

WINTRUST FINANCIAL CORP

Form S-4

May 05, 2015

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As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 5, 2015.

Registration No. 333-

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM S-4

REGISTRATION STATEMENT

UNDER THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

WINTRUST FINANCIAL CORPORATION

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

Illinois
(State or Other Jurisdiction of
Incorporation or Organization)

6022
(Primary Standard Industrial
Classification Code Number)

36-3873352
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification Number)

9700 W. Higgins Road, Suite 800

Rosemont, Illinois 60018
(847) 939-9000

(Address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of Registrant's principal executive offices)

Lisa J. Pattis
Executive Vice President, General Counsel, and Corporate Secretary
9700 W. Higgins Road, Suite 800
Rosemont, Illinois 60018
(847) 939-9000

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(Name, address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of agent for service)

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Sidley Austin LLP
One South Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60603
(312) 853-7000

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202-3590
(414) 273-5198

APPROXIMATE DATE OF COMMENCEMENT OF PROPOSED SALE OF THE SECURITIES TO THE PUBLIC: As soon as reasonably practicable after the Registration Statement becomes effective and after the conditions to the completion of the proposed transaction described in the proxy statement/prospectus have been satisfied or waived.

If the securities being registered on this Form are being offered in connection with the formation of a holding company and there is compliance with General Instruction G, check the following box.

If this Form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(d) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of large accelerated filer, accelerated filer and smaller reporting company in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer
Non-accelerated filer (Do not check if a smaller reporting company) Smaller reporting company

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

| Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered | Amount to be Registered(1) | Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Unit | Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(2) | Amount of Registration Fee(3) |
|--|----------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Common Stock, no par value per share | 498,530 | N/A | \$20,382,658 | \$2,369 |

(1)

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The number of shares to be registered represents the maximum number of shares of Wintrust Financial Corporation (Wintrust) common stock estimated to be issuable in connection with the merger described in the proxy statement/prospectus, based upon (i) 10,781,988 shares of common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, of Community Financial Shares, Inc. (CFS) outstanding, (ii) up to 11,982,900 shares of common stock of CFS issuable upon conversion of the 119,829 shares of Series C Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock of CFS outstanding, (iii) up to 6,542,700 shares of common stock of CFS issuable upon conversion of the 65,427 shares of Series D Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock of CFS outstanding and (iv) up to 599,000 shares of common stock of CFS issuable upon conversion of the 5,990 shares of Series E Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock outstanding.

- (2) Pursuant to Rules 457(c), 457(f)(1) and 457(f)(3) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee, the proposed maximum aggregate offering price is the difference between (a) the product of (i) \$1.39, the average of the high and low prices of CFS common stock reported on the OTCQB as of April 29, 2015, and (ii) 29,906,588, the estimated maximum number of shares of CFS common stock (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion described in the proxy statement/prospectus) to be exchanged pursuant to the merger described in the proxy statement/prospectus and (b) the aggregate amount of cash to be paid by Wintrust for the outstanding shares of CFS common stock, pursuant to the merger described in the proxy statement/prospectus.
- (3) Calculated by multiplying the estimated aggregate offering price of the securities to be registered by 0.0001162.

The registrant hereby amends this registration statement on such date or dates as may be necessary to delay its effective date until the registrant shall file a further amendment which specifically states that this registration statement shall thereafter become effective in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 or until this registration statement shall become effective on such date as the Commission, acting pursuant to said Section 8(a), may determine.

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The information in this proxy statement/prospectus is not complete and may be changed. We may not offer or sell these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission is effective. This preliminary proxy statement/prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and it is not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

PRELIMINARY COPY SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED MAY 5, 2015

Community Financial Shares, Inc.

Wintrust Financial Corporation

PROXY STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

PROSPECTUS OF WINTRUST FINANCIAL CORPORATION

Merger and Conversion Proposals Your Vote Is Important

DEAR COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC. STOCKHOLDERS:

You are cordially invited to attend a special meeting of stockholders of Community Financial Shares, Inc., a Maryland corporation, or CFS, which will be held on _____, 2015, at _____, local time, at _____.

At the meeting, CFS stockholders will be asked to consider and vote upon certain proposals in connection with the agreement and plan of merger, dated as of March 2, 2015, among Wintrust Financial Corporation, an Illinois corporation, or Wintrust, Wintrust Merger Sub LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wintrust, or Merger Co., and CFS, which we refer to as the merger agreement, that provides for Wintrust's acquisition of CFS. CFS is the parent company of Community Bank Wheaton/Glen Ellyn, an Illinois state chartered federally insured commercial bank, which we refer to as the Bank. The acquisition will be effected through the merger of CFS with and into Merger Co. In addition, the merger agreement provides that the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation for each series of preferred stock of CFS will be amended prior to the closing to provide for, among other things, the automatic conversion of each share of CFS preferred stock into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger, which we refer to as the preferred stock conversion. The purpose of the preferred stock conversion is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of CFS preferred stock with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the CFS preferred stock and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

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The aggregate merger consideration paid by Wintrust to CFS stockholders (including holders of CFS preferred stock converted into CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) is expected to be approximately \$42,375,000, subject to possible downward adjustment as described below. Assuming that the reference price as described below is between \$42.50 and \$52.50, approximately 50% of the aggregate merger consideration will be paid in shares of Wintrust common stock, no par value per share, and approximately 50% will be paid in cash.

The exchange ratio used to determine the number of shares of Wintrust common stock that you will be entitled to receive for each share of CFS common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, you own will be determined based on the average, calculated for the 10 trading day period ending on the second trading day prior to completion of the merger, of the volume-weighted average price of a share of Wintrust common stock for each trading day during such period, as displayed under the heading **Bloomberg VWAP** on the Bloomberg page for Wintrust, which we refer to as the reference price, subject to a minimum and maximum reference price equal to \$42.50 and \$52.50, respectively. The merger consideration may be adjusted downward (i) if the balance sheet delivered to Wintrust by CFS as of the closing date of the merger reflects that CFS stockholders equity, as determined pursuant to the merger agreement, is less than \$28,250,000 as of the closing date of the merger or (ii) under certain

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circumstances, if CFS fails to or elects not to cure certain defects or objections materially affecting the marketability of title to real property following notice of such defects or objections to CFS by Wintrust or to obtain certain title endorsements to title policies reasonably required by Wintrust.

The merger consideration is subject to downward adjustment as described in this proxy statement/prospectus, and the exchange ratio will not be determined until after the date of the special meeting. Therefore, at the time of the special meeting, you will not know the precise value of the merger consideration you may receive on the date the merger is completed.

Assuming no adjustment to the merger consideration and that the currently outstanding 10,781,988 shares of CFS common stock and 191,246 shares of CFS preferred stock remain unchanged at the closing, based on a reference price of \$ _____, which is equal to the reference price if it were calculated as of _____, 2015, the latest practicable date prior to the date of this proxy statement/prospectus, the merger consideration that a holder of CFS common stock (including holders of CFS preferred stock converted into CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) would be entitled to receive for each share of CFS common stock would be \$ _____ in cash and _____ shares of Wintrust common stock. In each case assuming no adjustment to the merger consideration and that the currently outstanding 10,781,988 shares of CFS common stock and 191,246 shares of CFS preferred stock remain unchanged at the closing, if the reference price were equal to the minimum of \$42.50, each share of CFS common stock (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) would be converted into the right to receive \$0.71 in cash and 0.017 shares of Wintrust common stock, and if the reference price were equal to the maximum of \$52.50, each share of CFS common stock (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of the CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) would be converted into the right to receive \$0.71 in cash and 0.013 shares of Wintrust common stock. Assuming no adjustment to the merger consideration and assuming that the reference price is between \$42.50 and \$52.50, we estimate that Wintrust may issue up to 498,530 shares of Wintrust common stock to CFS stockholders as contemplated by the merger agreement.

Wintrust common stock is traded on the NASDAQ Global Select Market, under the symbol **WTFC**. The closing price of Wintrust common stock on May 1, 2015 was \$49.13 per share. CFS's common stock is traded on the over-the-counter market and is quoted on the OTCQB under the symbol **CFIS**. The closing price of CFS common stock on May 1, 2015 was \$1.39 per share.

The merger cannot be completed unless CFS stockholders approve the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion. **Your board of directors has unanimously approved the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and recommends that you vote FOR the approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement at the special meeting. Your board of directors also unanimously recommends that you vote FOR the proposals to approve amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion, FOR the proposal to approve merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers and FOR the proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate, to permit further solicitation of proxies in favor of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.**

Additional information regarding the merger, the merger agreement, the preferred stock conversion, CFS and Wintrust is set forth in the attached proxy statement/prospectus. This document also serves as the prospectus for up to 498,530 shares of Wintrust common stock that may be issued by Wintrust in connection with the merger. **We urge you to read this entire document carefully, including the section entitled Risk Factors**

beginning on page 27.

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Sincerely,

Donald H. Wilson
President and Chief Executive Officer
Community Financial Shares, Inc.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of the securities to be issued under this proxy statement/prospectus or determined if this proxy statement/prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The securities to be issued in connection with the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement are not savings or deposit accounts or other obligations of any bank or nonbank subsidiary of any of the parties, and they are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other governmental agency.

This proxy statement/prospectus is dated , 2015, and is first being mailed to CFS stockholders on or about , 2015.

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REFERENCES TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As permitted by the rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission, which we refer to as the SEC, this proxy statement/prospectus incorporates important business and financial information about Wintrust from other documents that are not included in or delivered with this proxy statement/prospectus. These documents are available to you without charge upon your written or oral request. You can obtain documents incorporated by reference in this proxy statement/prospectus through the SEC's website at www.sec.gov or by requesting them in writing or by telephone at the following address and telephone number:

**Wintrust Financial Corporation
9700 W. Higgins Road, Suite 800
Rosemont, Illinois 60018
Attention: Lisa J. Pattis
Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary
(847) 939-9000**

In order to ensure timely delivery of these documents, you should make your request by _____, 2015 to receive them before the special meeting.

