



*Truro & Colchester*  
**CHAMBER**  
*of Commerce*

**134th Annual General Meeting**

February 29th, 2024



**Annual General Meeting  
Feb. 29, 2023, 11 a.m.  
Best Western Glengarry, 150 Willow St., Truro, NS**

**AGENDA**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Introductions of Executive and Board/Regrets**
- 3. Moment of Silence**
- 4. Approval of Agenda**
- 5. Approval of Previous AGM Minutes**
- 6. Business Arising from Previous AGM Minutes**
- 7. Reports**
  - 7.1 President's Report – Eric Tanton
  - 7.2 Executive Director's Report – Sherry Martell
  - 7.3 Auditor's Report – Grant Thornton
  - 7.4 Committee Reports:
    - a. Membership Committee- Heidi Sponagle
    - b. Immigration Task Force – Glen MacKenzie
    - c. Nominating Committee Report and Election of Officers – Ron Smith
- 8. New Business**
  - 8.1 Swearing in of New Board – Jennifer Hamilton-Upham
  - 8.2 Incoming President Report
  - 8.3 2024 Budget Presentation – Cyndi MacLean
  - 8.4 Appointment of Auditors
- 9. Adjournment**

**133<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting Minutes**

March 29, 2023, 11:00 AM

Inn on Prince

Truro, Nova Scotia

**In Attendance:**

Alison Butcher	Geoff Stewart	Mark Skinner
Alison Graham	Georg Oberprieler	Mark Wood
Allayna Munroe	George White	Matthew Mossman
Amanda Greek	Haley Smith	Mayor Bill Mills
Andrea Jackson	Heidi Sponagle	Mayor Christine Blair
Bill Thomas	Jenn Mantin	Mayor George Lloy
Calista Kossatz	Jennifer Hamilton-Upham	Megan Burgess
Cathy Hinton	Jeremy Nichols	Michelle McCann
Craig Sootiens	Jim Flemming	Mike Dolter
Crystal Clauige	Joanne Bouley	Richard MacKenzie
Cyndi MacLean	Justin Julien	Ron Smith
Dale Bogle	Karen Putman	Roseanne Chapman
David Hachey	Kendra Clark	Sam Madore
David Phillips	Kim Boomer	Sarah Flemming
David Webber	Laura McLaughlin	Sharon Corcoran
Desiree Stockermans	Leana Todd	Stephen McKeller
Doug MacInnes	Lisa Murphey	Steven Wilson
Emily MacRae	Logan MacNeil	Susan Creelman
Eric Tanton	Lyssa Jones	Wayne Talbot
Farida Gabbani	Margaret Roberts	Yvonne Thyssen-Post
Sherry Martell	Lisa Matthews	Chelsea Weatherbee
Ashlyn Johnstone	Brendon Smithson	

1. **Call Meeting to Order**
2. **Introductions of Executive and Board of Directors/Regrets**
3. **Moment of Silence**
4. **Approval of Agenda**  
 MOTION to approve Agenda.  
**First:** Ron Smith  
**Second:** Cyndi MacLean  
**Motion Carried**

**5. Approval of 2022 Annual General Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION** to approve the 2022 Annual General Meeting Minutes

**First:** Georg Oberprieler

**Second:** Eric Tanton

**Motion Carried**

**6. Business Arising from Previous Annual General Meeting**

No business arising

**7. Reports**

**7.1 President's Report**

It has been my pleasure to be the President of the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce the last two years. First, I would like to thank our Chamber staff, Sherry, Lisa and Chelsea, as well as our Past President Ron Smith and all our board members. I have built relationships with many of you which will last long into the future. Your dedication and passion for business success in our county is applauded and I especially thank everyone who has given their time to be a part of our Chamber. The greatest gift a person can give is their time and I thank you all for it.

We are the second largest Chamber in Nova Scotia. We are membership based. We are not government funded and last year we hit a major milestone. 500 plus, plus, plus members! This is a wonderful accomplishment for staff and those who use the Chamber as a resource. Member-to-Member discounts, advocacy to all levels of government on behalf of business, insurance coverage for your business, networking, grant benefits to small business for signs or E-commerce support, whatever the value it is you see with the Chamber, it is working. It has been successful, and our Chamber will be in place for another 133 years.

