



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Thursday, April 18, 2019
Halifax Chamber of Commerce
32 Akerley Boulevard Dartmouth, NS
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
Patrick Sullivan

The Chamber's Annual General Meeting is a mandatory function of the Chamber's Bylaws, where certain processes must be completed and traditions upheld.

First, I would like to give a brief update on what we have been working on since last year's Annual General Meeting

The AGM is the perfect time to pause and reflect on what your Halifax Chamber of Commerce has accomplished over the past 12 months. It also gives us time to examine our opportunities and challenges.

Your Chamber of Commerce is made up primarily of small businesses, with 82% of the member companies having fewer than 25 employees. Many of our events and advocacy work is focused on their needs and challenges. Now let's review the year.

This year was strong financially.

Expenses and revenues were better than budget which led to a net income of \$115,172 versus only \$13,543 the previous year.

Our revenue sources are primarily from our members, whether through annual dues, ticket sales for our events including our upcoming Spring Dinner or our Business Awards in January, and our luncheons and smaller events throughout the year.

Last year, we reached the end of our 2013-2018 Strategic Plan. We designed and presented the new Strategic Plan last fall, as more of an evolution rather than a revolution of the previous plan.

The plan is designed to help guide the Board of Directors, task forces and staff in our efforts around advocacy, event and communication themes.

Our purpose is to create value and prosperity for our members.

We provide services they need, events that will help them learn and we advocate for conditions in the economy that enhance their prosperity.

We are first and foremost here for our members. We want to see them succeed in Halifax.

Before building this plan, we listened to our members' feedback through roundtables and surveys and narrowed our areas of focus based on their needs. The plan's two pillars are:

- Fostering Private Sector Growth
- And Accessing a Skilled Workforce

Mark Sidebottom, Nova Scotia Power led the Membership Committee, which is focused on driving member prosperity and value – the overarching goal of our strategic plan, and we saw real growth last year.

Our Member Services Specialist and the Chamber team have been working hard to ensure member satisfaction remains high. We can see the evidence in our retention rate, that are currently the best we've had in years.

We want all members – which represent 65,000 individuals! – to really understand the value of the Chamber to our city, our province and to them. We provide value to the businesses through networking events, insurance programs, advocacy work, and training.

We want them to see the Chamber is in their corner and prove to them the value of the chamber. In fact, they can check out that value themselves with the ROI calculator on our website.

In 2018, we reshaped our two task forces, focusing on the two pillars of the strategic plan.

Paul Bent, a Self-Employed Consultant, is the chair of the **Fostering Private Sector Growth** Task Force.

This task force works towards a frictionless business environment in Nova Scotia. They focus on optimizing the size of government through:

- Reducing the tax burden, efficient spending in government, and increased revenue
- Creating a frictionless business environment through reduced regulatory burden
- Supporting the growth of Nova Scotia's export sector, both goods and services
- Promoting and supporting the growth of Halifax as a major Canadian city

We are currently discussing issues like, the use of P3's, chamber involvement in the fracking debate, growing our exporting businesses in Halifax and positive business stories in our city.

Our task force members will be engaging in social media posts, Chamber member polls, business voice communications and issue note and pre budget submission creation.

Don Bureaux, President of NSCC is the lead on the **Accessing a Skilled Workforce** Task Force.

This task force aims to attract and retain talent in our region. They focus on:

- Immigration to achieve many population targets, whether through direct immigration, interprovincial migration or the addition of underemployed groups in Nova Scotia to our workforce.
- Ensuring youth retention through work integrated learning and successful job placement
- Entrepreneurship training and development

Heading into Spring Dinner, this task force is researching how our members can take advantage of experiential learning.

We have received business voice articles from them, utilized social media to talk about the benefits of hiring students and will be adding other tactics to the list after the next meeting.

Please know that our staff, with the support of our dedicated volunteers, are working to create better networking opportunities, relevant training programs, and news that will help you build your business.

Last year, we led the biggest Small Business Week Halifax had ever seen. In partnership with BDC, we reached out to Business Improvement Districts and business associations and hosted a week full of free events, free training, and an expo.

With almost 1,000 individuals attending the week's events, 300 businesses reached through our Storm the City initiative, 25 booths at the expo, 10 sponsors and 6 community partners, we consider the week a huge success.

We're looking to double our impact in 2019.

We've hosted a variety of training sessions for member businesses to brush up on skills to make them more productive and competitive in the marketplace. Some of the training included marketing, social media, business management, communications, project management and human resources. All training sessions have been sold out with a waiting list.

Halifax is growing, and we want to support our members in taking advantage of every single opportunity that is out there. And perhaps create a few of their own!

Before I sign off, I would like to talk to you about some of our latest projects at the Chamber. Our new member engagement initiatives, to hear from our members on important issues facing their businesses.

We want to help our members succeed.

We're committed to providing you with more value for your membership through:

- New Mode tool: Our new advocacy tool that lives on the website. When an issue arises that requires a Chamber response, we now have the opportunity to reach out to our members for their support and can ask them to write directly to political leaders.
- Website and newsletter surveys: We've implemented quickpolls on our website and in our e-newsletters to hear from our members on important issues and incorporate this feedback in our work.

We want to hear from our members on red tape, taxes, and any other issue preventing them from focusing on their business.

When you invite the chamber to become an extension of your team, your business will thrive even more.

It's never a boring day at the Chamber, and we're excited to share some more news with you.

We're in the midst of planning our third edition of the Wonder Women event.

We took 130 members to China last fall for a discounted price of \$2,299. We walked the Great Wall and Tian An Men Square, and experienced a beautiful and ancient culture.

This September, we're offering a trip to India. Members will see the Taj Mahal at sunrise, and taste one of the most popular cuisines of the world.

In two weeks from today, we will be hosting our annual Spring Dinner, on May 2nd.

Please join us to hear from business leaders on how we can strengthen the conditions to create, attract and retain talent in Nova Scotia. In line with our Strategic Plan, we'll be discussing the importance of Work-Integrated Learning to our province's economic growth.

I'm looking forward to another outstanding year in 2019.

Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Sullivan', written in a cursive style.

Patrick Sullivan
President and CEO