See [Where You Can Find More Information](#) beginning on page 173.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

357 Roosevelt Road
Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137

Notice of Special Meeting of Stockholders

Date: , 2015

Time: , local time

Place:

TO COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC. STOCKHOLDERS:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Community Financial Shares, Inc., a Maryland corporation, or CFS, will hold a special meeting of stockholders on , 2015 at , local time, at . The purpose of the meeting is to consider and vote on the following matters:

- a proposal to approve the agreement and plan of merger, dated as of March 2, 2015, among Wintrust Financial Corporation, an Illinois corporation, or Wintrust, Wintrust Merger Sub LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wintrust, or Merger Co., and CFS, which we refer to as the merger agreement, the merger of CFS with and into Merger Co. contemplated by the merger agreement and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. A copy of the merger agreement is included as *Annex A* to the proxy statement/prospectus accompanying this notice;
- a proposal to approve amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series C Preferred Shares, providing for, among other amendments, the automatic conversion of each Series C Preferred Share into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. The purpose of the conversion is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of Series C Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series C Preferred Shares and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. A copy of the amended and restated articles supplementary reflecting the amendments is included as *Annex B* to the proxy statement/prospectus accompanying this notice;

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- a proposal to approve amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series D Preferred Shares, providing for, among other amendments, the automatic conversion of each Series D Preferred Share into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. The purpose of the preferred stock conversion is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of the Series D Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series D Preferred Shares and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. A copy of the amended and restated articles supplementary reflecting the amendments is included as *Annex C* to the proxy statement/prospectus accompanying this notice;

- a proposal to approve amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series E Preferred Shares, providing for, among other amendments, the automatic conversion of each Series E Preferred Share into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. The purpose of the preferred stock conversion is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of Series E Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series E Preferred Shares

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and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. A copy of the amended and restated articles supplementary reflecting the amendments is included as *Annex D* to the proxy statement/prospectus accompanying this notice;

- a proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers; and
- a proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate, to solicit additional proxies in favor of the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

Holders of record of CFS common stock, Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares at the close of business on _____, 2015, which we refer to as the record date, are entitled to receive this notice and to vote on one or more of these proposals at the special meeting and any postponements or adjournments thereof.

Approval of the merger requires the affirmative vote at the special meeting of (i) two-thirds of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares), voting together as a single class, which we refer to as the outstanding voting securities, and (ii) a majority of the outstanding shares of each of (A) the Series C Preferred Shares, (B) the Series D Preferred Shares and (C) the Series E Preferred Shares.

Approval of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion for the Series C Preferred Shares requires the affirmative vote of (i) two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities, (ii) a majority of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and (iii) a majority of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares. Approval of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion for the Series D Preferred Shares requires the affirmative vote of (i) two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities and (ii) a majority of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares. Approval of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion for the Series E Preferred Shares requires the affirmative vote of (i) two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities and (ii) a majority of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares.

Approval of the proposals to approve merger-related compensation arrangements for CFS's named executive officers and to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate, requires, in each case, a majority of all the votes cast by the outstanding voting securities at the special meeting if a quorum is present. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the outstanding voting securities present, in person or by proxy, at the special meeting may adjourn the special meeting.

The board of directors of CFS unanimously recommends that you vote FOR the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. Your board of directors also unanimously recommends that you

vote **FOR** the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion, **FOR** the proposal to approve merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS s named executive officers and **FOR** proposal to adjourn the special meeting to permit further solicitation of proxies in favor of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

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Your vote is important. To ensure that your shares are voted at the special meeting, please promptly vote via Internet or telephone, or complete, sign and return the proxy form in the enclosed prepaid envelope, whether or not you plan to attend the meeting in person. Stockholders who attend the special meeting may revoke their proxies and vote in person, if they so desire.

Glen Ellyn, Illinois
, 2015

By Order of the Board of Directors

Christopher P. Barton
Corporate Secretary

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE MERGER AGREEMENT, THE MERGER, THE PREFERRED STOCK CONVERSION AND THE OTHER TRANSACTIONS CONTEMPLATED BY THE MERGER AGREEMENT

Q: What am I being asked to vote on? What is the proposed transaction?

A: Holders of CFS preferred stock and CFS common stock are being asked to vote on the approval of the merger agreement, dated as of March 2, 2015, among Wintrust Financial Corporation, or Wintrust, Wintrust Merger Sub LLC, or Merger Co., which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Wintrust, and Community Financial Shares, Inc., or CFS, which provides for the acquisition of CFS by Wintrust through the merger of CFS with and into Merger Co., which we refer to as the merger. Upon completion of the merger, all shares of CFS common stock (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of the CFS preferred stock outstanding immediately prior to the effective time of the merger as described below) will be cancelled, and holders of CFS common stock will become shareholders of Wintrust.

Holders of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock are also being asked to approve amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation for each series of CFS preferred stock which provide for the conversion of CFS preferred stock into shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger, which we refer to as the preferred stock conversion. The purpose of the preferred stock conversion is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of CFS preferred stock with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of CFS preferred stock and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

Holders of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares are also being asked to vote on a proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers and a proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate.

Q: What will CFS stockholders be entitled to receive in the merger?

A: If the merger is completed, the shares of CFS common stock that you own immediately before the completion of the merger (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of the CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) will be converted into the right to receive cash and shares of Wintrust common stock (in each case subject to possible adjustment). The aggregate merger consideration paid by Wintrust to CFS stockholders is intended to be approximately \$42,375,000, subject to possible downward adjustment as described below. The parties intend for approximately 50% of the aggregate merger consideration to be paid in shares of Wintrust common stock and approximately 50% to be paid in cash.

For each of your shares of CFS common stock, you will receive the per share merger consideration to be calculated as set forth in the merger agreement. The exchange ratio used to determine the number of shares of Wintrust common stock that you will be entitled to receive for each share of CFS common stock you own will be determined based on the average, calculated for the 10 day trading period ending on the second trading day prior to completion of the merger, of the volume-weighted average price of a share of Wintrust common stock for each trading day during such period, as displayed under the heading "Bloomberg VWAP" on the Bloomberg page for Wintrust, which we refer to as the reference price, subject to a minimum and maximum reference price equal to \$42.50 and \$52.50, respectively. Assuming no adjustment to the merger

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consideration and that the currently outstanding 10,781,988 shares of CFS common stock, 119,829 shares of Series C Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series C Preferred Shares, 65,427 shares of Series D Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series D Preferred Shares, and 5,990 shares of Series E Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series E Preferred Shares, remain unchanged at the closing date, and assuming the conversion of each share of CFS preferred stock into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to completion of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion, based on a reference price of \$, which is equal to the reference price if it were calculated as of , 2015, the latest practicable date prior to the

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date of this proxy statement/prospectus, the merger consideration that a holder of CFS common stock (including holders of the shares of CFS preferred stock converted into shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) would be entitled to receive for each share of CFS common stock would be \$ _____ in cash and _____ shares of Wintrust common stock. In each case assuming no adjustment to the merger consideration and that the currently outstanding 10,781,988 shares of CFS common stock, 119,829 shares of Series C Preferred Shares, 65,427 shares of Series D Preferred Shares and 5,990 shares of Series E Preferred Shares (sometimes referred to in this proxy statement/prospectus collectively as CFS preferred stock) remain unchanged at the closing, and assuming the conversion of each share of CFS preferred stock into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the completion of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion, if the reference price were equal to the minimum of \$42.50, each share of CFS common stock (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of shares of CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) would be converted into the right to receive \$0.71 in cash and 0.017 shares of Wintrust common stock, and if the reference price were equal to the maximum of \$52.50, each share of CFS common stock (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of the shares of CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) would be converted into the right to receive \$0.71 in cash and 0.013 shares of Wintrust common stock. For a description of how the per share merger consideration will be calculated, see The Merger Agreement Consideration to be received in the merger on page 94.

In addition, the merger consideration may be adjusted downward (i) if the balance sheet delivered to Wintrust by CFS as of the closing date of the merger reflects that CFS stockholders' equity, as determined pursuant to the merger agreement, is less than \$28,250,000 or (ii) under certain circumstances, if CFS fails to or elects not to cure certain defects or objections materially affecting the marketability of title to real property following notice of such defects or objections to CFS by Wintrust or to obtain certain title endorsements to title policies reasonably required by Wintrust. For a description of the possible adjustment of the merger consideration, see The Merger Agreement Consideration to be received in the merger Adjustment to merger consideration on page 96.

Q: What will holders of CFS options be entitled to receive in the merger?

A: In April 2015, each outstanding and unexercised option to acquire a share of CFS common stock, which we refer to as a CFS option, was terminated, cancelled and redeemed by CFS, and no merger consideration will be exchanged therefor.

Q: Why do CFS and Wintrust want to engage in the merger?

A: CFS believes that the merger will achieve the board of directors' strategic business objectives, including increasing stockholder value, growing the size of the business and enhancing liquidity for CFS's stockholders, and Wintrust believes that the merger will provide an opportunity to expand and complement its existing market presence in the Wheaton and Glen Ellyn communities. As a larger company, Wintrust can provide greater capital and resources and efficiencies from integrating the operations of CFS into Wintrust's existing operations and allow Community Bank Wheaton/Glen Ellyn, an Illinois state chartered federally insured commercial bank owned by CFS, which we refer to as the Bank, to compete more effectively and to offer a broader array of products and services to better serve its banking customers. To review the reasons for the merger in more detail, see The Merger CFS's reasons for the merger and recommendation of the board of directors on page 84 and The Merger Wintrust's reasons for the merger on page 85.

Q: What does the board of directors recommend?

A: The CFS board of directors unanimously recommends that you vote **FOR** the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, **FOR** the proposals to amend the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion, **FOR** the proposal to

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approve merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers and **FOR** the proposal to adjourn the special meeting to permit further solicitation of proxies in favor of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion. The CFS board of directors has determined that the merger agreement, the merger and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion are advisable and in the best interests of CFS. To review the background and reasons for the merger in greater detail, see *The Merger* beginning on page 63.

Q: What vote is required to approve the merger?

A: The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation for the Series C Preferred Shares), voting together as a single class, which we refer to collectively as the outstanding voting securities, is required to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. In addition, a majority of the outstanding shares of each of the Series C Preferred Shares, the Series D Preferred Shares and the Series E Preferred Shares is required to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement.

Even if the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement receive the requisite votes for approval, the merger will not be completed unless CFS stockholders also approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

All of the directors and officers of CFS and certain other stockholders of CFS entered into voting agreements pursuant to which they agreed to vote their CFS shares at the special meeting in favor of the merger and any other matter necessary for consummation of the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement (including the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion). The shares subject to the voting agreement represent approximately 10.7% of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock, 31.5% of the outstanding voting securities, 50.1% of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares, 89.1% of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares and 0% of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares, each as of April 28, 2015. No vote of Wintrust's shareholders is required in connection with the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. See *The Merger* *Interests of certain persons in the merger* on page 89 and *The Merger* *Voting agreement* on page 91.

Q: What vote is required to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series C Preferred Shares?

A: The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities is required to approve the proposed amendments, collectively referred to as the amendment, to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS with respect to the Series C Preferred Shares.

Additionally, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares require that the proposed amendment thereto be approved by each of (i) a majority of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares and (ii) a majority of the outstanding shares of common stock. Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the proposal to approve the

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amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series C Preferred Shares.

