

Halifax Community Investment Fund Society

Annual Chair's Report - 2014

As the HCIF matures in its operations, I feel that it is appropriate that the HCIF Board Chair prepare an annual report. The objectives of the report are to highlight the previous year's activities and achievements, and to make recommendations about potential focus areas for the HCIF Board for the upcoming year. This report should be tabled for approval by the HCIF Board on an annual basis at the beginning of the calendar year. Following that approval, the report should be posted on the HCIF website.

2014 Activities and Achievements

I believe 2014 was one of the most successful years for the HCIF since its creation in 2007.

HCIF Board of Directors

The following people comprised the HCIF Board of Directors in 2014:

Bryan Darrell – Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Board Director
Melinda Daye – Board Director
Carl Gannon – Board Director
Linda Mantley – Board Director
Paul O'Hara – Secretary and Board Director
Michelle Strum – Board Director
Craig Walkington – Chair and Board Director

Bursary Program

As in previous years, we successfully implemented the Bursary Program for students from our designated area. Although we originally budgeted for 10 bursaries of \$2,500 each, the Bursary Program Committee recommended that the HCIF Board approve an additional bursary. The Board approved this recommendation and we distributed the first bursary instalment of \$1,250 each in August and the second instalment of \$1,250 each in December 2014. I am pleased to report that all of the bursary recipients fulfilled their intentions and attended their designated educational institution. This year we requested that the recipients provide a photograph and testimonial as to what the bursary means to them. Although limited in response, these testimonials were used in our new brochure and on our new website. I believe that we need to strengthen and expand our promotion of the Bursary Program in order to generate more applications. I also feel that we need to generate more testimonials from successful bursary applicants. I would like to thank the Bursary Committee and in particular the Chair, Carl Gannon, for their efforts with this cornerstone program of the HCIF.

Strategic Planning Session

For the first time since its creation, the HCIF underwent a strategic planning process at the Annapolis Basin Conference Center in April 2014. During the one and one half-day session, the Board members confirmed the HCIF Mission, the Five HCIF Pillars (Youth, Education, Seniors,

Community and Neighbourhood), and developed a five point strategic plan. The strategic objectives that were developed from the session are as follows:

- I. **Visibility Objective** – To implement a Communications Plan to improve visibility in the community by December 2014.
- II. **Bursary Program Objective** – To generate “x” number of applications from eligible residents for financial assistance by May 2014. (Note)
- III. **Seniors Wills Program Objective** – To provide pro-bono will services to “x” number of seniors in 2014 and to increase by “x” percentage in 2015 and 2016. (Note)
- IV. **Board Rejuvenation Objective** – To implement an HCIF Board Recruitment, Training, and Succession Plan by December 2014.
- V. **Collaboration/Partnerships Objective** – To establish new partnerships in each of the five HCIF pillars with organizations that support our mandate within the next 24 months.

Note - “x” was used as a placeholder until specific numbers are identified.

This strategic plan became our roadmap for the remainder of 2014 and will remain in effect until the HCIF Board undergoes another strategic planning process. While I believe the HCIF Board has always been focused in its work, this strategic planning session permitted us to have extensive discussions around our activities and to formalize our objectives. It is recommended that we undergo a similar strategic planning process on a regular basis.

Visibility and Community Partnering

In working towards increasing community awareness of the HCIF and increasing the number of our partners, the HCIF Board approved funding to hire an individual to map all of the various non-profit groups and other organizations in our defined area. This project was co-funded by the United Way. There is also some potential with this project to use the HCIF as a conduit to linking organizations needing resources with groups that have resources. I believe that more work needs to be done to confirm the accuracy of the information collected to-date, and to verify the objectives of this project.

Hope Blooms Grant

In June we received a request from Hope Blooms for a \$10,000 grant to fund their mentorship program. This was an urgent request as the process for requesting grants from Halifax Regional Municipality would have taken too long and funding from other sources had not materialized. The HCIF Board approved this significant grant amount by utilizing unexpended income from previous years. Hope Blooms was most appreciative of this grant and we had an official cheque presentation with the youth of Hope Blooms at their garden. Additionally, Jessie Jollymore of Hope Blooms recognized the HCIF at the official opening of the new Hope Blooms center.

