • No merchandise commission • May be required to have sound and lighting crew 	
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HUMANITIES THEATRE (University of Waterloo)

Facility	Seats	Availability*	Basic Rental Costs	Additional Services & Costs
Humanities Theatre	721	High	\$520 not-for-profit \$800 for-profit / 8 hours Required: Staffing at the discretion of the UW Theatre Centre (\$18.00-\$35.00 per hour, 2 hour minimum), box office charges, merchandise, commission, production charges (piano tuning, janitorial, security, rentals)	Optional: Equipment (piano, dance floor, projector, microphone, risers, set pieces, step units, smoke machine)

STUDIO 180

Facility	Seats	Availability*	Basic Rental Costs	Additional Services & Costs
Studio 180	60	Low	\$100 not-for-profit \$250 for-profit / 8 hours Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set install • Lighting hang & focus • Tech rehearsal • Performance Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing at the discretion of the General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama (\$15.00-\$30.00 per hour, 2 hour minimum) • Box office charges 	Optional: Projector, smoke machine

2.4 So why is performance space still in need?

As identified above there are a number of performing arts spaces in the community and the Region that are available for use by the performing arts community. Although these assets exist in the community,

many are inaccessible or do not support the needs of the end user (size, availability or location). We have summarized the key issues expressed by our interviewees.

THE STUDIO, CITS

Arts organizations have struggled with affording this space as it is a unionized house. While the daily rate is affordable the requirements of IATSE staff puts up a significant financial barrier to the arts organizations and artists, and therefore most arts organizations are unable to consider the Studio an option. Organizations are often unable to predict the final cost, and in many cases cannot take the financial risk.

The requirement of IATSE staff doesn't allow for the most creative control re: sound and lighting of their productions. One interviewee indicated that this could present an artistic barrier to the organizations who are accustomed to managing their own tech for their productions. Organizations such as JM Drama and MT Space have presented there, assuming some financial risk.

There were few organizations and artists interviewed that had used The Studio space at time of interviews.

Conrad Centre (CCPA), managed by Kitchener Waterloo Symphony (KWS)

Those organizations that attract audiences large enough to fill the seats at the CCPA (seats 226-400 depending on the configuration), indicated they would want to be able to perform at CCPA but acknowledged that they would generally be doing so at a financial loss.

Many of these organizations recover all costs through ticket sales and in some cases small government grants, therefore managing expenses closely is very important. With a higher per day rental (\$1,040 for non-profits), resulting in a higher deposit and higher incidental costs, many are cautious of booking in the event that the revenues (ticket sales) do not come in as projected. A few organizations mentioned an agreement that was negotiated with KWS, which had them book a block of dates for a reduced rate. The organizations were unable to renew this arrangement as they were unable to commit to the number of dates required.

Several organizations acknowledged their desire to be able to access CCPA, as it is a purpose built theatre space and a great asset to the theatre community. Being able to afford and perform in this space would go a long way for audience development and donor relationships.

"Conrad Centre...it's such a beautiful facility"⁶

OTHER COMMUNITY SPACES

The remaining spaces were mentioned in the interviews and were therefore included in this report, but collectively were not the first choice of the renters and artists interviewed. Below we have summarized the feedback we did receive.

⁶ Artist, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space.

STUDIO 180

- Located in Waterloo and often too far for some organizations to travel
- Not a proper performance venue: Very low house capacity and limited equipment

KW LITTLE THEATRE

- Often too small for the purpose of larger productions, negatively impacting the potential of revenue generation through ticket sales

THEATRE AUDITORIUM, MAUREEN FORRESTER RECITAL HALL (Wilfrid Laurier University), a full breakdown of this space was not available

- Unaffordable
- Located in Waterloo and often too far travel for some organizations.

HUMANITIES THEATRE (University of Waterloo)

- Unaffordable when additional costs are added to the final invoice
- Very difficult to navigate the campus, making the theatre hard to find - not ideal for audiences

CAMBRIDGE CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

- Too far for many audiences to want to travel
- Low availability

The Cambridge Centre for the Arts acknowledged that they often receive bookings from organizations that were unable to book at the Registry Theatre.

2.5 WHY THE REGISTRY THEATRE?

The Registry Theatre was identified as the only affordable theatre, and for reasons in addition to affordability, was the preferred theatre, amongst the interviewees.

“It’s a wonderful theatre space at a cost that is affordable. There are not any other options. Our community needs another space like the Registry Theatre.”⁷

Organizations have expressed the following three key reasons for choosing the Registry Theatre over other available spaces in the community;

- Affordability
- Size/atmosphere
- Creative/technical control

2.5.1 Affordability

What does affordability mean?

It is impossible to define what is affordable for every organization in the community, but all interviewed (that pay to use the Registry Theatre) indicated that the Registry Theatre is an affordable price point for them.

As listed above the Registry Theatre rents at \$250 from Sunday to Wednesday and \$300 from Thursday to Saturday. It is the cheapest to rent amongst the theatres of the same size or larger. It is difficult to compare final cost between the Registry Theatre and other spaces as there are many factors to consider, in respect to additional expenses. If we look at only the daily rate between the CCPA and the Registry Theatre as an example, the gap is significant - \$250 or \$300 vs. \$1,040 (for non-profit organizations).

The majority of those interviewed indicated that they have not experienced a financial loss when renting the Registry Theatre, and subsequently without the existence of the Registry Theatre and its price point, their shows would not be possible.

