From:	Web NoReply
То:	City Council
Subject:	Email - Request to Speak - Lee Fuller - Remai Modern Budget Deliberations - CK 430-72 x 1700-1
Date:	Saturday, October 28, 2023 1:42:49 PM
Attachments:	<u>City Council - Remai.docx</u>

--- Replies to this email will go to

Submitted on Saturday, October 28, 2023 - 13:40

Submitted by user: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.: No

I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor .: No

Date: Saturday, October 28, 2023

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

Pronouns: He/him/his

First Name: Lee

Last Name: Fuller

Phone Number :

Email:

Address: Willow St

Neighbourhood: Queen Elizabeth

City: Saskatoon

Province: Saskatchewan

Postal Code: S7J

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable): N/A

What do you wish to do ?: Request to Speak

If speaking will you be attending in person or remotely: In person

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: Remai Modern budget deliberations scheduled for November 28-30, 2023.

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: Unknown

Comments:

I will be speaking about the Remai's governance, Board composition, reporting of achievements, and will make some financial comparisons with other galleries.

I will deliver a signed hard copy of my letter.

Attachments:

• <u>City Council - Remai.docx</u>44.79 KB

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

https://www.saskatoon.ca/admin/structure/webform/manage/webform_398/submission/62457



Saskatoon City Council City Hall 222 Third Avenue North Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

Dear Council Members,

Re: The Art Gallery of Saskatchewan Inc. (aka Remai Modern - RM)

The RM is a City of Saskatoon controlled corporation. It is funded largely by taxpayers' dollars. Bylaw No. 1 reads (2.07):

"The Corporation shall apply all proceeds after expenses, or other income, to the operation and promotion of the Corporation and the fine arts for the benefit of the citizens of the City of Saskatoon and its visitors, as described in the Articles."

The RM exists for the benefit of the citizens of Saskatoon. Ultimately the facility, collection and operation are the responsibility of City Council.

Council wishes to take an "arm's length" approach to the operation of the three controlled corporations. The relationship between the controlled corporations and the City has been an issue for some time. Council is responsible for these corporations but does not want to be seen as "meddling". I believe that improving the representativeness of the Boards, ensuring that goals align with their mandates, and requiring regular and comprehensive reporting will fulfill Council's obligation and maintain an "arm's length" relationship between Council and day to day operations.

There was a recommendation to Council that the Board chairs should produce reports to City Council as often as quarterly. This consists of an update of upcoming actions, fiscal projections, and other relevant items which the Boards deem necessary to inform the shareholder (the City). I don't know the status of this proposal, but it is prudent as

substantial tax dollars are involved, particularly with the RM at approximately \$6 millions of City grants annually in recent years.

The RM Board currently receives applications for potential board members through the City Clerk. The names and qualifications are sent to the Board who select the candidates to be ratified by Council. There are no specific requirements placed on the Board by City Council.

The current Board is quite diverse as far as gender, indigenous and racial representation. It is not sufficiently representative of occupations. There four lawyers (29%) and just one visual artist (7%). This is alarming as one of the RM's principles is "Remai Modern is: Defined by artists and supports their work and vision to the fullest extent." If artists are inadequately represented, there is a disconnect between the Board and the principle. Poor artist representation is uncommon for Saskatchewan arts organizations (Sask. Arts Alliance, CARFAC, OSAC). The Saskatchewan Arts Board legislation requires that 1/3 of its Board must represent artists. City Council could easily require a minimum number of indigenous and visual art representatives, and require occupation, gender, and racial diversity. Achieving this should not be difficult as there were eleven candidates for four positions in the most recent call. Five of the fourteen current members have terms expiring on December 31, 2023.

The RM's Board follows a governance model. This includes developing, with management the Gallery's vision, principles, and goals. The Board is jointly responsible for setting overall objectives with management. Management's role is implementation and for reporting to the Board on progress. I agree with the vision and principles stated on the RM website. I believe that regular and comprehensive reporting on progress by management to the Board is lacking. Semi-annual reports to City Council from Controlled Corporation Board Chairs would be beneficial.

In 2021. the Remai CEOs presented a 2021 to 2025 plan to Council as part of the budget submission. It contained the following objectives.