Provincial Black Basketball Association (PBBA) Tournament Sponsorship

In an effort to increase its visibility in the community, the HCIF Board approved expenditures in support of PBBA Tournament in May 2014. Specifically, the HCIF Board approved the purchase of a full-page advertisement in the tournament program, and purchased a table of ten tickets for the Tournament Dinner. Some tickets for the dinner were distributed to our program partners at McInnesCooper and some bursary recipients. There was an opportunity to speak about the HCIF and its activities at the Tournament Dinner.

Pro Bono Seniors' Will Program

The HCIF Society successfully partnered with the law firm McInnesCooper to have wills prepared at no charge for qualified seniors from our community. We increased the number of seniors who had a will prepared and word of this program is spreading within the community. In addition, we confirmed the program's process and objectives with McInnesCooper and they are pleased to work in partnership with us to provide this service. I would like to thank Board Director, Bryan Darrell – who single-handedly ran this program – for his efforts.

HCIF Brochure

After several attempts over a number of years, the HCIF finally designed and printed a brochure. Through the efforts of David MacDonald, who kindly donated his graphic design services, we were able to produce a high-quality brochure. The intent for this brochure is to describe the HCIF and its activities and it will be included in a letter that will be distributed in 2015 that creates an awareness of the HCIF amongst key stakeholders in our community and region. This brochure will also be available in electronic format on the HCIF website.

HCIF Website

In Fall 2014, the HCIF Board commissioned a new HCIF website. The previous HCIF website had never been updated since its creation in 2010. As such, it was very important that we create a new website as a means by which to meet our strategic objectives. Additionally, in this day of extensive social media usage, it is imperative that the HCIF be current and utilize technology to communicate. The new website is almost complete and should be ready to launch by end-January 2015. Going forward, it is critical that at least three HCIF Board Directors undergo the necessary training in order to maintain and use the website.

HCIF Board of Directors Recruitment

In November and December 2014 we advertized for, interviewed and approved the addition of three new HCIF Board Directors. The new Directors are: Amy Hunt-Boudreau, Lindell Smith, and Alex Zachernuk. I am pleased to welcome them to the HCIF Board and look forward to working with them in achieving the HCIF strategic objectives.

Halifax Volunteer Conference

Two HCIF Board Directors attended the annual Halifax Volunteer Conference in November 2014. This was an excellent networking opportunity and provided seminars to assist volunteer organizations to achieve their objectives. I encourage more Board Directors to attend the conference in 2015.

Halifax Youth Foundation Grant

In December we were advised by the Halifax Youth Foundation that our application for a \$10,000 grant had been approved. This is a significant boost to our operating funds and will permit us to do additional work around youth programs. The HCIF Society is extremely grateful

for this grant. It is important that we make an annual application to the Halifax Youth Foundation.

Investment Strategy

Under the professional management of the Hopgood-Dean Group of ScotiaMcLeod, the HCIF investment portfolio has continued to do well. At the conclusion of 2014, the portfolio was worth approximately \$1.2million. This is up from our original endowment of \$1million in 2008. During the intervening period, the HCIF Board has approved distributions and expenditures of nearly \$300,000. It is recommended that the portfolio management be maintained with the Hopgood-Dean Group and that we maintain the policy of not encroaching on the initial endowment and its capital growth.

Governance and Operating Practices

On the whole, I believe the HCIF has good governance and operating practices that add to our credibility as an organization in the community. From a financial control perspective, we have all of the procedures in place to ensure we are operating, and are seen to be operating, in a proper and professional manner. That being said, I do believe we need to review and amend the HCIF By-Laws as they have not been changed since first implementation in 2007.

Fund Raising

As one of our operating principles is to not encroach on the investment capital, the HCIF Board should consider creating a fund raising strategy in order to expand and fund HCIF programs. This strategy need not be complex, but must be targeted and professional in its development and execution. It is recommended that we create a Fund Raising Committee to develop this strategy.

Conclusion

As previously stated, I believe we have had one of the most successful years since the HCIF was created. This success is in no small part due to the efforts of the HCIF Directors, who are all volunteers and are not compensated for their participation. I thank the Directors for their dedication and commitment to the HCIF mission and objectives. I look forward to working with the Board and creating a similarly successful year in 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Walkington', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Craig Walkington
Chair
Halifax Community Investment Fund Society

5 January 2015