“It’s the only affordable space. I can make it accessible to my community (audience).”⁸

2.5.2 Size / Atmosphere

For many of the organizations the size and the intimate nature of the space is the reason that they return. Even when the Registry Theatre is not sold out, it still feels like a full audience, something crucial for new and young artists. Many organizations shared that they would not be able to fill more than 166 seats in the Registry Theatre making it the most appropriately sized performance venue. For other performers the size of the theatre resonates with them as they are able to interact and feed off the audience.

⁷ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

⁸ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

“Intimate atmosphere as well as the acoustics. The musician gets so much feedback and people are so close - like a big living room.”⁹

“The intimacy of it all. You are forced to rub shoulders with strangers. That doesn’t happen at other spaces. It is tight but creates a nice vibe. It is a nice evening. I like how the artists react!”¹⁰

2.5.3 Creative and Technical Control

Access - When renting the Registry Theatre organizations have access to the space for their rental period. They have access to the space and the General Manager as needed, on their own schedule, without having to cover the cost of that staff. A renter can use the space as needed for the time rented without requiring JM Drama staff on site during their rental. They have the ability to call and reach out to JM Drama in the event of an equipment issue.

“They give you the key. We present at night and dark during the day. Sometimes we will do photoshoots etc.”¹¹

Staff - artists renting the Registry Theatre are able to use their own technicians in the theatre space. They have access to the basic lighting and sound boards for their own use, without having to contract JM techs. If they wish to do so, JM will provide technicians at an additional cost.

“Registry Theatre provides you with the control for your own productions. We always hire Allan, but then we bring a whole army with trusted technicians and volunteers.”¹²

In addition to being a resource for renters, the staff are driven by the needs of their renters. Examples from interviewees included flexibility on payment schedule, load in/load out timing and their willingness to form partnerships with groups to ensure that performances and productions are executed.

“Allan Hoch is a diamond - I go there because it is a learning facility - he is always there. He will teach us about lights and the theatre. He is a champion. He is a huge factor.”¹³

Equipment Rentals - Basic equipment is included in the rental cost. When additional equipment is needed it can be rented from JM or sourced externally.

“I like that it is self-serve. We have brought in our own lighting and booked techs in as well.”¹⁴

2.6 RECOMMENDATIONS RE: SPACE NEEDS IN THE COMMUNITY

Based on the interviews and the data collected from various community consultations, ABO recommends the following to work towards solving the much needed space issues for the performing arts community.

⁹ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

¹⁰ Long Time Attendee, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review Of Needs And Space

¹¹ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

¹² Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

¹³ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

¹⁴ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

2.6.1.1 PERFORMANCE SPACE

There are beautiful performing arts spaces in the community that are unaffordable for use by our professional and community artists and organizations. We recommend that the City of Kitchener take an active role in working with these existing facilities, specifically the CCPA and CITS, to understand how they can facilitate increased access to these spaces, while still supporting all organizations

This might include:

- Understanding how rates might be adjusted
- Understanding how rental practices/policies might be adjusted to be more amenable to experienced renters

We understand that CITS is a unionized space and so there is little flexibility around those staffing policies.

- We would recommend that the City of Kitchener with CITS endeavor to understand whether there are any options around separating The Studio from IATSE, to make it accessible to the community

2.6.1.2 REHEARSAL SPACE

There are few dedicated rehearsal spaces in the community for our performing artists/organizations. There is not one solution for the creation of rehearsal spaces, and in theory, rehearsal spaces can be created and maintained in a cost effective way. What is clear is that the community needs **several rehearsal spaces** to be made available immediately.

Recommendations include;

- The City of Kitchener endeavor to explore the creation of dedicated rehearsal space (s) for the performing arts community in any space they might develop in the future
- JM Drama work with the City of Kitchener to identify and manage rehearsal space elsewhere in the community that could be provided by or made available by the City of Kitchener

Other options regarding the renovation of the Registry Theatre to accommodate rehearsal space is referred to on page 26.

“City-owned properties offer a more stable model for the development of arts and culture spaces than do commercial properties, and city-owned spaces should be leveraged for arts and culture (as has happened with the Registry Theatre) whenever possible.”¹⁵

2.6.1.3 STORAGE SPACE

The need for storage space was brought up by a few interviewees. Storage of sets, props and costumes require a significant amount of space and does not result in any financial return. The storage of set props and costumes goes hand in hand with the issue of borrowing/lending costumes.

¹⁵ Deveau, Danielle. Background, Inventory, and Consultation for the Arts and Culture Strategy. page 16.

- JM Drama could play a role in convening key organizations in discussing the possibility of a shared costume/set storage space. Fees could be paid by each organization toward a staff person that manages these rentals and the space in which they are contained. This could address the need for full storage and workshop spaces and increase the use of costumes and props that have remained dormant for years

3 HOW DOES JM DRAMA/REGISTRY THEATRE SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL PERFORMING ARTS COMMUNITY?

As described previously, JM Drama provides affordable space for community organizations at the Registry Theatre that allows renters to have creative and technical control over the space during their rental period. In addition, interviewees described the impact and the role that the Registry Theatre plays in the community.

3.1 Providing a service to the community

Interviewees felt that JM Drama has provided a much needed service to the community through its operation of the Registry Theatre. There currently is no formal cultural/arts hub in Kitchener, but some identified the Registry Theatre as filling this role in the community.

“Registry Theatre is the hub. It is the nucleus of our community”¹⁶

“Great community hub that welcomes diversity in all its aspects.”¹⁷

“It is the most Kitchener based arts location. It really does reflect Kitchener”¹⁸

3.2 Community based space

The Registry Theatre was described as a space beyond just a theatre for rent. Interviewees felt that this space was driven by the needs of the community which is demonstrated in the price, policies, flexibility and one on one nature of their booking operations.

