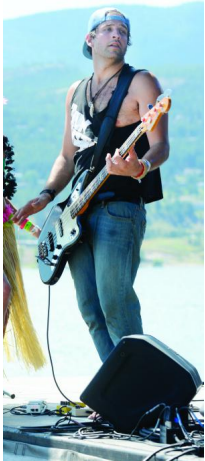


Written by Ron Seymour  
Saturday, 01 February 2014 02:00 -

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The Keloha music festival, which lost \$100,000 last summer, could say aloha to a \$15,000 grant from the City of Kelowna.



A member of the band Mindil Beach Markets performs at Tugboat Bay during the 2013 Keloha Music and Arts Festival. The Keloha music festival, which lost \$100,000 last summer, could say aloha to a \$15,000 grant from the City of Kelowna.

City staff believe the investment will help Wet Ape, the Keloha organizers, make the event a success and deliver more tourism-related economic benefits to the city.

"This one-time investment of strategic fund dollars will provide significant support to Wet Ape and will encourage them to develop and grow the event in Kelowna this coming summer," reads part of a report by city staffer Mariko Siggers that will be considered at Monday's council meeting.

Keloha is a youth- and family-oriented music festival with a tropical theme that has taken place the past two summers in Kelowna's Waterfront Park. About half the 8,000 people who attended last year's festival came from outside the Okanagan.

However, the event has not yet turned a profit. City staff say it's common for it to take three years before a tipping point is reached for any fledgling festival, where a decision is made on whether it should continue or cease.

"While there is no guarantee of success, Keloha has gained momentum during its first two years and has potential to become a mainstay in the Western Canadian summer festival lineup," Siggers says.

For this year, organizers have scaled back the festival's overall budget and secured more

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private sponsorships. Tourism Kelowna is also committed to investing \$15,000 in the festival, as it did last year.

If council endorses the staff recommendation, the money will be taken from a \$25,000 strategic events fund that is designed to help organizers of new festivals get their productions off the ground.

The investments of public money make sense, city officials say, because they support events that bring tourists to town.

Keloha's economic impact last year on the city's economy was estimated by city officials to be \$1.5 million, in terms of spending at hotels, restaurants and other tourism-related businesses.

Keloha is organized by the same promoters of the Center of Gravity festival, a similar but larger youth-oriented festival that also takes place in the summer in Kelowna.