- 12 exhibitions + live programs Ft indigenous artists
- 42% of exhibitions Ft yxe artists
- 42% focusing on Canadian art
- 75% of major shows strong connection to our region
- collection more inclusive of local and regional talent underway

I think these objectives are reasonable but am not confident that they are being seriously pursued.

I used the RM's website and internet searches to determine progress on these goals and developed a detailed spreadsheet from which to draw conclusions. This was done for the years 2021 and 2022. This information was communicated to the Remai's Chief Curator in a letters dated February 22 and March 9, 2022, with a request to review my information and provide me with feedback and possible corrections. We subsequently met with Michelle Jacques in spring 2022. In February 2023, I received information from the Remai that tracked progress on these numbers and that this required "painstaking" work from the staff. The counts differ substantially from mine. What is more important is that it is apparent that the Remai has not been continually tracking progress on its own goals. RM (like many galleries) programs two years in advance. By late 2023 the RM should have a very accurate estimate of achievement of the 2021 to 2025 targets. Has the management assembled and reported these numbers to the Board and City Council?

The Remai's revenue and expenses are far more than other galleries in Western Canada and in Nova Scotia, as shown below:

		Operating	
	Total	Surplus	Total
	Revenue	(Deficit)	Expenditures
Remai Modern (RM) - 2022	10,268,000	1,187,000	10,150,000
MacKenzie Art Gallery (MAG) - Mar 31,			
2023	3,417,270	-1,423,573	4,840,843
Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG) - 2022	13,381,741	723,597	12,658,144
Art Gallery of Alberta (AGA) - 2022	5,640,428	-191,035	5,831,463
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV)-			
Mar 31, 2023	4,379,622	729,507	3,651,115
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (AGNS) -			
March 31, 2022	5,027,266	111,003	4,888,414

The largest source of revenue, by far, is from the City of Saskatoon. The percent of total expenses coming from the host city and other grants sources is far more than what other galleries receive. The comparison is shown as follows:

RM - Grants - 2022		% of Total Expenditures
City of Saskatoon	6,096,000	60%
Other	972,000	10%
Total Grants	7,068,000	70%

MAG - Grants - Year End Mar 31, 2023

Federal Grants	429,000	9%
City of Regina	308,000	6%
Provincial Grants	538,000	11%
Total Government Grants	1,275,000	26%

VAG - Government grants - 2022

City of Vancouver	2,336,057	18%
Provincial Grants	2,079,600	16%
Federal Grants	888,389	7%
Total Government Grants	5,304,046	42%

AGA - Grants - 2022

Operating Grants			2,379,364	41%
Travelling	Exhibitions,	Projects,		
Programs			504,493	9%
Total Grants			2,883,857	49%

AGGV - Year End March 31, 2023

BC Arts Council	699,726	19%
Canada Council	607,300	17%
Capital Regional District	448,000	12%
Other	19,210	1%
Total Grants	1,774,236	49%

AGNS - Year End Mar 31, 2022

Federal. Grants	488,294	10%
Provincial Grants	2,620,358	54%
Total Grants	3,108,652	64%

Winnipeg Art Gallery - Year End Mar 31, 2022	% of Revenue
City of Winnipeg	5%
Gov't of Nunavut	2%
Province of Manitoba	37%
Federal	14%
Total Grants	58%

Typically, total grants are in the 40% to 60% range of expenditures. Money from host cities is usually about 5 to 18%. Compare that to the RM where grants cover 70% of expenditures and the City donates 60%. Financially, the RM is out of step with similar galleries. I question these differences but cannot investigate further. Is the RM Board aware of these benchmarks? Have they asked management to investigate and report? The RM does an annual financial audit. Has there been a recent "value for money" audit using industry comparisons?

I wrote to the CEOs on March 14, 2023, outlining why I was interested in the gallery, past communication with staff and Councillor Gersher and my wishes. They replied on March 28. I followed up on May 12. I believe my requests are modest. The copies of the correspondence are included following this letter. I received a reply on June 3 from the CEOs Executive Assistant stating that:

"On behalf of the CEOs, curatorial team and Remai Modern Board of Directors, thank you for your latest email.