“Their infrastructure works with the community. It is scalable and meets all needs.”¹⁹

“They are a community group and a space...”²⁰

“It is a nice, warm intimate space. We like working with Sam, Lawrence and Allan. They respect what we bring to the table.”²¹

3.3 Experimental/risk taking space

The size (number of seats) lends itself to experimentation, learning, teaching and exposing new audiences to performance of all types. It allows for the opportunity for new programming and co-productions and risk-taking, without assuming losses that could be a detriment an organization.

“It’s the right size...great for experimental work.”²²

¹⁶ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

¹⁷ Long time attendee, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

¹⁸ Artist, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

¹⁹ Artist, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

²⁰ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

²¹ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

²² Artist, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

“My work couldn’t really be done anywhere else.”²³

3.4 Programming

Interviewees were consistent in their feedback about the programming and the majority felt that it represented Kitchener as a community. It was clear that the Registry Theatre provides breadth of programming enjoyed by the community.

“There is nothing is missing. They are doing great work!! They are doing extremely well.”²⁴

“Quite reflective in the sense that you see different traditions.”²⁵

“I think they meet the needs of the community. Diversity of what is in the facility is fantastic.”²⁶

3.5 Of Note

Ticketing

Organizations appreciated the flexibility to be able to use their preferred ticketing system. This includes either an automated system such as CITS, Ticket Scene or selling at the door. There does seem to be a need or at least a willingness to explore a shared ticketing system amongst interviewees.

3.6 Audience Survey Results

ABO circulated a survey to audience members of Registry Theatre. Audience members were asked to identify how they felt when attending performances at the Registry Theatre. With a sampling of 50 surveys the following was revealed:

76% identified - **As though I am part of a larger community**

76% identified - **It is a good place to be introduced to new artists unfamiliar to me**

74% identified - **It is a good place to attend with family and friends**

70% identified - **I will leave the performance having been touched emotionally**

64% identified - **I will leave the performance feeling refreshed**

42% identified - **I will leave the performance intellectually stimulated**

The results of this sampling of surveys demonstrates that similarly to the users of the Registry Theatre audience members also feel as though they are a part of a larger community when attending shows at the Registry Theatre. It is a place to be with family and friends and to be introduced to artists unfamiliar to them.

²³ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

²⁴ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

²⁵ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

²⁶ Key Renter, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

4 WHAT ELSE CAN JM DRAMA/REGISTRY THEATRE DO TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL PERFORMING ARTS COMMUNITY?

4.1 PROGRAMMING

The majority of those interviewed felt that the Registry Theatre provides programming based on what the community needs and wants and that it provided a variety of programming that met the needs of most audience members.

Two suggestions stood out from interviewees of what else could be included in the programming at the Registry Theatre which reflected the need for more outreach to “... **cultural specific communities.**”²⁷ and younger audiences “...**let’s bring in a younger demographic**”.²⁸ One interviewee commented that they often see the same people throughout the year at Registry Theatre shows, and while this provides a sense of community and comfort, it also demonstrates that perhaps outreach is not making its way into new audiences that can be found in the ethno-cultural communities or amongst younger audiences.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS RE: PROGRAMMING/AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

YOUTH: The Registry Theatre already makes use of the EyeGO passes, (passes that provide discounts to youth audience members) to target a younger audience, but perhaps there can be more done to encourage their attendance including:

- Marketing specifically to these age groups through targeted social media, at the universities, or seeking grant support to pilot a program that might provide subsidies or engage this age group more effectively
- Engaging youth on the board level, may provide additional awareness to the Registry Theatre
- Seek grant support to pilot a program that might provide subsidies or engage this group more effectively

CULTURAL COMMUNITIES: This is a diverse community that boasts over 40+²⁹ ethno-cultural service groups. Within this community there is the opportunity to reach these specific groups effectively

- Marketing specifically to these groups through the service organizations and community groups
- Engaging those interested on a board level to gain a different perspective
- Seek grant support to pilot a program that might provide subsidies or engage these groups more effectively

4.2.1 SPACE

As indicated there are two immediate space needs in the community: Rehearsal and Performance. Solutions to the latter is more complicated in that it has more technical requirements (lighting, sound, seating) while identifying potential rehearsal space can be something JM Drama, the City of Kitchener

²⁷ Long time attendee, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

²⁸ Staff, Interviewee. Consultation for JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

²⁹Community Care Access Centre, Ethnocultural Groups - Kitchener-Waterloo.www.wwhealthline.ca (accessed January 30, 2016).

and the broader community can solve in the interim. The majority of those interviewed believed that JM Drama has the experience and track record of managing a community based space and have the confidence to see JM Drama do so elsewhere in the community, in addition to the Registry Theatre.

Based on these findings and in addition to turning away over 200 rentals per year we understand there to be two options that engage JM Drama in providing solutions to the needs of local performing artists and arts organizations.

4.2.2 SPACE OPTIONS

JM Drama sacrifices their rehearsal time at the Registry Theatre to manage the community demand for performance space.

OPTION 1 - JM Drama continue to explore the renovation of the Registry Theatre to provide a useable rehearsal space, in partnership with the City of Kitchener. This renovation would provide a new affordable rehearsal space to the community and JM Drama. Plans to renovate the existing space include converting their storage space into rehearsal space and an addition to the building that would accommodate proper piano storage on the main floor as well as a new storage space downstairs. The renovation would also include dedicated green room space for the performers.

Some interviewees identified areas that would need to be addressed in the renovation to accommodate a new rehearsal space.

