

The Prince Edward Island Council of the Arts

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 25, 2011

The 2010-2011 fiscal year has been a full one indeed. Hard on the heels of a troubling financial position, and needing to respond in a practical manner, the Council was also presented with some incredible opportunities that could not be turned down.

During the latter part of that year, we worked to finalize our partnership with the City of Summerside on the PACE Artist in Residency program. This program, which hosts artists in a small home on the city's west side, will provide annual opportunities for Island artists and will form the base for our future exchange program with other Canadian arts councils, funds permitting. At this writing, one artist, Troy Little, has already been through the residency, and Nancy Cole is currently in the house, working on her silk-based textile projects.

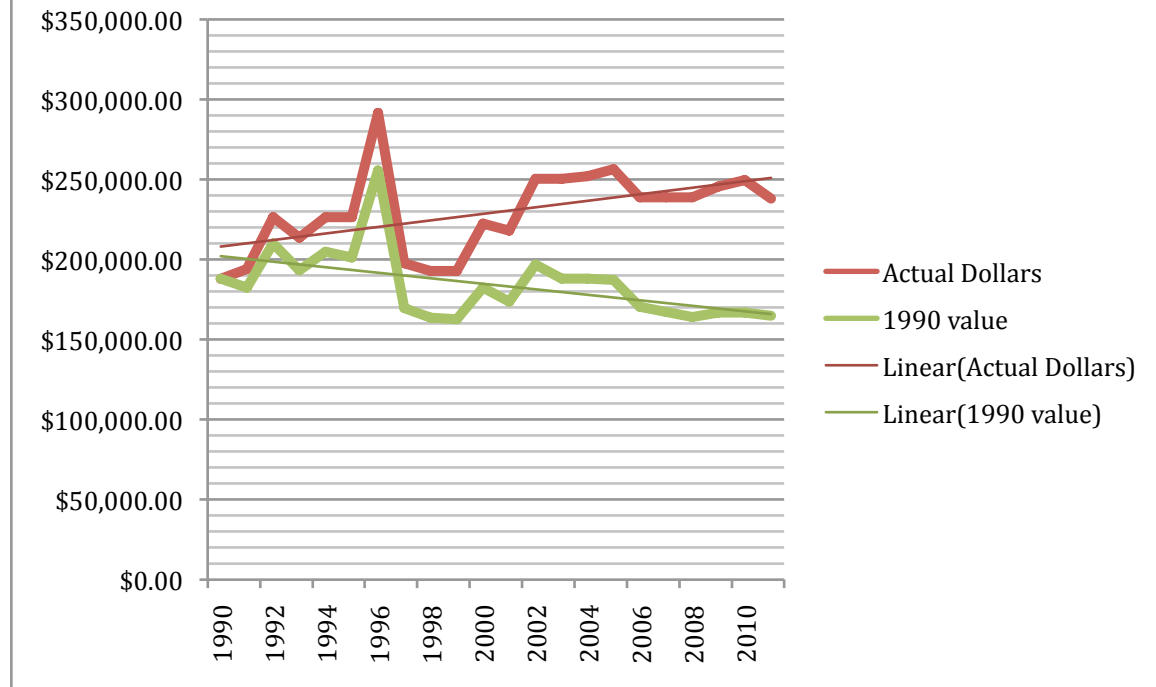
We also began work with the City of Charlottetown, as part of the Cultural Capitals designation, on the Art in the City project that was designed to see six pieces of public art installed throughout the city in public and privately owned locations. As administrators of the program, working with, and thanks to, Ann Carrière at the City, we jointly saw the program expanded to nine projects.

Slowly, almost painfully so, the Council is beginning to have at its disposal a sophisticated slate of tools and programs that resemble those of our peers across the nation. For too long, and in some regards, Island artists have been at a disadvantage, for we simply are unable to offer the level of support that artists can receive in other jurisdictions. However, it is not for lack of trying, and these recent partnerships are all in service of that goal. It is equally exciting that both of these projects continue to foster a huge relationship with the public, which can only help to install in Islanders and visitors alike the important role that artists and the arts play in Island life.

Financially, we were able to balance programming needs with financial ones, and we ended the year in the black, with substantial headway made against our liabilities. The Council has a multi-year budget plan in place that will continue to demonstrate this balance and see the Council remain on solid financial ground, with an eye to the future. However, it must be said that it becomes increasingly difficulty to find that balance, when we are pressured by inflation on one side and by the needs of the arts community to find support from the Council in a rough economic climate on the other.

You can see how, in the chart below, inflation has eaten away at our available funds. Indeed, the Council has less money to work with now than at any point since 1998.

Prince Edward Island Council of the Arts: Base Allocation Spending Power 1990 to Present



In this chart, we compare our actual budget to what it would be in 1990 equivalent dollars, and we have provided a trend line for both actual dollars and 1990 dollars. What these trend lines show is that, while our budget over time has steadily increased, the pace of these increases has not kept pace even with inflation, let alone seen committed additional investment. I must admit that it has been painful to see the investment of millions of dollars into artists and entertainers from abroad, while we have been faced with the above figures to support our artists here at home.

However, with each new Government, and each new Minister, the opportunity exists for us, collectively, to shine a light on this matter, and, hopefully, see some positive gains. The Council has, for years, had a wish-list of programs, and I continue to be optimistic that they will, someday, be funded.

For the current year (2011-2012), we have continued to walk that balance between programmatic needs and budget ones, and we are similarly on track for a positive financial statement at the end of this year, while maintaining a high degree of activity and community involvement.

To close, I would like to thank the Board of Directors for continuing to provide valuable insight and direction, and Heather Idt, our Administrator, for steadfast support in the office for the work that we do.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the contribution made by Annette Campbell during her time here at the Council.

Lastly, I would like to thank the membership, who proved the naysayers wrong, and demonstrated that artists can engage in proper, constructive dialogue, towards a common goal, as was demonstrated in the matter of the Guild and the ultimate decision to develop a lease.

We have clearly set the stage for advancing the Council's goals, and we will remain optimistic that our partners will be as willing to engage us in conversations and, collectively, make plans for the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Darrin White

Executive Director