They have appreciated the opportunity to engage in this dialogue and to showcase the numerous ways we are supporting artists from our region and beyond. At this time, we must respectfully conclude this conversation."

I am baffled at this reply. I have been employed in the public sector throughout nearly all my working life. This response is inappropriate for senior executives engaged in a publicly owned and funded organization. I have always been patient and respectful in my dealings with various RM people. I expected that this would be reciprocated.

After the executive assistant's response, I contacted the Board Chair, Doug Matheson and asked to meet with the Board. I was refused. His response is the main reason for contacting City Council.

This letter and attachments bring out information that asks more questions than contribute answers. I believe that a start to improving governance at the RM lies in ensuring that the Board is properly represented, (including visual artists) and has a mandate to ensure that the substantial amount of funding contributed by Saskatoon taxpayers is justified. The Board must insist that the gallery's vision and principles respond to the community and are achieved.

I would appreciate an opportunity to address City Council sometime during budget deliberations on November 28 to 30.

I can be reached by email at <u>lee.fuller@sasktel.net</u>, land line (306-665-9184), cell (306-250-4246) or at our home address (above).

Thanks.

Yours respectfully,

Lee Fuller

Remai Modern – Board Information Potential Member Call Out

5 of the 14 current members have their terms ending Dec 31, 2023.

Directors will support Remai Modern's vision to be a <u>welcoming and inclusive public</u> <u>gathering place</u> where we recognize the past, engage with the present, and envision new futures together through art.

A key goal for the organization is to ensure good governance, long-term financial and environmental sustainability, and sound operational and administrative practices. The Board of Directors is responsible for the <u>effective governance of the Remai Modern</u> and the advancement of its goals, values and mission. <u>This includes engagement</u>, <u>transparency, accountability, and other attributes of best-practice governance</u>.

Communications

From: Lee Fuller < Sent: Friday, March 3, 2023 10:57 AM To: Gersher, Sarina (City Councillor) <<u>Sarina.Gersher@Saskatoon.ca</u>> Cc: Christiane Stolhofer < >; Ray Keighley

Subject: Remai Modern

The "Work Sheet" tab has the detailed information. You may need to scroll up to see the information. I have sent this information to various people at the Remai four times, and have asked for the data be reviewed. I have never had a response to this request.

The individuals and dates I emailed are:

Stephany McKay - December 8, 2021 Michelle Jacques - Feb 24, 2022 Michelle Jacques - March 9, 2022 Bevan Bradley - Jan 17, 2323

My research is summarized below:

	Total #	Percentage
Saskatchewan Group	9	11%
Saskatchewan Solo	12	15%
Indigenous Group	12	15%
Indigenous Solo	11	14%
Other	35	44%
Total Shows	79	100%

You can see there is a significant difference between the numbers the Remai produced and mine. The Remai may be using a different definition of Sask artists that I am. I included folks who reside in the province. The Remai may consider someone with a connection to the province.

The Remai staff have to have done a similar summary to mine. I would like them to review my information and let me know where I have gaps or errors.

I work part time as an adjudicator with the Saskatchewan Municipal Board. In that role, I always prefer to see summary information supported by detailed source data.

The following is the summary information you sent me.

On Feb 27, 2023, at 11:48 AM, Gersher, Sarina (City Councillor) <<u>Sarina.Gersher@Saskatoon.ca</u>> wrote:

Exhibition Type	Number of shows	Number of shows	Percentage
Contains SK artists	34	82	41%
Without SK Artists	48	82	59%
SK Solo shows	15	51	29%
Group with SK	19	31	61%
Artists			

Indigenous artists exhibited: 25 exhibitions contained work by Indigenous artists.

	# Shows with Indigenous Artists	Total # Shows	Percentage
Indigenous artists	25	82	30%
SK Indigenous	13	82	16%
Other Indigenous	12	82	15%

With respect to non response, one artist did get feedback. The person who did not is Christiane Stolhoffer.

You have indicated that an "artists portal' is in the works. This is a positive development, but must include clear information about eligibility, portfolio etc.

The following are the notes that we made following a meeting with Bevan Bradley on Jan 25, 2023.