Even if the amendment of the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series C Preferred Shares receives the requisite votes for approval, the merger and the preferred stock conversion will not be completed unless CFS stockholders also approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the other amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

See The Merger Interests of certain persons in the merger on page 89 and The Merger Voting agreement on page 91 for a description of the voting agreement entered into by all directors and officers of CFS and certain other stockholders of CFS in connection with the proposed merger transaction.

Q: What vote is required to approve the amendments of the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series D Preferred Shares?

A: The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities is required to approve the proposed amendments, collectively referred to as the amendment, to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS with respect to the Series D Preferred Shares.

Additionally, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares require that this proposed amendment be approved by a majority of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares. Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the proposal to approve the amendment of the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series D Preferred Shares.

Even if the amendment of the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series D Preferred Shares receives the requisite votes for approval, the merger and the preferred stock conversion will not be completed unless CFS stockholders also approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the other amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

See The Merger Interests of certain persons in the merger on page 89 and The Merger Voting agreement on page 91 for a description of the voting agreement entered into by all directors and officers of CFS and certain other stockholders of CFS in connection with the proposed merger transaction.

Q: What vote is required to approve the amendments of the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series E Preferred Shares?

A: The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities is required to approve the proposed amendments, collectively referred to as the amendment, to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS with respect to the Series E Preferred Shares.

Additionally, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares require that this proposed amendments be approved by a majority of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares. Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the proposal to approve the amendment of the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS

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providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series E Preferred Shares.

Even if the amendment of the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series E Preferred Shares receives the requisite votes for approval, the merger and the preferred stock conversion will not be completed unless CFS stockholders also approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the other amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

See The Merger Interests of certain persons in the merger on page 89 and The Merger Voting agreement on page 91 for a description of the voting agreement entered into by all directors and officers of CFS and certain other stockholders of CFS in connection with the proposed merger transaction.

Q: What vote is required to approve the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers?

A: A majority of all votes cast by the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares), voting together as a single class, at the special meeting at which a quorum is present is required to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers. Abstentions and failures to vote will have no effect on the approval of the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers.

Q: What vote is required to approve the proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate, to permit further solicitation of proxies in favor of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion?

A: A majority of the votes cast by of the outstanding shares of common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of shares of such Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary for the Series C Preferred Shares), voting together as a single class, if a quorum is present at the special meeting, is required to approve the proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate, to solicit additional proxies to approve the merger agreement, the merger, the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the outstanding voting securities present in person or by proxy at the special meeting may adjourn the special meeting. Abstentions and failures to vote will have no effect on the proposal to adjourn the meeting, if necessary or appropriate, to solicit additional proxies in favor of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation.

Q: What constitutes a quorum for purposes of the special meeting?

A: CFS's by-laws provide that a majority of the outstanding securities of CFS entitled to vote, represented in person or by proxy, shall constitute a quorum. Abstentions are treated as present at the meeting for purposes of determining whether a quorum is present. If you hold your shares in street name and do not provide your broker or other nominee with instructions and your broker or other nominee does not submit a

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proxy card or otherwise does not vote because the broker or other nominee lacks discretionary authority to vote the shares, your shares will not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum and they will have the same effect as a vote against the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for the preferred stock conversion, as the case may be, and will have no effect on the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers proposal or the proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate.

Q: Why is my vote important?

A: CFS stockholders are being asked to approve, among other things, the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion. Approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion are closing conditions to the merger. If all of the required stockholder approvals are not obtained, the merger will not occur. If you do not submit your proxy by mail, telephone or via the Internet, or vote in person at the special meeting, it will be more difficult for CFS to obtain the necessary quorum to hold the special meeting. In addition, your failure to submit your proxy or attend the special meeting will have the same effect as a vote against the merger agreement, the merger and other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion and make it more difficult to obtain approval of the merger agreement, the merger and other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

Q: What do I need to do now? How do I vote?

A: You may vote on all matters presented at the special meeting if you own shares of CFS common stock or Series C Preferred Shares of record at the close of business on the record date for the special meeting, _____, 2015. You may vote on (i) the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and (ii) the proposal to approve an amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares that provides for the conversion of the Series D Preferred Shares into common stock if you own Series D Preferred Shares of record at the close of business on the record date for the special meeting, _____, 2015. You may vote on (i) the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and (ii) the proposal to approve an amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares that provides for the conversion of the Series E Preferred Shares into common stock if you own Series E Preferred Shares of record at the close of business on the record date for the special meeting, _____, 2015.

CFS stockholders of record may vote now by proxy by:

- completing, signing, dating and returning the enclosed proxy card in the accompanying pre-addressed postage-paid envelope;

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- calling the toll-free number specified on your proxy card; or
- accessing the Internet website specified on your proxy card.

A CFS stockholder has the right to appoint a person (who need not be a stockholder) as proxy holder to attend and act on his, her or its behalf at the special meeting, other than the CFS representatives of management and the CFS board of directors designated in the form of proxy. The CFS stockholder may

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exercise this right by completing another appropriate form of proxy and delivering the completed proxy in the manner set forth above.

We strongly encourage you to vote using the proxy card provided by CFS.

If you hold shares of CFS in street name, which means your shares are held of record by a broker, bank or nominee, you must provide the record holder of your shares with instructions on how to vote your shares. Please refer to the voting instruction card used by your broker, bank or nominee to see if you may submit voting instructions using the Internet or telephone.

Additionally, you may also vote in person by attending the special meeting. If you plan to attend the special meeting and wish to vote in person, you will be given a ballot at the special meeting. Please note, however, that if your shares are held in street name, and you wish to vote in person at the special meeting, you must bring a proxy from the record holder of the shares authorizing you to vote at the special meeting. Whether or not you plan to attend the special meeting, you are encouraged to grant your proxy as described in this proxy statement/prospectus.

Q: How will my proxy be voted?

A: If you vote via the Internet or complete, sign, date and mail your proxy form, your proxy will be voted in accordance with your instructions. If you sign, date and send in your proxy form, but you do not indicate how you want to vote, your proxy will be voted **FOR** the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion and the other proposals in the notice.

Q: Can I revoke my proxy and change my vote?

A: You can revoke your proxy at any time before it is voted at the special meeting by any of the following methods:

- Submitting a later-dated proxy by mail.
- Sending a written notice of revocation of proxy, prior to the taking of the vote at the meeting, to the Corporate Secretary of CFS at:

Community Financial Shares, Inc.

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357 Roosevelt Road

Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137

Attention: Christopher P. Barton, Secretary

Facsimile: (630) 545-0399

- Attending the special meeting and voting in person, although your attendance at the special meeting will not in and of itself revoke your proxy. You must also vote your shares at the meeting.

If your shares are held in the name of a bank, broker or other record holder, you must obtain a proxy, executed in your favor, from the record holder to be able to vote at the annual meeting. CFS stockholders must contact their broker, bank or other nominee to find out how to do so.

Q: What if I oppose the merger? Do I have appraisal rights?

A: CFS stockholders who do not vote in favor of approval of the merger and who otherwise comply with all of the procedures of Title 3, Subtitle 2 of the Maryland General Corporation Law, which we refer to as the MGCL, will be entitled to receive payment in cash of the fair value of their shares of CFS common stock, including common stock issued upon conversion of preferred stock into common stock prior to the merger,

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as ultimately determined under the statutory process. A copy of the relevant sections of the MGCL is attached as *Annex E* to this document.

Q: What if I oppose the preferred stock conversion? Do I have appraisal rights?

A: CFS stockholders who do not vote in favor of approval of the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion are not entitled to appraisal rights.

Q: What are the tax consequences of the merger to me?

A: In general, each of the conversion of your shares of CFS common stock into Wintrust common stock in the merger and the automatic conversion of the Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares into CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger is intended to be tax-free for United States federal income tax purposes. However, you generally will recognize gain (but not loss) in an amount limited to the amount of cash you receive in the merger. Additionally, you will recognize gain or loss on any cash that you receive in lieu of fractional shares of Wintrust's common stock. You should consult with your tax adviser for the specific tax consequences of the merger to you. See *The Merger* Material U.S. federal income tax consequences of the merger on page 85.

Q: When and where is the special meeting?

A: CFS's special meeting will take place on _____, 2015, at _____ local time, at _____.

Q: Who may attend the meeting?

A: CFS stockholders on the record date may attend the special meeting. If you are a stockholder of record, you may need to present proof of identification in order to be admitted into the meeting.

Q: Should I send in my stock certificates now?

A: No. After the merger is completed, the exchange agent for the merger will send you a letter of transmittal with instructions informing you how to send in your stock certificates to the exchange agent. You should use the letter of transmittal to exchange your CFS stock

certificates for the merger consideration. *Do not send in your stock certificates with your proxy form.*

Q: When is the merger expected to be completed?

A: We will try to complete the merger as soon as reasonably possible. Before that happens, the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion must be approved by CFS stockholders, and we must obtain the appropriate regulatory approvals. Assuming stockholders vote to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion, and assuming we obtain the other appropriate approvals and satisfaction or waiver of the other conditions to the closing described in the merger agreement, we expect to complete the merger in the second or third quarter of 2015. See The Merger Agreement Conditions to completion of the merger on page 108.

Q: Is completion of the merger subject to any conditions besides stockholder approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion?

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A: Yes. The transaction must receive appropriate regulatory approvals, and there are other closing conditions that must be satisfied. See The Merger Agreement Conditions to completion of the merger on page 108.

Q: Are there risks I should consider in deciding to vote on the approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion and other proposals contained in this proxy statement/prospectus?

A: Yes, in evaluating the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion, you should read this proxy statement/prospectus carefully, including the factors discussed in the section titled Risk Factors beginning on page 27.

Q: Who can answer my other questions?

A: If you have more questions about the merger or how to submit your proxy, or if you need additional copies of this proxy statement/prospectus or the enclosed proxy form, you should contact Christopher P. Barton, CFS's Corporate Secretary at (630) 545-0900.

