



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE CANCELLATION OF THE 2024 HOME COUNTY MUSIC & ART FESTIVAL**

### **1. Why is the 2024 Festival Cancelled?**

On October 19, 2023, the Board of Directors of the Home County Folk League (HCFL) announced the difficult decision to cancel the 2024 Festival. The reasons for this were two-fold:

- a. Financial – the Festival has been running at a deficit for the last two years. As we are settling the 2023 Festival, we anticipate taking a loss of over \$30,000. When considering the 2024 Festival, we are forecasting a loss of between \$40,000 and \$45,000. Losses like this are not sustainable. With increasing costs and declining revenues, it was not fiscally responsible to hold the Festival this year.
- b. Human Resources – Home County is run almost entirely by volunteers. We have a part-time paid Artistic Director and a part-time Office Administrator (position currently vacant). Over the past few years, and especially post-covid, it has been increasingly difficult to find Board Members and Festival Organizers willing to donate their time and expertise to Home County. We have been fortunate to have an abundance of volunteers at the actual Festival but to plan and organize this Festival is a huge months-long commitment.

These two issues cannot be considered separately. It would require a significant influx of sustainable revenue to be able to hire the appropriate people to run the League and the Festival. In turn, we would need to hire professionals to help identify and secure this source of funding.

### **2. How did the Board come to this decision?**

The Board has been thinking about the viability of the Festival and the HCFL for the past two years. After losing a small amount of money at the 2022 Festival, it was decided to hold one more Festival to get a better picture of the post-Covid environment. During this time, members of the Executive Committee met with past Board Members, community funding partners and key members of our Organizing Committee to learn from their experience and insights.

In September, many of these same people along with the Board, held a facilitated Future Planning session to investigate paths forward for the League. We came to a consensus that the only fiscally responsible thing to do was to cancel the 2024 Festival and further discuss the future of the League with the membership.

### **3. Will there be a Festival in 2025 or beyond?**

The answer to this question has yet to be determined. What we can say for certain is that the Festival cannot return in the same way it has run for the last 48 years. With revenues in decline across the board, a non-ticketed, volunteer-organized festival is no longer viable.

4. **What are the next steps for deciding what happens to Home County?**

The Board of Directors will host the Annual Meeting of Members in November. At this meeting, we will hold an election for Directors and present our current financial position as well as the forecasted outcomes for the 2024 Festival, as determined by our annual budget process. We will also present the findings that came from our Future Planning session in early September.

At the meeting, HCFL members will be able to ask questions and gain a clearer understanding of the challenges presently facing the HCFL.

Interested members can join a planning committee to brainstorm possible solutions for the path ahead. At the meeting, a deadline for the planning committee's recommendation will be set and the decision regarding the future of the League will be made at that time.

5. **When is the Annual Meeting of Members and who can attend?**

The Annual Meeting is November 28, 2023, at 7pm at Grosvenor Lodge, 1017 Western Road. **Only individuals who are paid members of the Home County Folk League may attend the meeting.**

6. **How do I become a member of the Home County Folk League?**

Memberships are \$20 annually and can be purchased through our website at <https://homecounty.ca/become-a-member> or at the meeting. We would prefer if you joined prior to the meeting to ensure we have adequate space to hold everyone.

7. **I cannot attend the meeting. How can I give my input?**

Please visit <https://homecounty.ca/news>. There is an online form for sharing your ideas on the future of Home County. The Board will review submissions and bring them to any discussions on the future of the organization.

8. **How can I stay informed about any decisions made about Home County?**

Following the November 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, we will share news via our website and social media, as well as through a press release.

**9. I want to get involved in helping save Home County. Can I join a Committee? Hold a fundraiser?**

We are very thankful for individuals who have reached out to suggest different types of fundraisers. At this time, the type of funding increase that we would require is an ongoing increase, not a one-time cash influx.

If you have some big ideas and the gumption to execute them, we suggest you consider joining the planning committee at the Annual Meeting of Members in November.

**10. I understand why the Festival is being cancelled but why is the future of the League being considered as well?**

The difficulty of finding and retaining organizational leadership affects both the League and the Festival. The Board of Directors and organizing volunteers have been also responsible for the planning and execution of other League activities, which are no longer possible as people power is low.

There are administrative costs associated with maintaining the League each year. Pre-Covid, these costs were offset by Festival-related revenue streams, such as vendor fees, grants and admission by donation. However, over the past few years, these streams have dwindled and are no longer sufficient. It is not sustainable to continue to incur the League's administrative costs without the ability to cover them.