We were told by Bevan that the Remai will only consider artists who have a reputation. She could not explain what sort of qualifications, artistic production, exhibition history etc. that they were looking for. A portal will be of very little value if the selection criteria is restrictive. In my view, the main criteria should be the quality of the work itself.

When we met with Michelle in 2022, we provided her with a list of possible leads to connect with Saskatchewan artists. We have had no feedback about any outreach done since spring 2022.

If the Remai wishes to show that it is rooted in community, the curatorial staff should attend local exhibitions, contact artists groups, etc.

One of the best sources of information is the Saskatchewan Arts Board. They have staff in Regina and Saskatoon whose jobs are to help artists with grant applications, administer the grants awarded and ensure that what was promised is delivered. These folks have very good connections with working artists and know their work.

I am doing this advocacy to help the Remai open up to the community, and to give local artists a shot at gaining deserved recognition.

It would be nice to meet with you in person. Yes, please forward this email to the Remai curatorial staff.

Thanks for the time and effort you have put into this file.

Lee Fuller

March 10 Email

Dear Lee,

Thank you for reaching out and sharing your perspectives on the museum. Your inquiries have prompted fresh reflections for our curatorial and communications teams, who have received your communications and participated in our statistical verifications, and we will be sure to keep your feedback in mind going forward.

It is so important to have engaged artists in the community. Thank you for your passionate interest. We look forward to seeing you at the museum or other art events around the city going forward.

Sincerely,

Aileen & Johan

Emailed to CEO@remaimodern.org

And hand delivered

Note to Aileen Burns and Johan Lundh, Co CEOs of the Remai Modern gallery.

March 14, 2023

I wish to thank Sarina for the time she has spent on the Remai Modern matter. She feels that for any further dialogue I should contact the co-CEOs directly, which this communication is doing. I have received and considered the email sent by the CEOs dated March 10. The following is an orientation into what has transpired, my views, and suggestions for the short-term future.

1. Background

I am a lifelong resident of Saskatoon and have been involved in creating art for around 50 years. I have learned, through my practise, that taking risks is essential to progressing. Taking chances breathes life into my work, and I believe into all creative endeavors.

I have been a member of Prairie Sculptors for about 25 years. Our group was `founded in 1982 by Bill Epp, an internationally recognized sculptor and art teacher at the University of Saskatchewan. We have around twenty members who work in a wide variety on media and subject matter.

I am a retired 15-year employee of the City of Saskatoon, having worked as Manager of Research Quality Control position with the Assessment Branch. I currently work part time for the Saskatchewan Municipal Board as an adjudicator dealing with administrative cases regarding property assessments and municipal planning. By training and temperament, I consider it essential to support conclusions and measure progress with factual data.

The Remai Modern gallery has regional and national recognition. For local artists to be able to get traction within and outside Saskatchewan, it is important that they have a fair opportunity to be shown at the gallery. The proportion of local representation in the Remai's 2021 to 2025 plan seems reasonable.

In 2021, some of our members discussed the lack of local/provincial representation in exhibitions at the Remai. This spurred me on to begin to look at the history of shows at the gallery. The Remai website contains a substantial amount of material on past shows including artists featured. I was able to use the internet to look up information on the great majority of the artists. I assembled this summary in a spreadsheet which I have sent to Remai staff on four separate occasions. I have and continue to acknowledge that there may be some errors and missing data in the file and have asked to be advised if any modifications should be made. I have never received feedback on this request.

Once I assembled the summary, I discussed the possibility of approaching the gallery with some of our members with the aim of encouraging more representation of local visual artists. I was advised by long time active members that efforts in that regard would be a waste of time. The Mendel and Remai had the reputation of looking down on most local creators.

In about 2020, there was a change in the leadership at the Remai, and that the signals given by the new administration were towards a "rooted in place" gallery. I contacted a city councillor who I know and found out that there was a five-year plan (2021 to 2025) presented to City Council which addressed local and indigenous representation. The plan's specific objectives are:

- 12 exhibitions + live programs Ft indigenous artists
- 42% of exhibitions Ft yxe artists
- 42% focusing on Canadian art
- 75% of major shows strong connection to our region
- collection more inclusive of local and regional talent underway

I think that these objectives are quite reasonable.