In my time we helped navigate our members through COVID-19. Venturing into the unknown was scary as a non-profit organization but we kept our focus, which was supporting our members through the ever-changing narrative and here we all are together. We continue to support our members and local business community and in 2023 we continue to face challenges which may have sparked from COVID-19. But in the end, with local business leaders supporting fellow local business leaders, we will come out strong.

Ron Smith, Past President and previously President of our Chamber, your steady hand and knowledge in our area and experience has provided the Chamber a wealth of knowledge. Thank you, Ron, for your dedication to the Chamber all these years. Also, to our outgoing solicitor George White. George knows the right questions to ask on any scenario when we all think we have it all figured out. George thank you for your guidance and helpful hand.

I have had the pleasure of attending the Atlantic and Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM, sat in policy meetings, and watched Sherry represent our Chamber with style. I have sat on our own local task forces, been a part of two strategic planning sessions covering six years, met, and networked with numerous business leaders throughout the county, and watch our Chamber grow in size and location to offer our members a larger area to conduct meetings, access service, the internet and collaborate.

I believe it is important to keep moving forward. Our Chamber has and will continue to be progressive, service our members and work towards supporting business success in Colchester County.

Thank you for your support.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Matthew Mossman, President

**MOTION** for the adoption of President Matthew Mossman's Report

**First:** Sharon Corcoran

**Second:** Kim Boomer

**Motion Carried**

## **7.2 Executive Director's Report**

I would like to begin by offering my sincere appreciation and thanks to Outgoing President Matthew Mossman for his extraordinary dedication to the Chamber during his 2 years as our President. Elected in 2020, days before the COVID-19 pandemic rocked the world with shutdowns and a total change of policy and function, he has led us through two of the most challenging and rewarding years in our 133-year history.

I would also like to recognize the contributions of our Past-President Ron Smith as he carries out his last official duties today with our board. Your wisdom and mentorship have been invaluable during your six years with the organization. I also extend warm thanks to our executive committee and our board of directors for their ongoing guidance and support.

Reflecting on the past year is always rewarding as I prepare a report for the AGM. I can tell you emphatically, that 2022 was a tremendous year for the Chamber in both its growth in membership and its value in the business community. It was most certainly a year of action and accomplishment.

Our membership grew 22 percent during the past year. By industry standards that far exceeds expectation. We were able to celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> member milestone during our Annual Small Business Awards in October and we continued to grow. We ended 2022 with a historically high of 515 members.

We have grown further topping over 525 as of today. We remain the second largest chamber in the province of Nova Scotia and we continue to be a leader within the regional, Atlantic and Canadian Chambers with representation on several policy committee.

In the past year we have acted as the voice of business on several issues such as immigration support, childcare, workforce and labour challenges, economic development, increased power rates, tourism healthcare and physician recruitment, taxation, inflationary pressures on fuel and other products, and many other regional, provincial and national issues.

We advocated for support for small business following Hurricane Fiona in September as well as ongoing challenges with COVID-19. We participated in the national policy debates in Ottawa with the Canadian Chamber and continue to bring issues to the table to seek support from government.

However, while advocacy for business is a driving force behind the Chamber, we have also offered hands-on local support for local business in new and innovative ways in the past year and new benefits for membership.

In the past year, we hosted 28 events with for our membership including luncheons, breakfasts, workshops, socials and our marquee events and awards welcoming more than 1,370 attendees.

One of our greatest accomplishments in the past year was successfully leading a \$237,000 project to support the revitalization and rediscovery of our main streets and neighbourhoods as we emerge from the pandemic. This multi-pronged project supported more than 100 businesses with microgrants across the

whole county for beautification and marketing, a shop local contest with the participation of 38 businesses and curated hundreds of seasonal local gift boxes featuring the products of more than 60 businesses.

We continued to provide support for tourism with our Explore Central NS brand and published the first printed tourism guide for the region in more than seven years. We also administered provincial funds to 10 tourist information centres in Central Nova Scotia, as well as a one-time activity of operating the Downtown Truro Visitor Information Centre.