These included:

- Proper sound proofing to block sound flow between floors
- Parking is currently limited and considerations would need to be made to accommodate an increase of concurrent users in the building
- Consideration given to performers if the rehearsal and performance space is being used concurrently

If/when a renovation project would occur, the Registry Theatre would likely have to stop operations for the duration of the renovations. This could result in a loss of revenue for JM Drama and impact the Registry Theatre users. There would need to be a plan in place to manage this risk.

In the event that the renovation is not a viable option then Option 2 could be considered.

OPTION 2 – In partnership with the City of Kitchener, JM Drama could manage rehearsal space elsewhere in the community that is made available to all community groups.

- This would bring in a small revenue stream to JM Drama while also providing the additional rehearsal space needed for performing arts organizations in the community

We have presented two options as the following are unclear at this time

1. How much money the City of Kitchener could invest in a renovation as described in Option 1
 - a. How long the Registry Theatre would need to close down for renovations
2. Whether additional city run space will become available that can accommodate rehearsal space

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEETING THE SPACE NEEDS

Without the knowledge of other existing spaces that could provide rehearsal space we are unable to make a definitive recommendation about which option best suits the community, however, it is clear that the community needs several affordable rehearsal spaces to fill the gap. JM Drama has demonstrated a strong record of facilities management for the benefit of the community and has also demonstrated their ability to manage a renovation and capital campaign successfully.

4.3.1 In the interim

We recommend that the City of Kitchener and JM Drama formally discuss the proposed Registry Theatre renovations to understand if there is any available contribution from the City of Kitchener. In addition we recommend that the City of Kitchener consider JM Drama if opportunities arise to manage rehearsal or performance space.

4.3.2 Of note

Some interviewees mentioned aspects of the Registry Theatre that could be improved. Many were reluctant to mention the improvements as they were aware of the buildings limitations, but we see the value in mentioning them in the event that there is the ability to address these changes moving forward, especially in pending renovations.

Suggested improvements included:

- Larger lobby space
- More parking and accessible parking
- More wing space
- More green room space
- Ability to have flexible seating

Parking was mentioned several times and there were questions regarding the adjacent Regional and privately owned lots, and whether or not they could be accessed by the Registry Theatre, when they were empty during show times (namely evenings).

We are aware that this has been attempted but we recommend that JM Drama and the City of Kitchener discuss the parking issues to see if connections can be made to the lot managers, so that JM Drama can work to improve the parking situation for its users.

5 HOW MIGHT OTHER KITCHENER FACILITIES MEET THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL PERFORMING ARTS COMMUNITY?

The most significant barrier to all the other performing arts spaces in the community is price. The rates are simply too high for organizations to be able to afford considering most or any of the spaces in the community, with the exception of the Registry Theatre.

As indicated, rental rates do not include just the daily fee, which some organizations could afford, but also the mandatory costs such as requiring venue FOH staff, venue staff on site during a booking, afterhours access, equipment rentals and deposits. All of these costs add up significantly and not all costs are easy to predict ahead of the booking, to allow for proper budgeting.

5.1 SUGGESTIONS FROM INTERVIEWEES:

Flexibility on the booking policies might allow for the organizations to book without incurring a financial loss and also feel confident that they will not be billed for unexpected charges.

Some interviewees provided specific suggestions on how to make the two most referenced spaces; the CCPA and the Studio at CITS more accessible, from their perspective as frequent space renters in the community

THE STUDIO, CITS (CITS)

- KWS moves back to CITS and use the Studio as their main rehearsal space
- De-unionize The Studio, so that additional costs can be lowered and become more accessible to the community

CCPA (KWS)

- KWS remain at the CCPA but bring in a venue manager, such as JM Drama, to manage that space for the broader community
- KWS moves back to CITS and theatre community groups can occupy CCPA administrative space, with one group, such as JM Drama, responsible for the management of the theatre rentals

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SPACE NEEDS

We believe that there is merit to the interviewee *suggestions* above as ways to address the overbooked Registry Theatre and the under booked CCPA and The Studio. We do however understand that these are sophisticated issues that involve numerous public and private partners. We see that the City of Kitchener can play a key role in facilitating these discussions to understand if there is the will to move forward in any way. We believe in addressing these issues, community organizations might have better access to all of these amazing community assets.

- City of Kitchener can play a role in understanding if there is a desire and will on behalf of CITS and KWS to see KWS move back to CITS as their new home

- City of Kitchener can play a role in understanding how this might work within the operations of the CCPA, the CITS and the KWS.
- Separating The Studio from IATSE, might also be a solution that works in tandem with the above, and might require support from the City of Kitchener's legal department

6 HOW DOES JM DRAMA PLAN APPROPRIATELY FOR SUCCESSION ON BOTH A BOARD AND STAFF LEVEL, TO CONTINUE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY, AND RESPONSIBLY MANAGE A NON-PROFIT CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATE A FACILITY, MOVING FORWARD?

ABO interviewed core staff and board members as well as lighting and sound technicians, FOH and volunteers. This allowed for a fulsome picture of how staff and volunteers are managed and how roles and responsibilities are managed internally. ABO also questioned key renters and artists on their interactions with staff and their experience using the space.

6.1 Current Operations

6.1.1 STAFF

- Full-Time General Manager of The Registry Theatre / Artistic Director of JM Drama, salary
- Part-Time Director of Programming, hourly
- Part-Time Operations Manager, hourly
- Contract Technical Director, billable
- Contract FOH, lighting, sound technicians, billable

For the purpose of this report, the General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama, Director of Programming and Development, Operations Manager and Technical Director, are referred to as core-staff, (technically the General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama is the only staff).