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SUMMARY

*This summary highlights selected information in this proxy statement/prospectus and may not contain all of the information that is important to you. To understand the merger and the preferred stock conversion more fully, you should read this entire proxy statement/prospectus carefully, including the annexes and the documents referred to or incorporated by reference in this proxy statement/prospectus. A copy of the merger agreement is attached as Annex A to this proxy statement/prospectus and is incorporated by reference herein. See *Where You Can Find More Information* beginning on page 173.*

Information about Wintrust and CFS (See page 63)

Wintrust Financial Corporation

9700 W. Higgins Road, Suite 800

Rosemont, Illinois 60018

(847) 939-9000

Wintrust Financial Corporation, an Illinois corporation, which we refer to as Wintrust, was incorporated in 1992 and is a financial holding company based in Rosemont, Illinois. Wintrust provides community-oriented, personal and commercial banking services to customers located in the Chicago metropolitan area and in southern Wisconsin through its fifteen wholly-owned banking subsidiaries, as well as the origination and purchase of residential mortgages for sale into the secondary market through Wintrust Mortgage, a division of Barrington Bank and Trust Company, N.A. Wintrust provides specialty finance services, including financing for the payment of commercial insurance premiums and life insurance premiums on a national basis through its wholly-owned subsidiary, First Insurance Funding Corporation and in Canada through its premium finance company, First Insurance Funding of Canada, and short-term accounts receivable financing and outsourced administrative services through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Tricom, Inc. of Milwaukee. Wintrust also provides a full range of wealth management services primarily to customers in the Chicago metropolitan area and in southern Wisconsin through three separate subsidiaries, The Chicago Trust Company, N.A., Wayne Hummer Investments, LLC and Great Lakes Advisors, LLC.

As of December 31, 2014, Wintrust had total assets of approximately \$20.0 billion, total loans, excluding loans held-for-sale and covered loans, of approximately \$14.4 billion, total deposits of approximately \$16.3 billion, and total shareholders' equity of approximately \$2.1 billion.

Wintrust common stock, no par value per share, which we refer to as Wintrust common stock, is traded on NASDAQ under the ticker symbol WTFC. Wintrust's principal executive office is located at 9700 W. Higgins Road, Suite 800, Rosemont, Illinois 60018, telephone number: (847) 939-9000.

Wintrust Merger Sub LLC

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c/o Wintrust Financial Corporation

9700 W. Higgins Road, Suite 800

Rosemont, Illinois 60018

(847) 939-9000

Wintrust Merger Sub LLC, an Illinois limited liability company, which we refer to as Merger Co., is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wintrust and was formed solely for the purpose of consummating the merger. Merger Co. has not carried on any activities to date, except for activities incidental to its formation and activities undertaken in connection with the merger.

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Community Financial Shares, Inc.

357 Roosevelt Road

Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137

(630) 545-0900

Community Financial Shares, Inc., a Maryland corporation, which we refer to as CFS, is a bank holding company headquartered in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. Its primary business is operating its bank subsidiary, Community Bank Wheaton/Glen Ellyn, an Illinois state bank, which we refer to as the Bank, with three banking locations in Wheaton, Illinois and one in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. CFS began operations in 1994.

As of December 31, 2014, CFS had consolidated total assets of approximately \$343.0 million, deposits of approximately \$305.4 million and stockholders' equity of approximately \$28.6 million.

CFS common stock is traded on the over-the-counter market and is quoted on the OTCQB under the symbol CFIS. The closing price of CFS common stock on May 1, 2015 was \$1.39 per share.

The merger and the merger agreement (See pages 63 and 94)

Wintrust's acquisition of CFS is governed by the agreement and plan of merger among Wintrust, Merger Co. and CFS, dated as of March 2, 2015, which we refer to as the merger agreement. The merger agreement provides that, if all of the conditions set forth in the merger agreement are satisfied or waived, CFS will be merged with and into Merger Co. and will cease to exist, which we refer to as the merger. After the consummation of the merger, Merger Co. will continue as the surviving corporation and remain a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wintrust.

Approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the preferred stock conversion (as described below) is a closing condition for completion of the merger. The merger will not be completed unless CFS stockholders approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. Even if the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement receive the requisite votes for stockholder approval, the merger will not be completed if any of the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares or Series E Preferred Shares is not approved by the requisite vote of stockholders.

The merger agreement is included as *Annex A* to this proxy statement/prospectus and is incorporated by reference herein. We urge you to read the merger agreement carefully and fully, as it is the legal document that governs the merger.

The conversion of the shares of CFS preferred stock

The merger agreement provides that, as a condition to the completion of the merger, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each of the Series C Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series E Preferred Shares, which we refer to collectively as CFS preferred stock, will be amended as set forth in *Annex B*, *Annex C* and *Annex D*, as applicable. The purpose of the preferred stock conversion is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of CFS preferred stock with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the CFS preferred stock and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

Among other things, the proposed amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock provide that, immediately prior to completion of the merger, each of the Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares will automatically convert into 100 shares of CFS common stock (the number of shares of CFS common stock into which such shares are convertible under the terms of CFS preferred stock), which we refer to as the preferred stock conversion. As a result, upon the effective time of the merger, each such share of CFS common stock would be converted into the

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right to receive the merger consideration and would be treated in the same manner as all other shares of common stock of CFS.

Approval of these amendments is a closing condition for completion of the merger. If any of the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares or Series E Preferred Shares is not approved by the requisite vote of stockholders, the merger will not be completed. In addition, even if each of these amendments receives the requisite stockholder votes for approval, the merger and the preferred stock conversion will not be completed unless CFS stockholders also approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement.

The amended and restated articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS reflecting the amendments providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion are included as *Annex B*, *Annex C* and *Annex D* to this proxy statement/prospectus and are incorporated by reference herein. We urge you to read the amendments carefully and fully, as they are the legal documents that govern the preferred stock conversion.

What CFS stockholders will receive (See page 94)

If the merger is completed, each share of CFS common stock that you own immediately before the completion of the merger (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) will be converted into the right to receive a combination of cash and shares of Wintrust common stock (in each case subject to possible adjustment). The aggregate merger consideration paid by Wintrust to CFS stockholders is expected to be approximately \$42,375,000, subject to possible downward adjustment as described below. The parties intend for approximately 50% of the aggregate merger consideration to be paid in shares of Wintrust common stock and approximately 50% to be paid in cash.

For each of your shares of CFS common stock, you will receive the per share merger consideration to be calculated as set forth in the merger agreement. The exchange ratio used to determine the number of shares of Wintrust common stock that you will be entitled to receive for each share of CFS common stock will be determined based on the average, calculated for the 10 day trading period ending on the second trading day prior to completion of the merger, of the volume-weighted average price of a share of Wintrust common stock for each trading day during such period, as displayed under the heading "Bloomberg VWAP" on the Bloomberg page for Wintrust, which we refer to as the reference price, subject to a minimum and maximum reference price equal to \$42.50 and \$52.50, respectively. Assuming no adjustment to the merger consideration and that the currently outstanding 10,781,988 shares of CFS common stock, 119,829 shares of the Series C Preferred Shares, 65,427 shares of the Series D Preferred Shares and 5,990 shares of the Series E Preferred Shares remain unchanged at the closing, and assuming the conversion of each share of CFS preferred stock into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to completion of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion, based on a reference price of \$, which is equal to the reference price if it were calculated as of , 2015, the latest practicable date prior to the date of this proxy statement/prospectus, the merger consideration that a holder of CFS common stock (including holders of shares of CFS preferred stock which will be converted into CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) would be entitled to receive for each share of CFS common stock would be \$ in cash and shares of Wintrust common stock. In each case assuming no adjustment to the merger consideration and that the currently outstanding 10,781,988 shares of CFS common stock, 119,829 shares of Series C Preferred Shares, 65,427 shares of Series D Preferred Shares and 5,990 shares of Series E Preferred Shares remain unchanged at the closing, and assuming the conversion of each share of CFS preferred stock into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the completion of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion, if the reference price were equal to the minimum of \$42.50, each share of CFS common stock (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) would instead be entitled to \$0.71 in cash and 0.017 shares of Wintrust common stock, and if the reference price were equal to the maximum of \$52.50, each share of CFS common stock would be entitled to \$0.71 in cash and 0.013 shares of Wintrust common stock. For a description of how the

per share merger consideration will be calculated, see The Merger Agreement Consideration to be received in the merger on page 94.

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The merger consideration may be adjusted downward (i) if the balance sheet delivered to Wintrust by CFS as of the closing date of the merger reflects that CFS stockholders' equity, as determined pursuant to the merger agreement, is less than \$28,250,000, or (ii) under certain circumstances, if CFS fails to or elects not to cure certain defects or objections materially affecting the marketability of title to real property following notice of such defects or objections to CFS by Wintrust or to obtain certain title endorsements to title policies reasonably required by Wintrust. For a description of the possible adjustment of the merger consideration, see *The Merger Agreement* Consideration to be received in the merger Adjustment to merger consideration on page 96. The fifth business day following the satisfaction of the conditions to closing set forth in the merger agreement, or any other date that the parties mutually agree upon, is the date of closing of the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, which we refer to as the closing date.

CFS may terminate the merger agreement if the reference price is less than \$39.50, and Wintrust may terminate the merger agreement if the reference price is more than \$55.50, in each case if CFS and Wintrust are in good faith unable, after five business days' notice of such termination, to reach agreement as to an amendment to the merger agreement containing terms acceptable to Wintrust and CFS so that the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement may be consummated.

CFS stockholders will not receive fractional shares of Wintrust common stock. Instead, they will receive a cash payment for any fractional shares based on the value of Wintrust common stock.

Treatment of CFS options (See page 97)

Pursuant to the merger agreement, in April 2015, each outstanding and unexercised option to acquire a share of CFS common stock, which we refer to as a CFS option, was terminated, cancelled and redeemed by CFS, and no merger consideration will be exchanged therefor.

Exchange of certificates (See page 97)

Once the merger is complete, American Stock Transfer & Trust Company, LLC, which we refer to as the exchange agent, will mail you materials and instructions for exchanging your CFS stock certificates for the merger consideration. Shares of Wintrust common stock representing the stock component of the merger consideration will be issued by book-entry transfer. Upon surrender of your CFS stock certificate, you will also receive a check for the cash component of the merger consideration you are entitled to receive. You should not send in your CFS stock certificates with your completed proxy card. Instead, you should wait until you receive the transmittal materials and instructions from the exchange agent.

Material U.S. federal income tax consequences of the merger (See page 85)

The parties expect that each of the preferred stock conversion and your receipt of shares of Wintrust common stock as part of the merger consideration generally will be tax-free for United States federal income tax purposes. However, you generally will recognize gain (but not loss) in an amount limited to the amount of cash you receive in the merger. Additionally, you will recognize gain or loss on any cash that you receive in lieu of fractional shares of Wintrust common stock. **You are urged to consult your tax adviser for a full understanding of the federal,**

state, local and foreign tax consequences of the merger to you.

Reasons for the merger (See page 84)

CFS's board of directors has concluded that the merger offers CFS stockholders an attractive opportunity to achieve the board's strategic business objectives, including increasing stockholder value, growing the size of the business and enhancing liquidity for CFS stockholders. In addition, CFS board of directors believes that the customers and communities served by the Bank will benefit from the merger.