Along with these activities we partnered with the Town of Truro, Downtown Truro Partnership, Town of Stewiacke, County of Colchester and Millbrook Cultural Heritage Centre on many tourism related initiatives. We purchased reusable shopping bags for the Heritage Centre and assisted with new signage. We covered the cost for the installation of web cameras at the Civic Square and Fundy Discovery site, printed maps of the Truro region, replaced our signage at Exit 14 by Giant Tiger to better promote local attractions, and worked with our partners to market the region on social media. We also launched an umbrella project in Downtown Truro where more than 35 business now have umbrellas for the use of shoppers as they move from shop to shop in poor weather.

Butterflies unite people around the globe in celebration of spring. This year, in partnership with Downtown Truro Partnership, the Town of Truro, and the North American Indigenous Games we organized and covered the cost of a seven-week light show projected at Civic Square, as well as hosting a Celebrate Spring Festival for the community that was attended by nearly 300 people at the Farmer's Market earlier this month.

Leased an apartment to aid in Physician Recruitment, completed a Workplace wellness plan project and worked with the Truro Colchester Newcomer group to create tools and promote resources to assist new people arriving in our community. Along with these activities, the Chamber fundraised \$30,000 toward and provided in-kind support to the Truro Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity as part of our ongoing commitment to the organization.

In total, for the second year in a row the Chamber has invested more than \$700,000 in the past year in the local economy through its execution of special projects and operations.

Your Chamber is in a strong financial position which can be attributed to our growing membership, support of our events and the generosity of our many sponsors. We are also very fortunate to have partnerships with Theriault Financial and Payworks who have generously supported the Chamber in the past year.

In the coming weeks, the Chamber will release its new Strategic Plan charting the course for the organization for the next three years. We are beginning the process of reaccreditation of the organization which will be completed in the fall.

We will work with our many municipal and tourism partners to establish a Destination Marketing Levy set to be enacted by the fall to better promote the assets of this region on a provincial, national and international stage.

The Chamber has planned a full roster of events in 2023 and will once again participate in policy debates at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM while also tabling a policy supporting the repair of the Chignecto Isthmus in partnership with the Cumberland County Chamber of Commerce.

In closing, I want to reinforce my commitment to you that the Chamber is focused on supporting you and your business regardless of size or which sector you work in. We listen to you and we learn from you that is one of our greatest strengths that drives our actions.

To our staff, Chelsea Weatherbee, Lisa Matthews and our project support student Ashlyn Johnstone I am incredibly proud to work with you as a team of exceptionally talented individuals. Your commitment to the organization is an inspiration and all our members should feel extraordinary confidence knowing we work on your behalf everyday to create a thriving, collaborative connected business community.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Martell  
Executive Director

**MOTION** for the adoption of Executive Director, Sherry Martell's Report

**First:** Yvonne Thyssen-Post

**Second:** Bill Mills

**Motion Carried**

### **7.3 Auditor's Report – Grant Thornton**

Alison Butcher, Grant Thornton LLP presented the audited financials for 2022, approved by the Board of Directors on February 8, 2023

**MOTION** to accept the Audited 2022 Financial Statements

**First:** Georg Oberprieler

**Second:** Ron Smith

**Motion Carried**

### **7.4 Committee/Task Force Reports**

#### **(a) Membership Task Force Report**

The Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce works to ensure that our members see a return on their investment in our organization. Value in membership is one of the five core pillars of the Chamber's Strategic Plan.

With dedicated membership growth efforts, we were able to end the 2022 year, with a historic high of 515 members, representing a 22 percent growth in membership. This milestone was achieved by setting goals and developing strategies to attract and retain members. About 75 percent of our members employ 10 people or less, a true representation of a Small Business Community.

Our Chamber continues to create innovative ways to add value in membership such as continuing to offer our Collaboration Centre free of charge for members, sponsored by Wilsons Heating, hosting in-person networking events; expanded benefit partners to save business money and coordinated special projects in tourism, promoting shop local and E-commerce to support business.

As we look forward to 2023, the Chamber will continue to focus on our on our membership growth, discuss ways we can further increase value in membership and increase engagement in our business community.

We look forward to supporting all our members in the coming year, as well as welcoming new businesses to the network.