6.1.2 KEY CHALLENGES

1. Under current operations core staff are exceeding their capacity and hours per week to fulfill responsibilities. This means that in order to effectively support the community renters and organizations, fulfill programming obligations and report to the board and effectively plan for the future, most staff are regularly working beyond the hours for which they are being compensated. Exceeding the work hours is not an uncommon practice in most sectors, but in this case the extent to which some staff are working vs. being compensated is unsustainable.
2. In the event that any of the core staff leave JM Drama, their salaries are such that it would be seemingly very difficult to replace these positions with a person of equal qualifications, skill level and knowledge of the sector and the space.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAFF

6.2.1 Review of staff responsibilities

Reviewing and restructuring of staff responsibilities will clarify the existing positions and responsibilities. It will also make the responsibilities clear in the event of re-hiring. Based on interviews with staff and board in the context of their operations we make the following recommendations;

GENERAL MANAGER OF THE REGISTRY THEATRE / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF JM DRAMA

- To take on more strategic and visionary roles
- Focus to be on programming, partnerships and funding needs/requirements

OPERATIONS MANAGER

- To take on the day to day rental responsibilities

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The responsibilities of the Director of Programming to be closely defined so the role can be properly compensated

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

- The responsibilities of the Technical Director should be more closely defined. Tasks such as maintenance could be replaced with a volunteer or other PT staff.

PT STAFF

6.2.2 Increase in salary for General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama (FT) and Director of Programming (PT)

It is necessary to increase salaries so that these roles are;

- a) Compensated appropriately for the work being performed
- b) Positioned competitively to attract qualified candidates when these roles will need to be refilled
- c) If JM Drama manages another space whether it be in the Registry Theatre or elsewhere in the community, there needs to be an increase in salary for the General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama - it also may require an increase of hours of the Director of Programming and Development

6.2.3 Increase the hours of the Operations Manager to accommodate new rental responsibilities

This will take some of the rental related work off of the General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama and delegated to the Operations Manager

6.3 FUNDING NEEDS

JM Drama does not receive operating funding from any government sources. Their revenues are a mix of:

- Rental revenues
- Bingo
- Project grants
- Corporate Sponsors

JM Drama has been successful in receiving OAC and Canada Presentation Fund grants and just completed an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant.

6.3.1 KEY CHALLENGES

While JM Drama has a fully booked theatre and has great relationships with the funders, they do not have any consistent operating funds that allow them to adequately compensate the staff positions needed to operate this facility sustainably from year to year.

Project grants that are received from year to year are restricted funds for a specific programming purpose and often limit what can go towards existing positions, if at all.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING / REVENUES

6.4.1 Operational Funding

Based on current salaries and funds needed to sustain community programming, we estimate that the amount of operational funding needed yearly is *at least* \$60,000.

- Begin conversations with the City of Kitchener to begin the process of being considered for operational funding
- Begin conversations with the Region of Waterloo to start the process of being considered for operational funding

6.4.2 Increase of Rental Rates and Implementation of HST

Increase of Rates

Based on conversations with the community, we recommend that the rates at the Registry Theatre be increased. Interviewees that currently pay to rent the Registry Theatre, for the most part, noted that there was room to increase the rates, while maintaining its affordability. There were a few interviewees that did acknowledge that a raise in rentals would have a significant impact on their financials and potentially their ability to rent the space.

It is not possible to compare each theatre venue as each vary on mandatory and optional costs, but we can say for certain that Registry Theatre is the only *widely* affordable and fully booked performing arts space in the community.

It is important that JM Drama balance what is needed to run the space, (which includes compensating their staff appropriately and what is needed for programming) while balancing what the community can really afford. Affordability of this space must be considered when determining higher rental rates.

For those that acknowledged they would be affected by a rental increase, it would be important that JM Drama remain flexible with their rental policies, to accommodate those unable to recoup the rental increase, thus keeping in line with their community minded approach.

- This might include a decrease or flexibility on the deposit amount
- A co-production arrangement

- Agreement on concession sales

There was no consensus on the amount of the rental increase, but we believe that small incremental increases can be tolerated if communicated appropriately. These increases would need to be considered with the addition of HST in mind.

Introduction of HST

If JM Drama continues to exceed \$250,000 in revenues per year they will be required by the CRA to begin charging HST.

The question of introducing HST to ticket sales and rental costs was asked of most interviewees.

For those that are a charity, this has little impact as they are able to recoup some of the cost.

The for-profit organizations mentioned they are accustomed to paying HST and this small cost would not impact their rentals at the Registry Theatre.

There are however a few organizations and artists who would be impacted by the new HST charge. For the benefit of these organizations and the community at large, it would be beneficial for JM Drama to review their rates (rental, lighting, technicians etc.) and see the HST charge and the rental rate increase together.

In theory, this could be better absorbed by all organizations if the rental rates were increased incrementally. As a charity, JM Drama would recoup some of the HST charged.

The issue of charging HST is one of compliance rather than policy. In the event that CRA deems it a requirement, JM Drama will need to be prepared to;

- Invest in marketing and communications to articulate these changes to their renters
- Be clear about what and who this is effecting
 - Their ticket sales? Just rental rates or tech rates too?
- Transparency about the raise in HST
- Give renters notice
- Work with the organizations and artists that are unable to pay these fees to ensure that their needs are being supported

6.4.3 Project Funding

Relying on project funding is not a sustainable way to support any organization; it can however contribute to costs associated with project based work that JM Drama has been exploring, on a larger scale.

- Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grants could be an ideal way to receive support to fund projects that impact the community.
- Ontario Trillium Foundation Seed Grants are opportunities to pitch experimental, never done before ideas. These will not cover organizational expenses, but it will cover costs relating to this

project - again allowing the organization to not have to use rental revenues for projects and ideas that might result in a loss.