In deciding to approve the merger agreement and the transactions contemplated thereby, CFS's board of directors consulted with CFS's management, as well as its legal counsel and financial advisors, and considered numerous factors, including the following:

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- information with respect to the businesses, earnings, operations, financial condition, prospects, capital levels and asset quality of CFS and Wintrust, both individually and as a combined company;
- the perceived risks and uncertainties attendant to CFS's operations as an independent banking organization, including the risks and uncertainties related to the continuing low-interest rate environment, competition in CFS's market area, increased regulatory costs and increased capital requirements;
- based on the closing price of Wintrust common stock on March 2, 2015 and CFS's December 31, 2014 unaudited balance sheet, the aggregate merger consideration was priced at a multiple of approximately 148.3% of the tangible book value of CFS (after giving effect to the conversion of all of CFS preferred stock into shares of CFS common stock);
- D.A. Davidson & Co.'s (D.A. Davidson) opinion, subject to the various assumptions, qualifications and limitations set forth in such opinion, that the per share merger consideration is fair, from a financial point of view, to the holders of CFS common stock and each class of CFS preferred stock, respectively;
- the value to be received by CFS stockholders in the merger as compared to value projected for CFS as an independent entity;
- the market value of Wintrust common stock prior to the execution of the merger agreement and the prospects for future appreciation as a result of Wintrust's strategic initiatives;
- Wintrust's strategy to seek profitable future expansion in the Chicago metropolitan area, leading to continued growth in overall stockholder value;
- the fact that Wintrust enjoys relatively high trading volumes on NASDAQ, and the merger would provide access to a more robust trading market for CFS stockholders whose shares currently are thinly traded over-the-counter on OTCQB, as well as enhanced access to capital markets to finance the combined company's capital requirements; and
- the likelihood that the merger will be approved by the relevant bank regulatory authorities without undue burden and in a timely manner.

Wintrust's board of directors concluded that the merger is in the best interests of Wintrust and its shareholders. In deciding to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated thereby, Wintrust's board of directors considered a number of factors,

including:

- management's view that the acquisition provides an attractive opportunity to expand and complement its existing market presence in the Wheaton and Glen Ellyn communities;
- CFS's community banking orientation and its compatibility with Wintrust and its subsidiaries;
- a review of the demographic, economic and financial characteristics of the markets in which CFS operates, including existing and potential competition and history of the market areas with respect to financial institutions;
- management's review of CFS's business, operations, earnings and financial condition, including capital levels and asset quality of the Bank;
- efficiencies to come from integrating certain of CFS's operations into Wintrust's existing operations; and
- the prospects for approval of the merger by the relevant bank regulatory authorities without undue burden and in a timely manner.

Board recommendation to CFS stockholders (See page 103)

CFS's board of directors believes that the merger and the preferred stock conversion are advisable and in the best interests of CFS. **CFS's board of directors unanimously recommends that you vote FOR the**

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proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion and the other proposals described in this proxy statement/prospectus.

Opinion of CFS's financial advisor (See page 74)

In deciding to approve the merger, CFS's board of directors considered, among other things, the opinion of Davidson as of March 2, 2015 that the per share merger consideration is fair, from a financial point of view, to the holders of CFS common stock and holders of shares of each class of CFS preferred stock. You should read the full text of the fairness opinion, which is attached to this proxy statement as *Annex F*, to understand the assumptions made, limits of the reviews undertaken and other matters considered by D.A. Davidson in rendering its opinion.

Interests of officers and directors of CFS and the Bank in the merger may be different from, or in addition to, yours (See page 89)

When you consider the recommendation of CFS's board of directors to vote in favor of the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion and the other proposals described in this proxy statement/prospectus, you should be aware that some of CFS's and the Bank's directors and officers may have interests in the merger and the preferred stock conversion that are different from, or in addition to, your interests as stockholders. CFS's board of directors was aware of these interests and took them into account in approving the merger and the preferred stock conversion. For example, CFS's board of directors considered the existing change in control agreements between CFS and certain CFS officers, as well as Wintrust's agreement pursuant to the merger agreement to pay for directors' and officers' liability insurance covering directors and officers of CFS and the Bank immediately prior to the consummation of the merger, subject to limitations on availability and cost and other terms set forth in the merger agreement, for up to six years following the effective time of the merger.

CFS stockholders will have appraisal rights in connection with the merger (See page 92)

CFS stockholders may dissent from the merger and, upon complying with the requirements of the Maryland General Corporation Law, which we refer to as MGCL, receive cash in the amount of the fair value of their shares instead of the merger consideration.

A copy of the relevant sections of the MGCL pertaining to appraisal rights is attached as *Annex E* to this proxy statement/prospectus. You should read the statute carefully and consult with your legal counsel if you intend to exercise these rights.

CFS stockholders will not have appraisal rights in connection with the preferred stock conversion (See page 116)

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CFS stockholders will not have the right to dissent from the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

The merger and the performance of the combined company are subject to a number of risks (See page 27)

There are a number of risks relating to the merger, the preferred stock conversion and the businesses of Wintrust, CFS and the combined company following the merger. See the **Risk Factors** beginning on page 27 of this proxy statement/prospectus for a discussion of these and other risks and see also the documents that Wintrust has filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission and which we have incorporated by reference into this proxy statement/prospectus.

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CFS stockholder approvals will be required to complete the merger and the preferred stock conversion (See page 45)

To approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, two-thirds of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation for the Series C Preferred Shares), voting together as a single class, which we refer to as the outstanding voting securities, must vote in favor of such proposal at the special meeting. In addition, a majority of outstanding shares of each of (A) the Series C Preferred Shares, (B) the Series D Preferred Shares and (C) the Series E Preferred Shares must vote in favor of the proposal. Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement.

To approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion, two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities must vote in favor of each amendment. Additionally, a majority of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and a majority of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares must vote in favor of the proposal to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS with respect to the Series C Preferred Shares, a majority of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares must vote in favor of the proposal to approve the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS with respect to the Series D Preferred Shares and a majority of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares must vote in favor of the proposal to approve the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS with respect to the Series E Preferred Shares. Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the proposal to approve the amendments of the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

To approve the proposals to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation of CFS's named executive officers and to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate, a majority of all the votes of the outstanding voting securities cast at the meeting, represented in person or by proxy, if a quorum is present must vote in favor of such proposal. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the voting securities represented in person or by proxy may adjourn the special meeting. To satisfy the quorum requirements set forth in CFS's amended and restated by-laws, stockholders holding a majority of the outstanding voting securities of CFS must be present in person or by proxy at the special meeting. Abstentions and failures to vote will have no effect on the approval of the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers.

Stockholders may vote their shares (i) in person at the special meeting, (ii) via the Internet or telephone or (iii) by signing and returning the enclosed proxy form.

All of the directors and officers of CFS and certain other stockholders of CFS have entered into voting agreements pursuant to which they committed to vote their shares of CFS common stock or CFS preferred stock in favor of the merger and any other matter necessary for consummation of the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement (including the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion). The shares subject to the voting agreement represent approximately 10.7% of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock, 31.5% of the outstanding voting securities, 50.1% of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares, 89.1% of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares and 0% of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares, each as of April 28, 2015. See "The Merger Voting agreement" on page 91.

CFS special meeting (See page 44)

The special meeting of CFS stockholders will be held at _____ on _____, 2015 at _____, local time. CFS's board of directors is soliciting proxies for use at the special meeting. At the special meeting, holders of CFS common stock and the Series C Preferred Shares will be asked to consider and vote on a proposal to approve the

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merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, proposals to amend the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS to provide for the preferred stock conversion, a proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers and a proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate.

At the special meeting, holders of Series D Preferred Shares will be asked to consider and vote on (i) the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and (ii) a proposal to amend the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS to provide for the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series D Preferred Shares.

At the special meeting, holders of Series E Preferred Shares will be asked to consider and vote on (i) the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and (ii) a proposal to amend the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS to provide for the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series E Preferred Shares.

Record date for the special meeting; revocability of proxies (See pages 45 and 46)

You may vote on one or more proposals, as applicable, at the special meeting if you own shares of CFS common stock or CFS preferred stock of record at the close of business on _____, 2015. You will have one vote for each share of CFS common stock you owned on that date except that holders of Series C Preferred Shares will vote on each matter, casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the preferred stock conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares, together with holders of CFS common stock as a single class. You may change your vote or revoke your proxy at any time before it is voted via the Internet or by filing with the secretary of CFS a duly executed revocation of proxy or submitting a new proxy form with a later date. You may also vote in person at the special meeting. Attending the special meeting and voting in person will also revoke your previously-submitted proxy, although your attendance at the special meeting will not in and of itself revoke your proxy. You must also vote your shares at the meeting in order to revoke your previously-submitted proxy.

Completion of the merger is subject to regulatory approvals (See page 88)

The merger cannot be completed until Wintrust receives the necessary regulatory approval of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, which we refer to as the Federal Reserve. Wintrust submitted an application with the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago on March 18, 2015.

Conditions to the merger (See page 108)

Closing conditions for the benefit of Wintrust. Wintrust's obligations are subject to fulfillment of certain conditions, including:

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- accuracy of representations and warranties of CFS in the merger agreement as of the closing date, except as otherwise set forth in the merger agreement;
- performance by CFS in all material respects of its agreements, covenants and undertakings under the merger agreement;
- receipt of all appropriate regulatory approvals;
- approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement at the special meeting by (i) the holders of two-thirds of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares, casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the preferred stock conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares), which we refer to collectively as the voting securities, voting together as a single

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class and (ii) a majority of each of the outstanding shares of (A) the Series C Preferred Shares, (B) the Series D Preferred Shares and (C) the Series E Preferred Shares;

- approval of the amendment to the articles of incorporation for the preferred stock conversion of Series C Preferred Shares by the affirmative vote of (i) two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities, (ii) a majority of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and (iii) a majority of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares;

- approval of the amendment to the articles of incorporation for the preferred stock conversion of Series D Preferred Shares by the affirmative vote of (i) two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities and (ii) a majority of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares;

- approval of the amendment to the articles of incorporation for the preferred stock conversion of Series E Preferred Shares by the affirmative vote of (i) two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities and (ii) a majority of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares;

- execution and delivery of the articles of amendment to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion in form suitable for filing with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation of Maryland, as applicable;

- execution and delivery of the articles of merger in form suitable for filing with the Illinois Secretary of State and the State Department of Assessments and Taxation of Maryland;

- absence of greater than 5% of the shares of CFS common stock outstanding as of the closing having made a written objection (treating for this purpose, for the avoidance of doubt, all shares of CFS preferred stock as having been converted into CFS common stock and treating each share of CFS preferred stock that has made such written objection as having made a written objection with respect to the number of shares of CFS common stock into which it is convertible);

- no threatened or instituted litigation seeking to enjoin the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement or seeking other relief that Wintrust reasonably believes, subject to certain conditions, would make it inadvisable to consummate the merger, as more fully set forth in the merger agreement;