Report prepared for Heidi Sponagle, Chairwoman Membership Task Force

**MOTION** for the adoption of Membership Task Force’s Report  
**First:** Cyndi MacLean  
**Second:** Christine Blair  
**Motion Carried**

**(b) Nominating Committee Report & Election of Officers and Directors**

My name is Ron Smith, Chairman of the Nominating Committee for the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce.

Our committee’s mandate is twofold. We are charged with nominating a slate of officers & directors for the annual general meeting and conducting the election of officers and directors at the Annual General Meeting.

On behalf of the Nominations Committee, I nominate the following for the 2023/2024 Chamber year:

- President** – Eric Tanton
- 1st Vice President** – Kim Boomer
- Treasurer** – Cyndi MacLean
- Solicitor** – Jennifer Hamilton-Upham
- Directors:** (\*returning)

Carol Fisher*	Doug MacInnis*
Christian Thompson*	Heidi Sponagle*
Glen MacKenzie*	Jeremy Nichols*
Kenisha MacMaster*	Vonda Hazzard*

As per our current Bylaws, Matthew Mossman will continue to serve as Past President and will be one of the five officers and one of the 13 directors.

**MOTION** for the adoption of Nomination Committee’s Report  
**First:** George White  
**Second:** David Webber  
**Motion Carried**



**Election of Officers and Directors**

The Election of Officers and Directors for the 2023/2024 Chamber year were opened. Members of Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce present, and with annual dues current, were eligible to vote.

Motions to cease nominations from the floor prior to the last call for nominations are out of order.

The Member receiving the highest number of votes for the specific Officer position is elected.

The 10 members receiving the highest number of votes for the 10 director positions are considered elected.

The Executive Director confirmed we had **32 eligible members present**, and therefore meet the quorum requirements of 25 members.

The nominating committee has nominated members for the five officer positions and the 10 additional director positions.

The call for additional nominations from the floor was made three times.

**MOTION** to cease nominations from the floor.

**First:** Christine Blair

**Second:** Bill Mills

**Motion Carried**

With no additional nominations from the floor, Chairperson Ron Smith, declared the election closed and the following nominated members elected for the positions of:

**President** – Eric Tanton

**1st Vice President** – Kim Boomer

**Treasurer** – Cyndi MacLean

**Solicitor** – Jennifer Hamilton-Upham

**Directors:** (\*returning)

Carol Fisher*	Doug MacInnis*
Christian Thompson*	Heidi Sponagle*
Glen MacKenzie*	Jeremy Nichols*
Kenisha MacMaster*	Vonda Hazzard*

Any vacancies throughout the Chamber year, can be filled by approved motion by the new board.

**8. New Business**

**8.1 Swearing in of New Board Executive & Directors – George White**

## 8.2 Incoming President's Report

Welcome to another new year at the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce. I am thrilled to pen this note with great optimism for the year ahead of us. Your Chamber staff have been diligent in planning for the upcoming year to continue to provide value for membership through engaging activities, events and advocacy for business in our region.

I'm pleased to welcome back so many faces to our Chamber board – it is a testament to the work accomplished that we have so many returning board members and I look forward to continuing to support the Chamber with these individuals.

Growth in membership and value in membership have been pillars of the work accomplished in 2022, and I'm confident our Chamber can benefit from the diversity and strength of our members as we face the challenges and opportunities ahead in 2023. We are continually working to recognize the current needs and predict the future needs of our business community, and will strive to bring support, resources and awareness to our members.

As we develop a Strategic plan for our Chamber for the years ahead, I look forward to the collaboration of our members and commitment from our staff to enable business development and growth for our region.

We have all the necessities to thrive as a region. We offer opportunities to a work force that rivals no other regions in Nova Scotia. The diversity and scope of our industry representation offers chances for us to partner together for growth. We can lead by example through providing sustainable, inclusive and welcoming work environments. Together as a Chamber, we will meet challenges head on and prosper.

I'm excited for the path ahead. I'd like to personally thank our Board of Directors, who have dedicated their personal time to serve on the Chamber. Thank you to our capable and motivated staff who provide value to our membership day in and day out. And a special thank you to our growing membership. We gain strength in numbers, and pride in your membership. Your membership allows us to offer enhanced programs drawing on the unique knowledge and skills of our member companies.