- Continuing to apply for Canada Presentation Fund (Canadian Heritage) and Ontario Dances (OAC) at the maximum allowed amount is also encouraged

6.4.4 Capital Support

Often revenues from rentals are used to make improvements/cover maintenance at the Registry Theatre. While contributing to a capital reserve fund is encouraged as a responsible asset management practice, policies around the amount per year should be established and enforced. This would allow remaining surplus to be used towards other operating costs such as staff.

In the event of future repairs or renovations, there are few sources outside of the municipality that will support capital infrastructure repairs and renovations and those include;

- Ontario Trillium Foundation Capital grants - \$150,000
- Canada Cultural Spaces - unlimited, but lengthy process
- Energy Incentives - these are available through the local utility, but require initial investment

It is recommended that JM Drama explore all of these options if making improvements to their space or elsewhere.

6.4.5 Rental Rates for New Space

In the event that JM Drama begins managing a new space within the Registry Theatre or in the community outside of the building, JM Drama should consider;

- The staff time expended in managing these spaces
- Who is using the space - non-profit or for profit organizations, to establish user rates

6.5 BOARD NEEDS

JM Drama is operated by a Board of Directors. The Registry Theatre is a project of JM Drama and is therefore overseen by the JM Drama Board of Directors. The Board of Directors filled with skilled directors in the areas of arts and business, are facing challenges.

6.5.1 KEY CHALLENGE

In the next two years JM Drama is slated to lose core board members that carry most of its institutional memory and have dedicated decades to the organization. The loss of board members will also mean loss of core skills that could be difficult to replace quickly.

6.5.1.1 Skills

In board and staff interviews key skills were identified as needing to support current JM Drama operations. By filling these core skills on the board of directors, this will allow for the JM Drama board to remain stable and effective while current board members transition off the board. Suggestions included;

- Financial and business acumen, including HR and marketing
- Fundraising and development

- Strong arts background in the performing arts

6.5.1.2 Who

It was evident that the board and staff value board members that are not only from the business sector, but that also have a vested interest in and/or experience of the arts sector, more specifically those that have been engaged with JM Drama. Many expressed the need that board members should be recruited from those within the JM Drama community. Understanding the values and history of JM Drama was stated as being extremely valuable in selecting new board members.

While many board members are moving on in the next few years, it was indicated that those moving on will remain engaged with JM Drama on the production side. While some of the institutional memory might be formally removed from the board, the opportunity to engage with the new board and carry on the knowledge to new members will still be there.

It was suggested that younger board members be recruited - no age range was specified. It was mentioned that there had been some work by JM Drama in including ‘youth’ members on the board, but it was not something that was continued, for reasons not described.

6.5.1.3 Board Policies

While there are board policies currently in place, based on the lack of familiarity with terms and specific policies of the board members interviewed it was clear that these policies had not been reviewed for some time.

It will be necessary to ensure that incoming board members understand how not only the board operates, but how the organization operates as well.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOARD NEEDS

6.6.1 Recruitment

- Have the current board members begin recruiting immediately

Most board members interviewed were confident that there were suitable and/or potential candidates within the JM Drama community that they could recruit to the board. Recruiting immediately will allow for proper orientation of the new board members and for overlap between incoming and outgoing board members. This overlap will lend itself to the outgoing members passing on key operational knowledge and institutional memory prior to their departure.

- Post immediately

Begin recruiting from within the JM Drama and Registry Theatre community, while also making the posting public via the JM Drama website, Charity Village or WorkInCulture websites.

- Maintain an open call for Board members

A posting can be placed on JM Drama’s website indicating that JM is currently actively recruiting board members. This can be left on the site until the point that the board has reached sufficient numbers and replaced the skills they need.

- Increase the size of the board

We recommend that JM Drama grow their board to 10 or 12 members from the current eight, and that those recruited are willing to be active on board sub-committees. In the event that JM Drama manages a new space or undergoes any renovations, there will be a need for an active sub-committee whose focus is on space related issues. With the possibility of managing another community performing arts space, within the Registry Theatre or another building, the board of directors stands to grow from the addition of members that understand the complexities of managing a community minded multi-disciplinary performing arts space.

6.6.2 Skills

If/when JM Drama is able to develop and/or manage a new theatre space, the following skills (in addition to financial and business acumen, fundraising and development, and a strong arts background in the performing arts) will be necessary to ensure the successful management of spaces and relationships with the municipality and the Region.

- Experienced space manager, preferably performing arts

Managing a community minded space that extends beyond just rentals, is a specific skill set. Knowledge of space management will be key in supporting current and new staff managing changes as well as policy development re: space. This skill set will also be needed for a dedicated sub-committee that would be responsible for space related issues.

- Previous working knowledge of municipalities

JM Drama will need to work closely with the City of Kitchener and potentially the Region of Waterloo on any potential future space opportunities. Connections with the municipality and/or understanding of municipal governance will be helpful to navigate moving forward.

- Corporate connector

In the event of renovations, development or managing another space, JM Drama will need increased financial support. This could include having to run a capital campaign, fundraisers or increasing corporate sponsorships. All of which need an experienced body that is well connected within the community

6.6.3 Who

- Recruit from within and outside of the JM Drama community

While there are benefits to recruiting internally, there are also benefits to reaching outside the existing JM Drama community, as there are skilled and qualified community members that might not currently

be engaged with JM Drama. Including those from ethno-cultural communities, that are underrepresented.

- Engage a youth representative

Including policies on recruiting young professionals to the board might be a way to encourage consistency and diversify its members.