- absence of any temporary restraining order, preliminary or permanent injunction or other order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction or other legal restraint or prohibition preventing the consummation of the merger;

- receipt of certain opinions from CFS's counsel;

- the filing by CFS with the appropriate tax authorities of amendments, in form and substance reasonably satisfactory to Wintrust and its counsel, to CFS's consolidated federal and state income tax returns for the 2012 and 2013 tax years to reflect certain corrections, as set forth in the merger agreement;
- absence of any material adverse effect on CFS or its subsidiaries and the continued conduct of business in the ordinary course and all respects consistent with prudent banking practices;
- receipt of balance sheets of CFS and its subsidiaries as of the closing date, adjusted to reflect a reduction in CFS's equity by (i) the after-tax basis of any fees, to the extent deductible for tax purposes, paid by or on behalf of CFS or any of CFS's subsidiaries in connection with the merger, including but limited to legal fees, investment banking fees and fairness opinion fees, and (ii) the after-tax basis of any costs to be paid by CFS or the Bank as a result of the merger in accordance with the terms of any change of control agreements, as set forth in the merger agreement;
- adjustment of the merger consideration, as applicable, as set forth in The Merger Agreement Consideration to be received in the merger Adjustment to merger consideration, to the extent applicable;
- the termination or cessation of certain customer relationships;
- receipt of title commitments and surveys with respect to each of the parcels of real property owned and used by the Bank;

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- receipt of certain specified consents, and all other consents, permissions and approvals where the failure to obtain such consent, permission and approval would have a material adverse effect, as defined in the merger agreement, with respect to CFS's or Wintrust's rights under the merger agreement;
- the registration statement on Form S-4, of which this proxy statement/prospectus forms part, having been declared effective by the SEC and continuing to be effective as of the closing date; and
- approval for listing on NASDAQ of the shares of Wintrust common stock to be issued in connection with the merger.

Closing conditions for the benefit of CFS. CFS's obligations to consummate the transaction are subject to fulfillment of certain conditions, including:

- accuracy of representations and warranties of Wintrust and Merger Co. contained in the merger agreement as of the closing date, except as otherwise set forth in the merger agreement;
- performance by Wintrust in all material respects of its agreements, covenants and undertakings under the merger agreement;
- receipt of all appropriate regulatory approvals;
- execution and delivery of the articles of merger suitable for filing with the Illinois Secretary of State and the State Department of Assessments and Taxation of Maryland;
- absence of any temporary restraining order, preliminary or permanent injunction or other order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction or other legal restraint or prohibition preventing the consummation of the merger;
- the absence of any suit or action seeking to enjoin the merger or to obtain substantial damages in respect of such transaction;
- receipt of an opinion from Wintrust's special counsel;

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- receipt of a tax opinion from CFS's special counsel that the merger constitutes a reorganization within the meaning of Section 368(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;
- absence of any material adverse effect on Wintrust;
- the registration statement on Form S-4, of which this proxy statement/prospectus forms part, having been declared effective by the SEC and continuing to be effective as of the closing date;
- approval for listing on NASDAQ of the shares of Wintrust common stock issuable pursuant to the merger agreement; and
- the execution and delivery by Wintrust of one or more supplemental indentures and other instruments required for the due assumption of CFS's outstanding debt, guarantees, securities and other agreements to the extent required by the terms of such debt, guarantees, securities or other agreements.

How the merger agreement may be terminated by Wintrust and CFS (See page 104)

Wintrust and CFS may mutually agree to terminate the merger agreement and abandon the merger at any time. Subject to conditions and circumstances described in the merger agreement, the merger agreement may be terminated as follows:

- if the merger is not completed (other than through the failure of any party seeking to terminate the agreement to comply fully with its material obligations under the merger agreement) by September 30, 2015 or such later date agreed to by the parties; provided, that such termination date will be extended to October 31, 2015 if the sole impediment to closing is due to delay in receiving regulatory approval from the Federal Reserve;

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- if the other party has breached or failed to perform in any material respect any of its representations, warranties or covenants contained in the merger agreement, which breach or failure would give rise to the failure of a condition under the merger agreement required to be met by it prior to the closing date, it cannot be cured within 30 days and the non-breaching party has not waived such condition;
- if it becomes impossible for the other party to satisfy a condition and its inability to satisfy the condition was not caused by the non-breaching party's failure to comply with any of its obligations under the merger agreement and such non-breaching party has not waived such condition;
- in certain circumstances, by CFS if the CFS board receives a superior proposal from a third party and concurrently enters into a definitive agreement providing for the implementation of such superior proposal;
- by either party if CFS stockholder approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the transactions contemplated in the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion is not obtained at the special meeting;
- by CFS if at the time the conditions to the merger are satisfied, the reference price is less than \$39.50;
- by Wintrust if at the time the conditions to the merger are satisfied, the reference price is more than \$55.50;
- in certain circumstances, by Wintrust if the CFS board or committee withdraws or modifies, or publicly proposed to withdraw or modify, its approval or recommendation of, or fails to recommend the merger agreement or the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, or approves or recommends, or publicly proposes to approve or recommend, a takeover proposal by a third party or fails to reaffirm its recommendation in certain circumstances; or
- in certain circumstances, by Wintrust if CFS fails to cure certain title defects or obtain certain endorsements by the closing date.

Termination fees and expenses may be payable under some circumstances (See page 105)

Generally, if the merger agreement is terminated by either CFS or Wintrust because the other party has committed a material breach, subject to certain limitations, the breaching party will be required to pay the non-breaching party a termination fee of \$900,000 and reimburse the non-breaching party for up to \$325,000 in out-of-pocket costs and expenses.

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Under certain circumstances described in the merger agreement, Wintrust may be owed a \$1,750,000 termination fee from CFS, including the following:

- if Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because CFS has breached or failed to perform its obligations under its covenant not to solicit a takeover proposal from a third party;
- if Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because the CFS board or any committee of the CFS board withdraws or modifies, or proposes publicly to withdraw or modify, its approval or recommendation of the merger agreement or the merger;
- if Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because the CFS board or any committee of the CFS board fails to recommend to its stockholders that they approve the merger agreement, the merger and the transactions contemplated in the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion;
- if Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because the CFS board or any committee thereof approves or recommends, or proposes publicly to approve or recommend, any takeover proposal or fails to reaffirm its recommendation in certain circumstances;
- if Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because the CFS board fails to reaffirm its recommendation to CFS stockholders that they approve the merger agreement, the merger and the

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other transactions contemplated in the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion within five business days of Wintrust's written request to do so following public disclosure of a takeover proposal;

- if after a takeover proposal is made to the CFS board or to the public, or any person's bona fide intention to make a takeover proposal is publicly announced, either Wintrust or CFS terminates the merger agreement because the closing has not occurred by September 30, 2015 or such later date agreed to by the parties (or October 31, 2015, if the sole impediment to closing is due to delay in receiving regulatory approval from the Federal Reserve) and, within fifteen months after termination of the merger agreement, CFS or a CFS subsidiary consummates or enters into a definitive agreement relating to a takeover proposal or the CFS board or any committee thereof has approved, adopted or recommended in favor of any takeover proposal; provided, that no such fee shall be payable when the CFS stockholder approval has not been obtained at least two business days before such termination;

- if after a takeover proposal is made to the CFS board or to the public, or any person's intention to make such a takeover proposal is publicly announced, Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because CFS has breached or failed to perform in any material respect any of its representations, warranties or covenants under the merger agreement that would give rise to a condition to Wintrust's obligations to close to be satisfied, such breach or failure to perform cannot be cured within 30 days, and Wintrust has not waived such condition, and, within fifteen months after termination of the merger agreement, CFS or a CFS subsidiary consummates or enters into a definitive agreement relating to a takeover proposal or the CFS board or any committee thereof has approved, adopted or recommended in favor of any takeover proposal; provided, that no such fee shall be payable when the CFS stockholder approval has not been obtained at least two business days before such termination;

- if after a takeover proposal is made to the CFS board or to the public, or any person's intention to make such a takeover proposal is publicly announced, Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because satisfaction of a condition to its obligation to close is or becomes impossible to satisfy (other than through a failure of Wintrust or Merger Co. to comply with its obligations under the merger agreement), Wintrust has not waived such condition and, within fifteen months after termination of the merger agreement, CFS or a CFS subsidiary consummates or enters into a definitive agreement relating to a takeover proposal or the CFS board or any committee thereof has have approved, adopted or recommended in favor of any takeover proposal and CFS stockholder approval has not been obtained at least two business days before such termination;

- after a takeover proposal is made to the CFS board or to the public, or any person's intention to make a takeover proposal is publicly announced, either Wintrust or CFS terminates the merger agreement if the approvals of CFS stockholders of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated in the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion are not obtained at the special meeting, and within fifteen months after termination of the merger agreement, CFS or a CFS subsidiary consummates or enters into a definitive agreement relating to a takeover proposal or the CFS board or any committee thereof has approved, adopted or recommended in favor of any takeover proposal; or

- CFS terminates the merger agreement to enter concurrently into a definitive agreement providing for the implementation of a superior proposal, provided that CFS and its subsidiaries have complied with all their obligations set forth above in the sections entitled "The Merger Agreement - No solicitation of or discussions relating to a takeover proposal" and "The Merger Agreement - Board recommendation of CFS board of directors," and the CFS board previously determined in good faith and after consultation with outside counsel and its financial advisors that a failure to make a recommendation change and/or, subject to compliance with its requirements under the merger agreement, terminate the merger agreement in order to enter concurrently into a definitive agreement providing for the implementation of such superior proposal would be inconsistent with their directors' duties under Maryland law, and, following the five business day negotiation period with Wintrust, Wintrust does

not make an offer that is at least as favorable to the stockholders of CFS.

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In addition, if the merger agreement is terminated by either Wintrust or CFS because CFS stockholder approval is not obtained, CFS shall pay to Wintrust up to \$325,000 in out-of-pocket expenses and costs. See The Merger Agreement Termination fee.

Voting agreement (See page 91)

All of the directors and officers of CFS and certain other stockholders of CFS have entered into voting agreements pursuant to which they committed, among other things, to vote their shares of CFS common stock or CFS preferred stock in favor of the merger and any other matter necessary for consummation of the transactions contemplated by the merger (including the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion). The shares subject to the voting agreement represent approximately 10.7% of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock, 31.5% of the outstanding voting securities, 50.1% of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares, 89.1% of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares and 0% of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares, each as of April 28, 2015. The voting agreement terminates if the merger agreement is terminated in accordance with its terms. A copy of the voting agreement is attached to this proxy statement/prospectus as *Annex G*.

Accounting treatment of the merger

The merger will be accounted for as a purchase transaction in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States.