We look forward to continuing to support you.

Eric Tanton

**MOTION** for the adoption of President Eric Tanton's Report

**First:** Kim Boomer

**Second:** Matthew Mossman

**Motion Carried**

### 8.3 Treasurer's 2023 Budget Presentation

Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce  
Statement of Revenue and Expenses  
2023 Budget

	2022 Actual	2022 Budget	2023 Budget
<b>Revenues</b>			
Membership fees	88,159	83,500	96,000
Insurance commissions	63,094	56,500	65,000
Other earnings (Note 1)	92,823	80,750	69,960
Special projects	305,789	-	
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>549,865</b>	<b>220,750</b>	<b>230,960</b>
<b>Operating expenses</b>			
Advertising	4,219	4,100	4,000
Bad debt		1,200	300
Bank charges	3,548	2,540	3,000
Canadian Chamber AGM/Atlantic Chamber	5,346	3,150	5,000
Consulting fees	-	1,225	2,500
Depreciation	3,169	5,580	5,030
Dues and fees	3,569	3,600	4,160
Director's and commercial insurance	1,686	1,375	1,600
Meeting and travel expenses	2,824	4,000	4,500
Office rent	14,400	13,200	13,200
Office supplies and cleaning	3,232	3,400	3,360
Postage	644	800	750
Professional fees	13,957	13,000	14,000
Salaries and benefits	150,530	150,850	154,760
Technology		800	3,000
Membership Management software	1,056	1,060	1,100
Utilities	5,168	5,170	5,000
Other expenses		200	200
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>213,348</b>	<b>215,250</b>	<b>225,460</b>
<b>Net from operations</b>	<b>336,517</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>5,500</b>
<b>Special Projects Expenses</b>			
Special Project - phsy/workforce		-	-
Other special projects			
<b>Total special projects</b>	<b>304,654</b>		
<b>OTHER EXPENSES</b>			
Small Business Week Legacy		2,500	2,500
Scholarship expense	2,000	3,000	3,000
	<b>306,654</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>5,500</b>
	29,863		
<b>Excess of revenues over expenses</b>	<b>29,863</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

**MOTION** for the adoption of Treasurer Cyndi MacLean's 2023 Budget Report

**First:** Ron Smith

**Second:** Sarah Flemming

**Motion Carried**

**8.4 Appointment of Auditors**

**MOTION** to appoint Grant Thornton as the Chamber of Commerce's Auditor for 2023

**First:** Cyndi MacLean

**Second:** Georg Oberprieler

**Motion Carried**

**9. Adjournment**

**MOTION** to Adjourn the 133<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting was made by Sharon Corcoran

**President's Report**  
**Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce**  
**Annual General Meeting, Feb. 29, 2024**

It gives me great pleasure to share this President's report on behalf of the Board of Directors of the chamber. Over the past year, there has been a renewed focus on aligning our chamber's activities, advocacy and member services around our strategic vision.

In the area of membership value and services to our membership, the Chamber has delivered timely and well attended sessions that span from educational, current local events/issues, and social connections. We are always encouraged to see the participation of our membership at these events, and have focused on ensuring we deliver meaningful opportunities through these events. Thank you to all those who have sponsored events, and to those who have participated actively – we see the benefits first-hand as we bring the business community together through ongoing partnerships and informal networking.

This membership value has been reflected in our new memberships and also in our renewal and retention rates. To date, our chamber is 510 strong – making us the second largest chamber in the province. What's more – our representation from various business sectors, communities, and backgrounds has broadened – making our chamber much more diverse, and that much more capable of meeting the business challenges and opportunities that lay ahead.

Our chamber staff have continued to deliver exceptional execution against their business plan. In the areas of advocacy, our chamber was fundamental in the efforts to bring forward a national transportation and infrastructure policy at the national Chamber AGM in Calgary. Our Executive Director Sherry has once again shown her leadership and collaborative spirit in bringing this important piece of policy forward.