I reviewed my information considering these objectives and found that there had indeed been a move toward greater representation of local artists. However, based in my information, it seemed unlikely that the objectives of representation of local artists would be met. In addition, it was clear Canadian art east of Ontario was substantially excluded. There was also a greater emphasis on indigenous artists from BC and Ontario than the prairies.

2. Contact with Remai Staff

I approached two other Prairie Sculptors' members (Michelle Thevenot and Ray Keighley) for help in composing a letter to Michelle Jacques with the goal of encouraging her to seek out and connect with local artists. We finalized the letter (dated February 22nd, 2022) asking for a meeting. Due to family matters, Michelle was only able to connect with on April 26. At the get-together, we provided her with a 12-page document that could be used to connect with various arts organizations, artist groups and individual artists in Saskatchewan. (digital and hard copy included).

We felt that it was worthwhile to follow up with Michelle early this year, so we wrote another letter to Michelle dated January 9, 2023. Ray Keighley, Christiane Stolhoffer and I ultimately met with Bevan Bradley on January 25, 2023. She was gracious and toured us through the current exhibits, and pointed out works created by local and indigenous artists. Towards the end of the tour, we were informed by Bevan that the gallery was considering including an artist's portal on its website. (The MacKenzie in Regina has a similar access point.) We asked Bevan what sort of criteria is used by the Remai to select local artists. Bevan was not able to outline the gallery's expectations other than to point out that the Remai would only show works by "recognized" artists. (Bevan may not be in a position to know these criteria.) Bevan stated that she was familiar with the lead information we provided to Michelle but said nothing about whether any of the various folks were contacted.

It is encouraging that the Remai is making plans to develop an artist's portal. This is in line with the principle that the gallery is "defined by artists and supports their work and vision to the fullest extent". However, such an initiative will have little impact on exhibitions if only "recognized" artists will be considered. Limiting access to a defined group of creators is contrary to the spirit of this principle.

I believe that a gallery that seeks to represent our community should be actively involved in outreach. The lead information that we supplied is a good starting point. It makes no sense to me that the Remai will only consider "recognized" artists. The question arises as to how local creators are to gain recognition if the Remai is not interested. I acknowledge that there is a substantial amount of local visual art that is not of sufficient quality to merit being shown. However, there are diamonds to be discovered if effort is put toward searching.

3. Contact with Sarina Gercher

On January 6, I emailed Sarina (as a member of Council and a Remai Board member), encouraging her to advocate for more local representation in shows at the gallery. I provided her with my summary of exhibitions and informed her of plans to met with curatorial staff. Subsequently, we had a telephone conversation on January 12. On February 1, we discussed the meeting we had with Bevan. I told Sarina that, based on information available to me, the gallery was probably going to meet its indigenous objectives but fall short of local representation. After this call, I received an email from Sarina (that I assume was partly authored by gallery staff) that showed substantially different results than what I had found. (There was no review and correction my spreadsheet or a similar listing supporting the percentages shown.) I am dismayed that after the open communication I have had with gallery staff that now, after about a year's exposure, my information is being contradicted.

My motivation in assembling this information was to be able to determine, based on facts, how well the Remai was progressing in meeting its <u>own stated objectives</u>. In my dialogue with Sarina, I had the impression that the Remai Board was not being advised about ongoing progress on indigenous and local representation.

4. My Requests

- a) Please email me the Remai's data supporting the summary information included in Sarina's email. Based on your March 10 email, this information has been completed by gallery staff.
- b) It is the curatorial staff's task to select works for exhibition. It would be a breath of fresh air if ongoing local outreach was part of their mandate. The limitation that only "recognized" local artists can have their work exhibited presents a "catch 22" to most creators who do not have the resources to promote themselves in smaller Saskatchewan communities and/or other provinces. Meaningful and consistent outreach would change the "don't bother approaching the Remai" attitude of many local visual artists.