Certain differences in Wintrust shareholder rights and CFS stockholder rights (See page 151)

Wintrust is an Illinois corporation, and CFS is a Maryland corporation. The rights of holders of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock under Maryland law and CFS's articles of incorporation and amended and restated by-laws are different from rights of holders of Wintrust common stock under Illinois law and Wintrust's articles of incorporation and by-laws. Certain of these differences are described in detail in the section entitled Comparison of Rights of Wintrust Shareholders and CFS Stockholders beginning on page 151. After completion of the merger, CFS stockholders (including holders of CFS preferred stock, which will be converted into common stock of CFS immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) who receive shares of Wintrust common stock in exchange for their shares of CFS common stock will become Wintrust shareholders, and their rights will be governed by Wintrust's articles of incorporation and by-laws, in addition to laws and requirements that apply to public companies.

Wintrust shares will be listed on NASDAQ (See page 111)

The shares of Wintrust common stock to be issued pursuant to the merger will be listed on NASDAQ under the symbol WTFC.

Per Share Market Price and Dividend Information

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Wintrust common stock is listed on NASDAQ under the symbol WTRF. The table below shows, for the quarters indicated, based on published financial sources, the reported high and low sales prices of Wintrust's common stock during the periods indicated and the cash dividends paid per share of Wintrust common stock.

| | High | | Low | | Dividend |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----|-------|----|----------|
| Year Ended December 31, 2013 | | | | | |
| First Quarter | \$ 38.66 | \$ | 35.90 | \$ | 0.09 |
| Second Quarter | 38.70 | | 34.63 | | |
| Third Quarter | 42.28 | | 38.38 | | 0.09 |
| Fourth Quarter | 47.80 | | 40.61 | | |
| Year Ending December 31, 2014 | | | | | |
| First Quarter | \$ 49.99 | \$ | 42.14 | \$ | 0.10 |
| Second Quarter | 49.46 | | 42.53 | | 0.10 |

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|--------------------------------------|----|-------|----|-------|----|------|
| Third Quarter | | 48.53 | | 44.34 | | 0.10 |
| Fourth Quarter | | 47.78 | | 41.99 | | 0.10 |
| Year Ending December 31, 2015 | | | | | | |
| First Quarter | \$ | 48.81 | \$ | 41.04 | \$ | 0.11 |
| Second Quarter (through May 1, 2015) | | 49.97 | | 46.77 | | 0.11 |

CFS common stock is traded on the over-the-counter market and quoted on OTCQB under the symbol CFIS. The table below shows, for the quarters indicated, based on published financial sources, the reported high and low sales prices of CFS's common stock during the periods indicated and the cash dividends paid per share of CFS common stock.

| | | High | | Low | | Dividend |
|--------------------------------------|----|------|----|------|----|----------|
| Year Ended December 31, 2013 | | | | | | |
| First Quarter | \$ | 1.45 | \$ | 1.07 | \$ | 0.00 |
| Second Quarter | | 1.30 | | 1.20 | | 0.00 |
| Third Quarter | | 1.30 | | 0.81 | | 0.00 |
| Fourth Quarter | | 1.10 | | 0.82 | | 0.00 |
| Year Ending December 31, 2014 | | | | | | |
| First Quarter | \$ | 1.20 | \$ | 0.91 | \$ | 0.00 |
| Second Quarter | | 1.15 | | 0.90 | | 0.00 |
| Third Quarter | | 1.14 | | 1.00 | | 0.00 |
| Fourth Quarter | | 1.00 | | 0.85 | | 0.00 |
| Year Ending December 31, 2015 | | | | | | |
| First Quarter | \$ | 1.52 | \$ | 0.89 | \$ | 0.00 |
| Second Quarter (through May 1, 2015) | | 1.39 | | 1.35 | | 0.00 |

Comparative Per Share Data

The following table presents selected comparative per share data for Wintrust common stock and CFS common stock. You should read this information in conjunction with the selected historical financial information of CFS included elsewhere in this proxy statement/prospectus and the historical financial statements of Wintrust and related notes that are incorporated by reference in this proxy statement/prospectus. The historical per share data is derived from Wintrust's and CFS's audited financial statements as of and for the year ended December 31, 2014.

| | | Year Ended December 31, 2014 |
|--------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| Wintrust: | | |
| Diluted earnings per share | \$ | 2.98 |
| Cash dividends declared per share | | 0.40 |
| Book value per share (at period end) | | 41.52 |
| CFS: | | |
| Diluted earnings per share | \$ | 0.18 |
| Cash dividends declared per share | | 0.00 |
| Book value per share (at period end) | | 0.96 |

Table of Contents**Selected Historical Financial Data of Wintrust**

The selected consolidated financial data of Wintrust presented below is being provided to assist you in your analysis of the financial aspects of the merger. The annual Wintrust historical information as of and for each of the years in the five-year period ended December 31, 2014 are derived from Wintrust's audited historical financial statements. This information is only a summary and should be read in conjunction with Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations and the consolidated financial statements and the notes thereto incorporated by reference into this proxy statement/prospectus from Wintrust's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2014. The historical results below or contained elsewhere in this proxy statement/prospectus are not necessarily indicative of the future performance of Wintrust or the combined company.

| | Years Ended December 31, | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 |
| | (Dollars in thousands, except per share data) | | | | |
| Selected Financial Condition Data | | | | | |
| (at end of period): | | | | | |
| Total assets | \$ 20,010,727 | \$ 18,097,783 | \$ 17,519,613 | \$ 15,893,808 | \$ 13,980,156 |
| Total loans, excluding loans held-for-sale, covered loans | 14,409,398 | 12,896,602 | 11,828,943 | 10,521,377 | 9,599,886 |
| Total deposits | 16,281,844 | 14,668,789 | 14,428,544 | 12,307,267 | 10,803,673 |
| Junior subordinated debentures | 249,493 | 249,493 | 249,493 | 249,493 | 249,493 |
| Total shareholders' equity | 2,069,822 | 1,900,589 | 1,804,705 | 1,543,533 | 1,436,549 |
| Selected Statements of Income Data: | | | | | |
| Net interest income | \$ 598,575 | \$ 550,627 | \$ 519,516 | \$ 461,377 | \$ 415,836 |
| Net revenue(1) | 813,815 | 773,024 | 745,608 | 651,075 | 607,996 |
| Net income per common share - Basic | 3.12 | \$ 3.33 | \$ 2.81 | \$ 2.08 | \$ 1.08 |
| Net income per common share - Diluted | 2.98 | \$ 2.75 | \$ 2.31 | \$ 1.67 | \$ 1.02 |
| Selected Financial Ratios and Other Data: | | | | | |
| <i>Performance Ratios:</i> | | | | | |
| Net interest margin(2) | 3.53% | 3.50% | 3.49% | 3.42% | 3.37% |
| Non-interest income to average assets | 1.15% | 1.27% | 1.37% | 1.27% | 1.42% |
| Non-interest expense to average assets | 2.92% | 2.88% | 2.96% | 2.82% | 2.82% |
| Net overhead ratio(2) (3) | 1.77% | 1.60% | 1.59% | 1.55% | 1.40% |
| Efficiency ratio(2)(4) | 66.89% | 64.57% | 65.85% | 64.58% | 63.77% |
| Return on average assets | 0.81% | 0.79% | 0.67% | 0.52% | 0.47% |
| Return on average common equity | 7.77% | 7.56% | 6.60% | 5.12% | 3.01% |
| Return on average tangible common equity(2) | 10.14% | 9.93% | 8.70% | 6.70% | 4.36% |
| Average total assets | \$ 18,699,458 | \$ 17,468,249 | \$ 16,529,617 | \$ 14,920,160 | \$ 13,556,612 |
| Average total shareholders' equity | \$ 1,993,959 | \$ 1,856,706 | \$ 1,696,276 | \$ 1,484,720 | \$ 1,352,135 |
| Average loans to average deposits ratio (excluding covered loans) | 89.9% | 88.9% | 87.8% | 88.3% | 91.1% |
| Average loans to average deposits ratio (including covered loans) | 91.7% | 92.1% | 92.6% | 92.8% | 93.4% |

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Common Share Data (at end of period):

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|------------|----|------------|----|------------|----|------------|----|------------|
| Market price per common share | \$ | 46.76 | \$ | 46.12 | \$ | 36.70 | \$ | 28.05 | \$ | 33.03 |
| Book value per common share(2) | \$ | 41.52 | \$ | 38.47 | \$ | 37.78 | \$ | 34.23 | \$ | 32.73 |
| Tangible common book value per share(2) | \$ | 32.45 | \$ | 29.93 | \$ | 29.28 | \$ | 26.72 | \$ | 25.80 |
| Common shares outstanding | | 46,805,055 | | 46,116,583 | | 36,858,355 | | 35,978,349 | | 34,864,068 |

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| | 2014 | 2013 | At December 31, 2012 | 2011 | 2010 |
|---|-----------|------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| <i>Other Data at end of period: (7)</i> | | | | | |
| Leverage Ratio | 10.2% | 10.5% | 10.0% | 9.4% | 10.1% |
| Tier 1 capital to risk-weighted assets | 11.6% | 12.2% | 12.1% | 11.8% | 12.5% |
| Total capital to risk-weighted assets | 13.0% | 12.9% | 13.1% | 13.0% | 13.8% |
| Tangible common equity ratio (TCE)(2)(6) | 7.8% | 7.8% | 7.4% | 7.5% | 8.0% |
| Tangible common equity ratio, assuming full conversion of preferred stock(2)(6) | 8.4% | 8.5% | 8.4% | 7.8% | 8.3% |
| Allowance for credit losses(5) | \$ 92,480 | \$ 97,641 | \$ 121,988 | \$ 123,612 | \$ 118,037 |
| Non-performing loans | \$ 78,677 | \$ 103,334 | \$ 118,083 | \$ 120,084 | \$ 141,958 |
| Allowance for credit losses to total loans(5) | 0.64% | 0.76% | 1.03% | 1.17% | 1.23% |
| Non-performing loans to total loans | 0.55% | 0.80% | 1.00% | 1.14% | 1.48% |
| Number of: | | | | | |
| Bank subsidiaries | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| Banking offices | 140 | 124 | 111 | 99 | 86 |

(1) Net revenue is net interest income plus non-interest income.

(2) See Item 7, Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations Non-GAAP Financial Measures/Ratios of Wintrust's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014 for a reconciliation of this performance measure/ratio to GAAP.

(3) The net overhead ratio is calculated by netting total non-interest expense and total non-interest income, annualizing this amount, and dividing by that period's total average assets. A lower ratio indicates a higher degree of efficiency.

(4) The efficiency ratio is calculated by dividing total non-interest expense by tax-equivalent net revenue (less securities gains or losses). A lower ratio indicates more efficient revenue generation.