We have continued our partnerships in areas of economic development over the past year. With round tables and consultations completed with our partners at TCPEP, school boards, Community partnerships, Municipalities, First Nations communities, and other provincial and national partnerships. Most recently we engaged in a day-long event focused on attracting, supporting, and retaining foreign talent to help address the issues related to workforce vacancies. Further, our work with Nova Scotia Tourism ensured that services to provide guidance and a welcome to those who visit our area were maintained. Our work in these areas continues as we look to provide support to community capital projects over the coming years.

Finally, I'd like to address our board of dedicated and engaged business leaders. I thank each and every one of you for your voice, for your experience and your knowledge. Also, to our broader membership, thank you for sharing your insights, feedback and for your engagement. Hearing regularly from the ideas, concerns, opportunities, and insights into our business community ensures our chamber can deliver timely and valuable services and advocacy.

Sincerely,

Eric Tanton  
President  
Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce

**Executive Director's Report**  
**Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce**  
**AGM, Feb. 29, 2024, Best Western Glengarry**

Reflecting on the past year, the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce is proud to have cemented our position as a leading force in shaping the economic landscape of the province.

We aspire to even greater heights in the year ahead, fueled by our unwavering commitment to advocating for policies that foster business growth and innovation, and our unwavering dedication to delivering exceptional events, programs, and member services that add real value to our members.

With the support of our members, partners, volunteers, and staff, we are confident that we can continue to drive positive change in the business community and create a more vibrant and prosperous economy for all.

Our goal is to remain at the forefront of progress, relentlessly pursuing new opportunities and bold initiatives that benefit our members and the wider community. Thriving communities and strong business communities go hand in hand, you can't have one without the other.

In the past year, our Chamber has taken on several projects, activities, and initiatives to support our members.

The following is a brief recap of these actions:

We completed a \$237,000 project which began in 2022 and rolled into 2023, spanning nine months, that focused on encouraging people to support local business. As part of this project, we purchased 100 umbrellas for businesses in downtown Truro that were distributed to about 30 businesses by the Downtown Truro Partnership. More than 100 microgrants of \$1,000 or less were distributed to businesses for marketing and beautification activities.

Additional parts of the project included marketing for tourism, local contests with 38 businesses participating, "Shop Local" Boxes featuring locally made goods that supported more than 60 business, signage improvements at Exit 14, and we co-hosted a spring Butterfly festival and light show.

We supported an Immigration Project which will be detailed in the Immigration Task Force report later in the meeting. I will however mention that we were pleased to engage with a local media company, Sonder Creative, to create a video series titled "Newcomer Voices – A Journey in their Words," showcasing vibrant immigrant owned businesses in our region.

Support for tourism was also front and centre last year with a list of actions taken to attract people to this region. The Chamber continues to host the Explore Central NS website and social media pages and respond to inquiries. We will publish our third annual tourism guide for the region in 2024 with 25,000 print copies distributed across the province and a downloadable version accessible on our website.

For the past 7 years we have coordinated a Visitor Information Centre Program to ensure 9 visitor centres receive provincial funding, operate at a high standard, have access to training, and access to materials. We also act as a liaison for them to receive important industry updates.

We have been present at local, provincial, national, and international events to support hosts and welcome visitors to this region.

Despite our efforts, tourism is a unique sector that needs dedicated resources, and we are ready to move on to other areas that also need our attention.

On April 1, our local municipalities will move forward with the implementation of an accommodations levy, that will generate a significant source of dedicated funding to promote this region and attract visitors. This is a monumental step for this region, and we look forward to working with all parties to benefit our business community.

On the Governance side of our operations, the Chamber completed a rigorous re-accreditation process to meet national standards of operation which will stand for the next three years.

The board has also renewed its Strategic plan to guide us for the next three years. The three key pillars in the plan are: Creating Conditions for Economic Growth, Value in Membership and Communications and Marketing. The board has tasked our team with preparing an actionable business plan to address these priorities. This plan will be brought to the board for approval at the December meeting along with an accompanying 2024 budget.

Advocacy for business has been abundant in the past year. It is hard to think back to this time last year when some COVID-19 restrictions remained in place. The Chamber has been present to support recovery efforts and will continue to provide commentary to government on business needs as we move further away from the Pandemic fallout.

