



SAINT JOHN REGION

# THE CHAMBER

CHAMPIONS FOR BUSINESS

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2022

**JUNE 28, 2023**

**Delta Saint John**



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The Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce is a nationally accredited business organization dedicated to fostering an economic climate that enhances growth, prosperity, and improved quality of life in the community. With more than 600 member businesses, representing the interests of 37,000 people, The Chamber is a dynamic advocate and the principal voice for the business community of Greater Saint John. It offers a variety of programs, activities, services, and networking opportunities designed to enhance the business prospects of members and the overall business climate of the area.



## **Chair's Report – Derrick Stanford 2023**

It's hard to believe that it's already been a year. It was the first full year without the COVID restrictions we had all become begrudgingly accustomed to. The Chamber was finally able to revive many of the in-person events that had been its lifeblood for decades. These events were not only an important source of revenue for the Chamber, but also a major source of joy and value for our membership. I know the Chamber Team, the Board, and all of our members and partners have enthusiastically embraced returning to meeting and attending events in person, like we are today.

Even though it's been well over a year since we settled in the new location on Water Street. We're still thrilled that it gives us a storefront presence and allows us to be more visible to our members. It gives the Chamber its own brand and identity and we have welcomed numerous organizations, dignitaries, and visitors to our new facility once restrictions were lifted.

The Chamber was delighted to jump back into live events again and welcomed an impressive list of speakers to our newly created "Leaders Innovators Influencers" series. Some of the highlighted speakers included; Premier Higgs, US Ambassador to Canada David Cohen, President & CEO of Moosehead Breweries, The Honourable Omar

Algahabra the Federal Minister of Transportation, Her Worship Donna Noade Reardon Mayor of Saint John, and Tim Peterson the CEO of Worksafe NB (with whom the Chamber played a major role in leading the discussion on rate reductions)

We organized monthly social “mixers” at various member’s locations which were extremely well attended and positively received.

The Chamber launched a bold new contemporary format for the OBA’s which was met with much excitement and hosted by Maestro Fresh Wes himself! The Christmas social was another much anticipated event that received rave reviews.

On top of these excellent events, the Chamber also trialed the notion of a Breakfast events hosting The Hon. Randy Boissonnault, Federal Minister of Tourism & Associate Minister of Finance at the Riverside Country Club (which was one of 2 events held in the Valley last year)

Our popular annual golf tournament returned again and we were pleased to hold another sell-out event. Planning is already well underway for this year’s event on August 17th.

I could go on with many other initiatives that David and his team undertook throughout the year to advance the cause of the Chamber, which are too many to list here and I would miss some if I tried. I want to thank David, Carole and the various team members for all of their hard work, loyalty, and continually representing the spirit of the Chamber. Without you there are no events, no advocacy and no searching out new opportunities and sources of funding to keep our operations going and ensuring that the Chamber remains relevant. I

also want to thank the other volunteers that helped make the last year a successful one.

Speaking of volunteers, The Chamber's Board members include such notable community leaders as: Christine Gilliland, Matt Joyce, Anne McInerney, Mike Corbett, Mohamed Bagha, Melanie Cook, Stephanie Bell, Andrew Costin, Dean Mullin, Doug Jenkins, Heather Acker, Fraser Wells, and Melissa Bailey. Your Board has been involved and focused in helping create a high functioning Chamber. We've undertaken a strategic direction review and are in the process of creating a work plan for the next year that will tie into our strategy of being more for our members. I want to thank every member for their contribution of their time and talents to the Chamber. The goal of any Board should be to leave it in better shape than when we got there. I think we can say we did that. The new Board that you will hear about shortly will carry on this work and I know the Chamber will be in great hands. With Mohamed as the incoming chair, there really is no limit to what the Chamber can achieve. I want to thank the departing members Christine, Matt, and Stephanie. Your contributions have been major and your participation has been valuable. Also thanks to our Past Chair Dean Mullin who will also be rolling off the Board this year after serving as past chair. Dean's leadership was invaluable and he will be missed. Thank you for everything.

In closing, it's been an honor to serve as the Chair and I am grateful for the opportunity to have played my role in our plus 200 year-old Chamber. I am proud of the purpose, impact, and benefits that The Chamber provides for our business community and look forward to being able to contribute for another year in the Past Chair role as I believe in our mission and value.

I thank you for your continued support for the Chamber.

I move that the Chair's report be accepted as presented.

## **Treasurers' Report – Mike Corbett – June 28, 2023**

The Saint John Regional Chamber of Commerce's financial goal is to ensure sustainability, growth, and financial security. Success in these goals allows the Chamber to provide services that increase value for you, the members.

With Covid in the rearview mirror, 2022 was a more normalized fiscal year. That being said, The Chamber, as well as our members, continue to face many financial challenges that require tremendous effort and resourcefulness. As we find our place in the new-normal, we are able to celebrate the fact that the business community was able to overcome and succeed.

Traditionally, our main revenue streams are Memberships and Special Events. As of fiscal 2022, we were once again able to return to offer events that bring value to our members. We were pleased to see the business communities continued support of our efforts by excellent event attendance, strong Membership Renewals, and the addition of new members.

Our external auditors, Teed Saunders Doyle, have completed an audit of the 2022 financial statements and have issued an unqualified audit opinion.