6.6.4 Board Policies

- Review of all board policies and the creation of a an updated board manual

This board manual will be essential to new board members as it should provide them with current, updated policies, description of sub-committees and their functions, and staff roles and responsibilities - at a minimum. This should be provided to all new board members to ensure they are acquainted with expectations and policies from the beginning of their term.

With that said, the Ontario Non-profit Corporations Act (ONCA) has been scheduled to be released for years, with delays. It could be a waste of resources to update all current policies, in the event that they would need to be re-updated with the eventual release of ONCA. To be mindful of resources and in the absence of ONCA, the current policies can be made available to all until new policies are drafted under the ONCA.

6.6.5 Sub-committee for JM Drama specific programming

Some discussions revealed the need to develop policies around JM Drama specific decisions around production. While that extends beyond the purpose of this consultation, it was suggested several times that there might be an executive sub-committee struck to vote on JM Drama production specific decisions.

A growing board and a change of focus re: new spaces might see a new mix of board members that may or may not have the same ties to the production side of JM Drama. A sub-committee could ensure that the production side of JM Drama remains a priority not at the expense of space related and other programming issues.

7 RENTALS

Rental practices are enforced and practiced by all core staff members. There are contracts and policies in place by JM Drama to support their rental practices. These are posted both on the website and available in printed copy. What was clear was that organizations were unable to articulate the decision process to booking renters or attributing dates.

7.1 KEY CHALLENGES

The rental side of the Registry Theatre business is increasing every year. In addition to booking the space yearly the General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama is actively managing;

- Increase of rental requests every year

- Managing a wait list for last minute cancellations
- Managing customized bookings (needing to get into the space earlier or leaving later)

The Operations Manager manages the contracts etc. while the Director of Programming often manages the relationships on site when it is a co-production (very case by case basis).

These, in addition to the unique nature of each booking - which requires one on one time with each renter, customized experiences that change, ensuring the renter has access to the building and are properly supported on the day of, all lend itself to time intensive method of managing a community-minded theatre space.

- Rental Management is unique and customized - often the reason that renters enjoy the venue so much

For example, an interview described a situation when they had to move into the space earlier than anticipated. JM Drama made arrangements with the renter leaving the space to ensure that needs of both groups were met, and in this instance at no additional cost.

“They do really bend over backwards to make it as easy as possible.”³⁰

- Takes the General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama away from long term visioning, financial planning, program development and new partnerships

So much of the General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama’s time is consumed with managing the rentals of the space that less time can be devoted to JM Drama specific activities such as programming, grant research/application, partnerships and long term planning.

It was clear when speaking with renters that the booking/rental policies are quite flexible, which for most was reassuring as they felt that JM Drama would work to accommodate additional needs or issues.

While the JM Drama works closely with the community to ensure that their needs are met, the demand of the space has caused many renters to worry if they will be able to secure dates the following year especially if they are unable to commit to next year’s show a full year in advance.

Most interviewees who have been booking the Registry Theatre for years, understand that they must book a year in advance, yet if that deadline is missed or has passed there is worry that they might not get the dates that they had been booking in years previous. This fear demonstrates that there is a lack of understanding on behalf of the renters as to how and when booking dates are decided.

On the flip side, there are renters that would like to book more than one year in advance to plan for their programs and in some cases can afford to put deposits down two years in advance to reserve their preferred dates. Booking this far in advance is not currently an option.

³⁰ Key Renter, Interviewee, Consultation For JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RENTAL PRACTICES

7.2.1 Communicate timelines to renters

JM Drama makes the decisions on the rental schedule at the beginning of each year. While this is an internal process, the deadline to submit booking requests could be made clearer to *frequent* renters. This could avoid disappointment, but also remove some anxiety on the part of the *frequent* renters.

- Revise staff responsibilities re: rentals

As suggested previously, a review of staff responsibilities will help highlight what rental process could be removed from the General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama. If additional resources were made available, some of the rental responsibilities could be delegated to the Operations Manager.

7.2.2 Review of rental bookings process / policies

The Registry Theatre distinguishes itself by being flexible and community focused. This is something that the community needs and expects from the Registry Theatre when booking. We do believe that there is merit in reviewing the process around how the rentals are booked and the policies around what is required from the renters, to ensure that they are up to date and made available to the renters. This would include insurance requirements, deposit amounts and timelines and cancellation policies. This would also be an opportunity to consider whether new policies could accept bookings more than one year in advance to support those that can afford to issue a down payment on their rental requests.

APPENDIX A - SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

PERFORMANCE SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the City of Kitchener take an active role in working with existing facilities, specifically the CCPA and CITS to understand how they can facilitate increased access to these spaces, while still supporting all organizations

In the interim;

- Understanding how rates might be adjusted
- Understanding how rental practices/policies might be adjusted to be more amenable to experienced renters

Longer term;

- City of Kitchener can play a role in understanding if there is a desire and will on behalf of CITS and KW S to move Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony back to CITS as their new home
- City of Kitchener can play a role in understanding how this might work within the operations of the CCPA, the CITS and the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony.
- Separating The Studio from IATSE, might also be a solution that works in tandem with the above, and might require support from City of Kitchener legal department

REHEARSAL SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

The community needs **several rehearsal spaces** to be made available immediately.