We sought the support of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce to advance efforts to protect the vital trade corridor of the Chignecto Isthmus by putting forward a policy position at the national network's debates. We have supported economic development, weighed in on the Childcare program rollout, met with local officials regarding building codes and accessibility standards, pushed for improved roads and had several pivotal meetings regarding the work on highway 102 at the Salmon River Bridge, among a great deal of additional advocacy work.

In the coming months, the chamber will continue to facilitate the actions in its robust business plan. The Chamber continues to be the second largest in the province. Our voice is respected and strengthened through the engagement of our members.

Housing, immigration pathways, labour challenges, WCB program changes, taxes, supply chain challenges, access to healthcare, internet and communication services, improved roadways, childcare, carbon footprints, cost of transportation, food security, incoming Accessibility Act regulations and items needed to spur business growth are all top priorities of the Chamber.

One of the most significant projects the Chamber is launching in 2024 is happening today! We have reinvented our Member-2-Member program to better serve you. One of the key offerings of a Chamber is to provide benefits to members and help them save money. You have told us you wanted increased promotion, increased marketing, to be more engaged with the membership. This new App-based tool "Chamber Perks" will provide that solution as well as promoting support for local businesses.

Stay tuned for a presentation during our Chamber luncheon as we get this project "perking."

We are excited by the possibilities that lie ahead and we are committed to pursuing them with vigor and determination. Join us on this exciting journey as we work together to shape the future of business in Truro and Colchester.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sherry Patriquin-Martell  
Executive Director  
Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce



**Membership Committee Report**  
**Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce**  
**AGM, Feb. 29, 2024**

Value in membership is one of the three key pillars of the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce's Strategic plan that guides our activities and overall program.

Today's AGM is an opportunity to showcase the organization's unwavering commitment to advancing the interests of its members through principled policy work, value-added business services and broad engagement to drive economic growth.

With the continuation of dedicated membership growth efforts, we were able to end the 2023 year with 522 members. This is a slight increase over the previous year as we continue to expand our reach throughout Colchester County.

Our tactics to support membership are as diverse as the variety of business sectors and sizes of businesses that we represent, recognizing that about 82 percent of our members employ 25 people or less, a true representation of a Small Business community.

In 2023, the Chamber's more than 30 events had attendance of over 1,200. This number can be looked at as more than 1,200 opportunities to build your network and collaborate with like-minded business people.

We have strengthened our communication to members as well as our presence on social media. On going advocacy ensures the Voice of the Business community is heard at all levels of government.

Use of our Collaboration Centre continues to be offered free of charge for members, sponsored by Wilsons Heating, and a range of benefit partners have promotions to save business money while supporting your workforce.

As we look forward to 2025, the Chamber will continue to focus on membership value and increasing engagement in our business community.

We are excited to be re-inventing our traditional Member-to-Member benefits program with the use of new technologies with an aim to increase promotion of our membership. The Chamber Perks App, which will be demonstrated later today, will provide increased exposure for members along with giving them the ability to attract new customers.

We look forward to supporting all our members in the coming year, as well as welcoming new businesses to the network.

Report prepared for,  
Heidi Sponagle, Chairwoman Membership Task Force

**Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce**  
**Immigration Task Force Report**  
**AGM, February 29, 2024**

Immigration played a major role in the Chamber's advocacy and action in the past year.

Early in the year, the board struck a committee of the board, the Immigration Task Force, with the purpose of crafting policy statements to guide the Chamber's immigration lobbying efforts with all levels of government and other stakeholders related to the interests of immigration.

The task force is immersed in the organization's efforts to influence immigration legislation and programs by working with staff to compile an informed list of business needs regarding immigration, along with first-hand accounts of businesses tapping into immigration streams to bolster their workforce.

It also works to identify roadblocks within the immigration system and work with staff to communicate these to government and key stakeholders.

The Chamber, along with its partner the Truro Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity, secured a purse of funding in 2022 to complete a year-long, Immigration-related support project, with three objectives that were completed earlier this year.

First, to produce a video series highlighting contributions of immigrants to our local economy; and second, to create and publish support materials that can be used to help those looking to immigrate, or move from elsewhere in Canada, make informed decisions and connect with the right individuals to provide them assistance. Lastly, we hosted information sessions for business to gain insight into immigration pathways.