- c) An artist's portal would be a welcome addition to the gallery's website. The McKenzie Gallery in Regina has a portion of their website entitled "for artists". It contains the relevant information for that audience. As stated previously, including a portal is counterproductive if only "recognized" individuals are ultimately invited to show their work.
- d) You have stated that my inquiries have prompted "fresh perspectives for our communications and curatorial staff". Discussions around this are probably in the early stages. If I can contribute to this dialogue, I would be happy to do so. Once settled, new initiatives should be made known to the arts community in Saskatchewan. (The Sask. Arts Board, CARFAC, the Sask. Arts Alliance, and the Sask. Craft Council can reach the key audience.)
- e) If the Remai wishes to make a visible demonstration of support for local artists, a digital and physical bulletin board could be included in its website and at the entry to the gallery. There is currently no central location for arts events to be promoted each organization does what it can within its capabilities.

Lee Fuller Willow Street Saskatoon, SK S7J

Copy to: Sarina Gercher, Michelle Jacques, Bevan Bradley, Ray Keighley and Christiane Stolhoffer

Email Dated March 28, 2023

Dear Lee,

Thank you for following up with this email and for this dialogue. We admire your palpable passion for the Saskatoon art scene!

In response to your specific requests.

- a) The statistics that Sarina provided you were painstakingly verified by us and Michelle Jacques. The numbers are based on the spreadsheet that Bevin shared with you in her meeting with you in January. Doing a detailed review did alert us to a couple of lovely local artists presentations in interstitial spaces such as Darrell Bell and Wally Dion that we had not initially captured and are not yet online.
- b) A point of clarification around the word recognized. Our curators showcase "recognized" (for lack of a better word) artists of course, but they also spend a great deal of time getting to know artists in our community and further afield, giving opportunities to artists at various stages of their professional careers. Local outreach is very much a part of that and will continue to be in future years. Please do forward on invitations to community presentation or studio events that might be of interests to the curators. We hope you will also visit us to experience these artists and all our programs.
- c) An artist portal/contact page is in development and has always been a part of the scope for our new website.
- d) Thanks for all your tips on organizations to be in touch with locally. We spent a great deal of our first year here connecting with Directors and programmers at the Sask Arts Board, Sask Art Alliance, Craft Council, Wanusekwin, the University galleries and many more. We are highly collaborative and know that those relationships will continue to flourish for us as CEO and across our entire team.
- e) Thanks for the sharing the idea for a shared arts calendar. We'll discuss the idea with our colleagues provincially and keep in touch.

We will reach out if there are opportunities to speak further. In the meantime, we wish you all the best,

Aileen and Johan

May 12, 2023 Email

Hi Aileen and Johan. I thought it was time to follow up on your March 28 email.

a) I have asked Michelle for a copy of the material you assembled tracking the home bases of artists you have exhibited at the Remai. I hope to receive that information soon.

b) I forwarded information to Michelle on a seasonal home-based commercial gallery located across the river from the Remai (i.e. the Backdoor Gallery). The couple who are opening their home are Rene and Allan Duddridge. It is a short and pleasant walk to their place at 103 Saskatchewan Crescent West. They have 31 artists work being shown. They are open Wednesday to Sundays inclusive from 11:00AM to 5:00PM. They can be reached by phone at 306-652-9193.

c) When do you plan on having an artist's portal included in your website? It is my understanding that adding this functionality is not difficult.

d) With respect to contact with local arts organizations, you state that early on in your time in Saskatoon, you contacted many of the groups we suggested. I understand that there has recently been relationship building with the Saskatchewan Craft Council. I hope this is one of many active partnerships that will develop.

e) Similar to an artist's portal, an arts calendar would be quite easy to put in place. As an example, the U of S has a public physical board, This is open to anyone, subject to approval. This authorization is shown through a stamp on the material. We are entering the busy season for arts shows, so it would be very helpful to at least have a physical bulletin board near the entry to the gallery.

Thanks

Lee Fuller

June 8, 2023 Email – Response to May 12 Email

Dear Lee,

On behalf of the CEOs, curatorial team and Remai Modern Board of Directors, thank you for your latest email.

They have appreciated the opportunity to engage in this dialogue and to showcase the numerous ways we are supporting artists from our region and beyond. At this time, we must respectfully conclude this conversation.

Wishing you all the best,

Yvonne

Yvonne Brooks (she/her) Executive Assistant +1 306 975-8051 ybrooks@remaimodern.org remaimodern.org 102 Spadina Crescent East Saskatoon SK S7K 0L3 Canada