

Have You Seen The Red Flags Waving?

ASK THE MEMBERS OF THE COBEQUID BRANCH COMMITTEE

(Editor's Note: The following document was released by Valerie J. Meredith, Chair of the Cobequid Branch Committee fighting to keep the Bass River branch open. It is presented here in an unedited version).

Members of the Cobequid Branch Committee continue their fight to keep the Cobequid Branch of the Community Credit Union of Cumberland Colchester Ltd. (Community Credit Union) open and state this past month has proved to be very interesting to say the least.

Committee members are questioning if Management and the Board of Directors understand the meaning of the words respect and accountability. The Committee feels that if Management and the Board of Directors did understand the concept of accountability they would not be choosing to ignore the directive given by the membership at the Special Meeting held in Wentworth on April 24th, 2012. At that meeting, Members passed a motion to have an independent financial review done of the Cobequid (Bass River) Branch. This review has still not been done and Darrell Kuhn, Chief Executive Officer, is not replying to Committee letters. The Committee has pointed out to Mr. Kuhn this was a motion passed according to the By-laws and the Credit Union Act and therefore must be carried out. Also, the Committee reports that Mr. Kuhn is not providing minutes to this same meeting.

The Committee decided to hold a "Unite the Membership" peaceful information session on May 29th, 2012. The purpose of this was to make fellow members aware of the situation that the Cobequid Branch and its members are facing. Members of the Committee and Branch members carried signs expressing slogans such as "Members First", "Save the Bass River Credit Union", and "Put the Community Back in Credit Union" as they strolled the sidewalk in front of the Truro Branch. Committee member Heather Lawson also

handed out flyers to fellow members until being asked to leave by Branch Manager, Wil Ross. As this was a peaceful information session, members left without protest.

Committee members also walked the streets of Bass River, Economy, and surrounding communities collecting members' signatures to request a second special meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to review the finances of the Cobequid Branch and to view any and all information that the Board of Directors and Management used to determine it is financially un-viable. In other words, members are asking to see the proof of the losses that this Branch is accused of accumulating. If this Branch has lost this large amount of money, then it shouldn't be that hard to show the members. Members also requested discussion on the determination made to decrease Branch hours as this caused the Branch to lose business and members. Discussion on the removal of two directors from the Board of Directors was also requested. Although the Board of Directors are not branch specific representatives, the Committee strongly feels that Chair/Director, Charlotte MacVicar, and Director, Howard Welch, have strong ties to the communities that this Branch serves and have not represented the membership appropriately. Members question how Management and the Board of Directors can wait ten years until they are ready to lock the door before making these losses known to the membership?

Not only was there smoke coming from the heels of Committee members after all the walking, but it must have been curling from the phone lines too. The Committee has made and received many phone calls during the past month.

First, a call was made to Michael Wark, Chief Executive Officer, with the Valley Credit Union to touch base with him in regards to the Cobequid Branch's situation. As Community Credit Union was to amalgamate with the Valley Credit Union on July 1st, 2012, the Committee felt it imperative to state their case to Mr. Wark. If a resolution was not found prior to amalgamation, the Committee wanted to be able to continue to work with Valley Credit Union to try to keep the Cobequid Branch open. Mr. Wark assured the Committee that the Cobequid Branch would continue to operate under First Nova (the amalgamated Credit Union) even though the Branch was not mentioned in the Amalgamation Agreement until September 30th, 2012. Mr. Wark also commented that he expected he would be hearing from the Committee as of July 1st.

Next the Committee received a phone call in response to their letter to Bernie O'Neil, Chief Executive Officer of Atlantic Central. Part of Atlantic Central's role is to represent and support the Credit Unions of the Atlantic Provinces and to manage the system's liquidity reserve requirements. Mr. O'Neil stated that he would be following the events occurring at the Cobequid Branch and commented on the efforts of the Committee. It was pointed out to Mr. O'Neil that the Committee was putting a lot of effort into this but that members would have done the same thing if someone had alerted them to a problem and given them a chance.

The Committee also

received a phone call and letter in response to the complaint that they registered with the Office of the Ombudsperson. Mr. Clarence Landry, Ombudsman, has determined that the Committee's complaint falls outside of his jurisdiction and therefore he could only try to offer alternatives for the Committee to pursue. Mr. Landry suggested the Committee contact Mr. Wark and petition the Valley Credit Union and/or contact the Superintendent of Credit Unions. Unfortunately, as the Committee was already pursuing both of these suggestions, the letter was of little assistance.