As per our December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 year-end financial statements, the Chamber essentially experienced a breakeven year with a surplus of \$3K. Our operational loss position was \$-2K, but thanks to the last of the wage subsidies and investment income, we were able to end the year in a positive position.

Throughout 2022, we maintained strong Membership Dues collected and saw an increase in Special events. This increase is, as per Note 8 in our year-end statements, primarily a result of Special Programs such as Shop/Lift Up Local, Rapid COVID Testing for Businesses, and Workcation.

The Chamber, at the end of the fiscal year, had cash and investments of approximately \$490K. Of this amount, \$40K is internally restricted to ensure the financial stability of the organization. The remaining funds are unrestricted and available to the organization for its general operating needs and assist in its ability to continue representing the business community in the Greater Saint John Region.

We as the Chamber will need to continue to practice strong fiscal restraint in our operations and find new revenue streams to assist us in our efforts for growth in the Saint John Region. We must ensure that we can remain an active and viable voice for our membership. The days ahead will still require strong financial management, but we are confident that we are up to the task.

I would like to make a motion that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as presented.





CEO AGM Remarks for David Duplisea  
Presented June 28, 2023

Good morning, everyone, I too add my personal welcome to everyone.

Thank you to Derrick and Mike for your remarks, thank you to Derrick for serving as Chair and to Mike for continuing as Treasurer.

As we come out of the challenges created through the pandemic, we are grateful to have been able to continue to serve our members and the entire business community.

We have been fortunate to work with all levels of government over this past year to help develop programs and policies that have had a real impact on businesses, programs that have helped many of us to survive and provide a measure of security also.

I want to thank all our elected politicians, our members of parliament, our MLS's and provincial Ministers who have been tremendously helpful and I truly believe it was the collaborative communication amongst us that helped immeasurably.

As we recover with our new normal, we do have the opportunity to try to be better. We are hearing phrases like "building back better" and others, this brings hope for a better future.

Just over a year ago we moved into our new office, our new home, The Chamber Building, as we refer to it as, this serves as an example of the resiliency of our region's business community. After 203 years, we returned to the very block upon which we were formed.

When Lauchland Davidson first met with other local businesspeople at Cody's Coffee House to form our association, I wonder if they would have been able to imagine that we would still be here two centuries later.

From shore to store, the Saint John Regional Chamber of Commerce is committed to diversity, equality and sustainability while continuing to be a resounding voice for all business. We will continue to press all levels of government for policies that help our members survive and grow. We will continue to press all levels of government for policies that help our members survive and grow.

And finally, working with our partners and stakeholders we will continue to play a major role in the economic and social well being of our vibrant region.

Thank you to our Board of Directors and our staff, all of whom have helped in immeasurable ways, I am grateful to them.

And thank you to you our members, whose support and dedication to our community, are really the very reasons why we are here today.

It has been my honour to serve as your CEO.

## **Nominating Committee Report – Dean Mullin – June 28, 2023**

As provided in the existing by-laws, a nominating committee was established earlier this year to develop a slate of candidates to serve on the board of directors and for the various officer positions.

That report was circulated to all chamber members, along with an invitation for further nomination of candidates. No additional nominations were received prior to the deadline.

Those who will serve as members of the board of directors of the Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce are:

Anne McInerny, Melanie Cooke, Andrew Costin, Heather Acker, Serena Allen, and Sunny Khosla

Elected to serve as officers of the Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce and members of the executive committee for the coming year are:

Mohamed Bagha - Chairperson

Fraser Wells -1st Vice-Chairperson

Doug Jenkins - Saint John Vice Chairperson

Melissa Bailey – Grand Bay – Westfield and Westside Vice Chairperson

Mike Corbett -- Treasurer

Derrick Stanford -- Immediate Past Chairperson



## **Incoming Chair's Report – Mohamed Bagha – June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Dear Members,

First I would like to take a moment to thank our Chair Derrick Stanford, past chair Dean Mullin and the entire outgoing board of director for your stewardship, leadership and laying the groundwork that we will continue to build on in the coming year. With your expertise and knowledge you have put the Saint John Chamber on a course of growth, a course where entrepreneurial, and collaborative spirit continue to flourish in this organization.

I am humbled, honoured and privileged to accept this position where I promise I will work all members remaining committed to driving business in Saint John and promoting economic growth in our region. I will stay to our mission so greater Saint John community will become the best place in Canada to start, run and grow a business...period!

We are dedicated to being champions for business and advocating for a climate that is right for business. However, our commitment to the Saint John community goes beyond just driving business. We are passionate about promoting diversity in our community and ensuring the successful integration of newcomers to Saint John. We believe that diversity is our strength and that the successful integration of newcomers is essential to the growth and prosperity of our region.

At the Saint John Region Chamber, we are driven by impact in all forms and areas of life for members of the Saint John community. We believe that our work should positively impact the lives of our members and the community as a whole. We are dedicated to fostering an economic climate that enhances growth and prosperity, promoting diversity and inclusion, and supporting the successful integration of newcomers to Saint John.

It gives me great pleasure and sense of responsibility to carry this torch further into the future and ensure it shines brighter in unwavering commitment.

Thanks to our members for your continuing support. We are proud to be a part of this amazing community and look forward to working together to achieve our shared goals.