Being a welcoming community and improving our connection with newcomers is key to growing our economy. Filling job vacancies with qualified labour remains a top challenge for businesses in this region and immigration has a role to play in solving that issue.

Addressing the labour shortage will take a multi-pronged approach from education about labour needs and opportunities considering career paths, to more support for trade training, job readiness skills training and immigration.

There is no question that immigration also enriches communities, grows jobs, adds to cultural diversity and assists in building our economic prosperity.

We joined with other Chambers across the country advocating for a reform of the system to reduce wait times and red tape redundancies, as well as adding more flexibility on a case-by-case basis to address applications, particularly for those trained in skilled trades.

We also know from our Chamber's work supporting newcomers in the community, that a strong support system is needed when they arrive to assist with settlement in an area.

Recently the Chamber and several immigration support partners hosted a half-day session in Truro to learn about immigration pathways and services. Our Chamber's Immigration Task Force hosted a panel discussion to share real-life experiences as businesses working within the immigration systems.

It was an important discussion, and we look forward to continuing to work with our partners to be a welcoming community.

Another initiative the Chamber undertook related to immigration was partnering with the Downtown Truro Partnership to increase activity in the downtown core during the end of winter and early spring months. We hosted an event on the first day of spring in 2023, at the Truro Farmer's Market, "Welcome to Spring – Butterflies & Blossoms Celebration." This event attracted between 200 and 250 attendees, which included a large percentage of students and families who immigrated to our community.

Immigration advocacy and support will continue to be a priority for the chamber in the years ahead.

Report prepared by Sherry Patriquin-Martell

For Glen MacKenize, member of the Chamber's Immigration Task Force

**Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce**  
**Statement of Revenue and Expenses**  
**2024 Budget**

	<b>2023 DEC Actual</b>	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>
<b>Revenues</b>			
Membership fees	94,151	96,000	98,000
Insurance commissions	65,828	65,000	67,000
Other earnings (Note 1)	88,682	69,960	70,500
Special projects	268,313	-	
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>516,974</b>	<b>230,960</b>	<b>235,500</b>
<b>Operating expenses</b>			
Advertising	9,359	4,000	3,400
Bad debt		300	300
Bank charges	3,640	3,000	3,700
Canadian Chamber AGM/Atlantic Chamber	4,732	5,000	5,000
Consulting fees	2,450	2,500	1,000
Depreciation	2,692	5,030	3,000
Dues and fees	4,830	4,160	4,160
Director's and commercial insurance	1,738	1,600	1,700
Meeting and travel expenses	4,203	4,500	4,500
Office rent	14,400	13,200	13,200
Office supplies and cleaning	3,862	3,360	3,000
Postage	552	750	700
Professional fees	30,728	14,000	16,000
Salaries and benefits	138,222	154,760	162,000
Technology	-	3,000	2,000
Membership Management software	1,056	1,100	1,440
Utilities	4,582	5,000	4,700
Other expenses	540	200	200
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>227,586</b>	<b>225,460</b>	<b>230,000</b>
<b>Net from operations</b>	<b>289,388</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>5,500</b>
<b>Special Projects Expenses</b>	<b>268,313</b>		
Special Project - Website		-	5,000
Other special projects			15,000
Special Project - Chamber Perks			5,000
Total special projects			

**OTHER EXPENSES**

		-	-
Small Business Week Legacy	2,500	2,500	2,500
Scholarship expense	2,000	3,000	3,000
	4,500	5,500	30,500
	<hr/>		
Total Special Project Expenses	272,813		
<b>Excess of revenues over expenses</b>	16,575	-	(25,000)
	<hr/> <hr/>		

**Note 1) Other Earnings**

	<b>2023 Dec</b>	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>
Tourism related activities	14,700		17,500
Membership services	4,090		5,400
Golf Tournament	7,285	5,000	6,000
Small Business Week	12,198	10,000	12,000
Annual Dinner	12,171	10,000	12,000
Political speakers	4,234	2,000	3,000
Senate Club	-	(400)	(400)
Small events/ Lunch&Learn/Networking	4,938	2,500	3,000
Other Revenue	61,246	38,860	12,000
	120,862	67,960	70,500
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# Thank You to Our Chamber Partners

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Truro & Colchester *Partnership*  
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