At the time the Committee registered a complaint with Mr. Landry, they also wrote to Doug Murphy, the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, to alert him to the situation playing out at the Cobequid Branch. On June 7th, 2012, the Committee wrote again to Mr. Murphy and registered a formal complaint with his office in regards to the actions of the Board of Directors, Management, and the entire handling of the proposed closure of the Cobequid Branch. The Committee stressed to Mr. Murphy that Management and the Board of Directors need to be held accountable for their actions. Mr. Murphy responded by telephone the next day and assured the Committee that he was making inquiries on their behalf and holding meetings with respect to same.

The Committee also contacted local Councilor Tom Taggart to ask for his support and assistance. Mr. Taggart offered to contact Mr. Kuhn in

an effort to arrange a meeting. Mr. Taggart suggested a meeting between Management, the Committee, and himself to see what could be done to turn this situation around. Mr. Kuhn did respond to

Mr. Taggart's request and agreed to meet with the Committee but as his terms were rather insulting the Committee replied "No Deal". Mr. Kuhn agreed to meet with three Committee members, all of whom must have signed a confidentiality agreement before the meeting. Mr. Taggart could not attend, and the request sent in by the Committee for a second special meeting had to be waived!

The Committee questions who would benefit from this meeting and feel certain that it would not be the members of the Cobequid Branch.

MLA Karen Casey was also contacted by the Committee and she has also lent her support to the members of the Cobequid Branch and the Committee and its' endeavours. Mrs. Casey attended a Committee meeting on June 13th, 2012, and shared ideas and suggestions with the Committee. Mrs. Casey also offered to write to the Chair of the Board, Charlotte MacVicar.

Then just in case things weren't already interesting enough, staff announced that they were ready to strike! Staff at all three branches of the Community Credit Union voted in favor of strike action due to bullying and disrespect by Management! Once again, Members ask where are those wonderful values that the Community Credit Union is supposed to promote?

Members sadly feel that respect, integrity, fairness, and teamwork have apparently also been forgotten.

Then to top everything off, Valley Credit Union, in a surprising turn of events, terminated the Amalgamation Agreement with Community Credit Union. Although the Valley Credit Union cited the reason for termination as wanting to focus on their priorities and strengthening their presence in the Valley communities, Members can not help but wonder if they noticed "the red flags waving". Did Valley Credit Union take a moment to glance behind those red flags, like many Community Credit Union members have, and find peeking out from behind them the Management and Board of Directors of Community Credit Union?

The Committee wants to show that Community Credit Union members are willing to use the services offered by this Credit Union but Management is placing many obstacles in their paths. Therefore, the Committee is asking members of all branches to "Tell Us Their Story". The Committee would like to be able to document problems members have encountered. These same members state that they have obtained the same services at other financial institutions without the hoops and hurdles.

After a month of many surprises, members are still left looking though for the principles that were the basis of them joining a Credit Union in the first place and demand their immediate return!

Deadline for the August issue of
Shoreline
Journal is July 24

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.theshorelinejournal.com

AMALGAMATION OFF

Continued from page 1

request that all memos and reports that the Board considered in making its decision to close the Cobequid Branch (Bass River) be available for discussion with the members.

To discuss the new business that arose at the 2011 Annual General Meeting as set out under the heading of New Business in the Minutes of the 2011 Annual General Meeting. Specifically, to discuss the data which the Board referred to as being the basis of the decision for new hours; and to discuss the Board's concern with safety issues; and

To discuss the removal and anticipated motion for removal of the following directors from The Board of Directors: Charlotte MacVicar, Chairperson/Director and Howard Welch, Director.

May 30: Letter to Darrell Kuhn, CEO, asking for confirmation of when the independent financial review of the branch as approved at the special Meeting on April 24th will be carried out and when

minutes from that meeting will be available to members.

June 6: Further five page letter to Doug Murphy, Superintendent, of Financial Institutions asking for his immediate attention to a variety of matters relating to the proposed closure of the branch.

June 6: Press release issued by Valley Credit Union stating its board of directors had decided to terminate its amalgamation agreement with Community Credit Union.

June 14: Follow up letter to Board of Directors seeking information on when the independent financial review would be carried out, who is conducting the review and when the results will be made available to the committee, and when they will receive copy of the special meeting held April 24th in Wentworth.

The committee has also compiled a detailed summary of its activities, which is contained in a separate article, "Have you seen the Red Flags Waving?", which is printed above.



Atlantic Grand Circuit Week

July 22 - 29

TRURO RACEWAY

Entertainment You Can Bet On - Racing Rain or Shine

Climate controlled grandstand, canteen, dining room and lounge

Free admission and parking

Phone 893-8075 www.truroraceway.ca



5 cards of exciting racing

Stakes races plus the Atlantic Aged Mares and Exhibition Cup Invitational

Also on July 28 –Breakfast in the grandstand

Children's Fun Day, sponsored by Little Wonders Day Care

Open House, co-sponsored by Greenhawk-Truro

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE!

GOLF TOURNAMENT Friday, July 27 - Mountain Golf & Country Club