We recommend that;

- The City of Kitchener endeavor to explore the creation of dedicated rehearsal space (s) for the performing arts community in any space they might develop in the future for the arts and or creative community
- JM DRAMA continue to explore the renovation the Registry Theatre to provide a useable rehearsal space, in partnership with the City of Kitchener.
- We recommend that the City of Kitchener and JM Drama formally discuss the proposed Registry Theatre renovations to understand if there is any available contribution from the City of Kitchener.
- JM DRAMA work with the City of Kitchener to identify and manage rehearsal space elsewhere in the community that could be provided by or made available by the City of Kitchener

Parking

- We recommend that JM Drama and the City of Kitchener discuss the parking issues to see if connections can be made to the lot managers, so that JM Drama can work to improve the parking situation for its users.

STORAGE SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that;

- JM DRAMA could play a role in convening key organizations in discussing the possibility of a shared costume/set storage space. Fees could be paid by each organization toward a staff person that manages these rentals and the space in which they are contained. This could address full storage and workshop spaces and increase the use of costumes and props that have sat dormant for years

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIVERSIFYING AUDIENCES (JM DRAMA)

Engaging Youth

- Marketing specifically to youth audiences through targeted social media, universities, or seeking grant support to pilot a program that might provide subsidies or engage this age group more effectively
- Engaging youth on the board level, may provide additional awareness of the Registry Theatre

Cultural Communities

- Marketing specifically to ethno-cultural groups through dedicated service organizations
- Seek grant support to pilot a program that might provide subsidies or engage these groups more effectively

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAFF OF JM DRAMA

- Review of staff responsibilities
- Increase in salary for General Manager of the Registry Theatre/Artistic Director of JM Drama (FT) and Director of Programming (PT)
- Increase the hours of the Operations Manager to accommodate new rental responsibilities

RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEET FUNDING NEEDS

Operational Funding

Based on current salaries and funds needed to sustain community programming, we estimate that the amount of operational funding needed yearly is *at least* \$60,000.

- JM Drama should begin conversations with the City of Kitchener to begin the process of being considered for operational funding

- JM Drama should begin conversations with the Region of Waterloo to begin the process of being considered for operational funding

Increase of Rental Rates and Implementation of HST

We recommend that

- The rates at the Registry Theatre are increased, provided the rates remain affordable for users.
 - There was no consensus on the amount of the increase, but we believe that small incremental increases can be tolerated if communicated appropriately. These increases would need to be considered with HST in mind.

Introduction of HST

If JM Drama continues to exceed \$250,000 in revenues per year they will be required by CRA to begin charging HST. The issue of charging HST is one of compliance rather than policy.

In the event that CRA deems it a requirement, JM Drama will need to be prepared to;

- Invest in marketing and communications to articulate these changes to their renters
- Be clear about what this is effecting
 - Their ticket sales? Just rental rates or tech rates too?
- Transparency about the raise in HST
- Give renters notice
- Work with the organizations and artists that are unable to pay these fees to ensure that their needs are being supported

Project Funding

Relying on project funding is not a sustainable way to support any organization; it can however contribute to costs associated with project based work that JM Drama has been exploring, on a larger scale.

- Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grants could be an ideal way to receive support to fund projects that impact the community.
- Ontario Trillium Foundation Seed Grants are opportunities to pitch experimental, never done before ideas. These will not cover your expenses, but it will cover expenses relating to this project - again allowing the organization to not have to use rental revenues for projects and ideas that might result in a loss.
- Continuing to apply for Canada Presentation Fund and Ontario Dances at the maximum allowed amount is also encouraged

Capital Support

It is recommended that JM Drama explore the following options if making improvements to their space or other managed spaces.

- Ontario Trillium Foundation Capital grants - \$150,000
- Canada Cultural Spaces - unlimited, but lengthy process
- Energy Incentives - these are available through the local utility, but require initial investment

Rental Rates for New Space

In the event that JM Drama begins managing a new space within The Registry Theatre or in the community outside of the building, JM Drama should consider;

- The staff time being expended to manage these spaces
- Who is using the space - non-profit or for profit, to establish a rate sheet

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOARD NEEDS

Recruitment

- Begin recruitment immediately
- Maintain an open call for Board members
- Increase the size of the board

Skills

- Financial and business acumen, including HR and marketing
- Fundraising and development
- Strong arts background in the performing arts
- Experienced space manager, preferably performing arts
- Previous working knowledge of municipalities
- Corporate connector

Who

- Recruit from within JM Drama community as well as outside, including ethno-cultural communities and youth representation

Board Policies

- Review of all board policies and the creation of an updated board manual, made available to all

Sub-committee for JM Drama specific programming

- A sub-committee could ensure that the production side of JM Drama remains a priority not at the expense of space related and other programming issues

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RENTAL PRACTICES

- Communicate/re-iterate booking timelines to renters
- Revise staff responsibilities re: rentals
- Review of rental bookings process / policies

APPENDIX B - LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Key Renters
Lost and Found
Growing in the Arts
ACTOut
Inter Arts Matrix
MT Space
Sam Dlugokecki
Carousel Dance
KWMP
Michael Kelly Cavan

Staff
Sam Varteniuk
Lawrence McNaught
Allan Hoch
Lynne Sosnowski
Cody Miller
Sonja Malton
Ben Steele
Harry Marshalsey
David Delouchery

Board
Marian Marshall
Tim Jackson
Deborah Hoch
Mary Collard
Ron Green
Cheryl Ewing
Don Bourgeois

Key artists engaged with JM Drama
Green Light Arts
Ted Harms
Nota Bene
Larry Larson
Tim Louis
Earl McCluskie
Jack Cole
Gary Kirkham
Bruce Cameron

Long time attendees/audience members
Martin de Groot
Edwin Laryea
Adam Qualter
Elizabeth Hayes
Cathy Farwell

Volunteers
Irena Baltaduonis
Teresa Zvonar
Marion Grousopoulos
Stephanie Farrow