(5) The allowance for credit losses includes both the allowance for loan losses and the allowance for unfunded lending-related commitments, but excludes the allowance for covered loan losses.

(6) Total shareholders' equity minus preferred stock and total intangible assets divided by total assets minus total intangible assets.

(7) Asset quality ratios exclude covered loans.

Table of Contents**Selected Historical Financial Data of CFS**

The selected consolidated financial data of CFS presented below is being provided to assist you in your analysis of the financial aspects of the merger. The annual CFS historical information as of and for each of the years in the five-year period ended December 31, 2014 are derived from CFS's audited historical financial statements. This information is only a summary and should be read in conjunction with Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations of CFS and the consolidated financial statements and the notes thereto included in this proxy statement/prospectus. The historical results below or contained elsewhere in this proxy statement/prospectus are not necessarily indicative of the future performance of CFS or the combined company.

| | Years Ended December 31, | | | | | |
|--|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|--|
| | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 | |
| | (Dollar in thousands, except per share data) | | | | | |
| Selected Financial Condition Data (at end of period) | | | | | | |
| Community Financial Shares, Inc. | | | | | | |
| Total loans, excluding loans held for sale | \$ 185,015 | \$ 195,951 | \$ 197,423 | \$ 206,964 | \$ 229,286 | |
| Total deposits | \$ 305,421 | \$ 315,709 | \$ 317,204 | \$ 301,101 | \$ 309,080 | |
| Total stockholders' equity | \$ 28,576 | \$ 21,627 | \$ 22,352 | \$ 7,250 | \$ 17,755 | |
| Selected Statements of Income Data | | | | | | |
| Community Financial Shares, Inc. | | | | | | |
| Net interest income | \$ 10,394 | \$ 10,534 | \$ 10,258 | \$ 10,767 | \$ 10,395 | |
| Net revenue | \$ 12,179 | \$ 12,783 | \$ 12,162 | \$ 12,384 | \$ 12,209 | |
| Net income per share | \$ 0.18 | \$ (0.38) | \$ 0.11 | \$ (9.20) | \$ (4.03) | |
| Community Financial Shares, Inc. Common Share Data(1) | | | | | | |
| Book value per common share(1) | \$ 0.96 | \$ 0.72 | \$ 0.89 | \$ 5.82 | \$ 14.26 | |
| Common shares outstanding(1) | 29,906,588 | 29,906,588 | 25,245,267 | 1,245,267 | 1,245,267 | |
| Selected Financial Ratios of Community Financial Shares, Inc. | | | | | | |
| Net interest margin | 3.41% | 3.34% | 3.49% | 3.71% | 3.42% | |
| Non-interest income to average assets | 0.53% | 0.65% | 0.57% | 0.49% | 0.54% | |
| Non-interest expense to average assets | 3.24% | 4.07% | 4.43% | 3.82% | 3.50% | |
| Return on average assets | 1.61% | (0.81)% | (0.74)% | (3.35)% | (1.35)% | |
| Return on average common equity | 105.18% | (227.51)% | 42.47% | (113.72)% | (33.69)% | |
| Average total assets | \$ 333,936 | \$ 344,214 | \$ 331,974 | \$ 328,583 | \$ 337,739 | |
| Average equity | \$ 24,243 | \$ 20,666 | \$ 8,923 | \$ 17,041 | \$ 21,683 | |
| Selected Other Data of Community Bank | | | | | | |
| Leverage ratio | 7.70% | 6.80% | 7.70% | 3.30% | 5.40% | |
| Tier 1 capital to risk-weighted assets | 12.20% | 10.80% | 11.40% | 4.80% | 7.30% | |
| Total capital to risk-weighted assets | 13.40% | 11.90% | 12.60% | 6.10% | 8.60% | |
| Allowance for loan losses | \$ 2,442 | \$ 2,500 | \$ 3,032 | \$ 8,854 | \$ 7,679 | |
| Non performing loans | \$ 2,448 | \$ 1,172 | \$ 7,767 | \$ 13,799 | \$ 20,294 | |
| Allowance for loan losses to total loans | 1.32% | 1.28% | 1.54% | 4.28% | 3.35% | |
| Non-performing loan to total loans | 1.32% | 0.60% | 3.94% | 6.68% | 8.86% | |

(1) Assumes full conversion of CFS preferred shares.

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RISK FACTORS

In addition to the other information contained in or incorporated by reference into this proxy statement/prospectus, including the matters addressed under the caption "Special Notes Concerning Forward-Looking Statements" on page 41, you should consider the following risk factors carefully in deciding whether to vote for the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the other proposals in this proxy statement/prospectus. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to Wintrust and CFS or that are not currently believed to be important to you, if they materialize, also may adversely affect the merger and Wintrust and CFS as a combined company.

In addition, Wintrust's business is subject to numerous risks and uncertainties, including the risks and uncertainties described in Wintrust's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, which is incorporated by reference into this proxy statement/prospectus.

Risks relating to the merger

Because the market price of Wintrust common stock may fluctuate, you cannot be certain of the precise value of the stock portion of the merger consideration you may receive in the merger.

At the time the merger is completed, each issued and outstanding share of CFS common stock (which includes shares of CFS common stock issued pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) other than shares held as treasury stock or otherwise owned by CFS or the Bank and shares of CFS common stock in respect of which appraisal rights have been properly exercised and perfected, will be converted into the right to receive merger consideration in the form of Wintrust common stock and cash, subject to adjustment as set forth in the merger agreement. The exchange ratio for the Wintrust common stock, as calculated in accordance with the formula set forth in the merger agreement, may fluctuate depending on the market price of Wintrust common stock during the reference period.

There will be a time lapse between each of the following dates: the date on which CFS stockholders vote to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for the preferred stock conversion, at the special meeting; the date on which the exchange ratio is determined and the date on which CFS stockholders entitled to receive shares of Wintrust common stock actually receive such shares. The market value of Wintrust common stock may fluctuate during these periods. Consequently, at the time CFS stockholders must decide whether to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, they will not know the actual market value of the shares of Wintrust common stock they will receive when the merger is completed. The actual value of the shares of Wintrust common stock received by CFS stockholders will depend on the market value of shares of Wintrust common stock on that date. This market value may be less than the value used to determine the exchange ratio, as that determination will be made with respect to a period occurring prior to the consummation of the merger.

Because the merger consideration is subject to downward adjustment, the value of the merger consideration you may receive in the merger may be less than you expect.

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The merger consideration to be received by CFS stockholders at the closing of the merger is subject to downward adjustment by Wintrust and CFS (i) if the balance sheet delivered to Wintrust by CFS as of the closing date reflects that CFS stockholders' equity, as determined pursuant to the merger agreement, is less than \$28,250,000 or (ii) under certain circumstances, if CFS fails to or elects not to cure certain defects or objections materially affecting the marketability of title to real property following notice of such defects or objections to CFS by Wintrust or to obtain certain title endorsements to title policies reasonably required by Wintrust. For a description of the possible adjustment of the merger consideration, see The Merger Agreement Consideration to be received in the merger Adjustment to merger consideration on page 96.

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The financial forecasts reflected in the opinion of D.A. Davidson & Co. (D.A. Davidson), which is summarized beginning on page 74, involve risks, uncertainties and assumptions made by Davidson, many of which are beyond the control of Wintrust and CFS. As a result, they may not prove to be accurate and are not necessarily indicative of current values or future performance of either Wintrust or CFS.

The financial forecasts of D.A. Davidson reflected in its fairness opinion, a copy of which is attached to this proxy statement as *Annex F*, and which is summarized beginning on page 74, involve risks, uncertainties and assumptions made by D.A. Davidson and are not a guarantee of future performance. The future financial results of Wintrust and CFS and, if the merger is completed, the combined company, may materially differ from those expressed in the financial forecasts of D.A. Davidson due to factors that are beyond Wintrust's and CFS's ability to control or predict. Neither Wintrust nor CFS can provide any assurance that these financial forecasts will be realized or that Wintrust's or CFS's future financial results will not materially vary from such financial forecasts. Wintrust did not provide its own financial forecasts and the management of Wintrust did not confirm or otherwise comment with respect to any estimates used by or the financial forecasts of Davidson, nor do Wintrust or CFS undertake to update the forecasts reflected in Davidson's fairness opinion. Such financial forecasts cover multiple years, and the information by its nature becomes subject to greater uncertainty with each successive year. These financial forecasts do not take into account any circumstances or events occurring after the date they were prepared.

More specifically, the financial forecasts of Davidson:

- necessarily make numerous assumptions by Davidson, many of which are beyond the control of Wintrust or CFS and may not prove to be accurate;
- do not necessarily reflect revised prospects for Wintrust's or CFS's businesses, changes in general business or economic conditions, or any other transaction or event that has occurred or that may occur and that was not anticipated at the time the forecasts were prepared;
- are not necessarily indicative of current values or future performance, which may be significantly more favorable or less favorable than is reflected in the forecasts; and
- should not be regarded as a representation that the financial forecasts will be achieved.

The financial forecasts reflected in Davidson's fairness opinion were not prepared with a view toward public disclosure or compliance with published guidelines of the Securities and Exchange Commission, which we refer to as the SEC, or the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants for preparation and presentation of prospective financial information or generally accepted accounting principles, which we refer to as GAAP, and do not reflect the effect of any proposed or other changes in GAAP that may be made in the future.

Wintrust may be unable to successfully integrate CFS's and the Bank's operations and may not realize the anticipated benefits of acquiring CFS.

Wintrust and CFS entered into the merger agreement with the expectation that Wintrust would be able to successfully integrate the operations of CFS and the Bank, and that the merger would result in various benefits, including, among other things, enhanced revenues and revenue synergies, an expanded market reach and operating efficiencies. Achieving the anticipated benefits of the merger is subject to a number of uncertainties, including whether Wintrust integrates and operates CFS and the Bank in an efficient and effective manner and general competitive factors in the market place. The process of integrating operations could cause an interruption of, or loss of momentum in, the activities of one or more of the combined company's businesses or the loss of key personnel. The diversion of management's attention and any delays or difficulties encountered in connection with the merger and the integration of the two companies' operations could have an adverse effect on the business, financial condition, operating results and prospects of the combined company after the merger. Failure to achieve these anticipated benefits could result in increased costs, decreases in the amount of expected revenues and diversion of management's time and energy and could have an adverse effect on the combined company's business, financial condition, operating results and prospects.

Among the factors considered by the boards of directors of Wintrust and CFS in connection with their respective approvals of the merger agreement were the benefits that could result from the merger. We cannot give any assurance that these benefits will be realized within the time periods contemplated or even that they will be realized at all.

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CFS will be subject to business uncertainties while the merger is pending, which could adversely affect its business.

Uncertainty about the effect of the merger on employees and customers may have an adverse effect on CFS, and, consequently, the combined company. Although CFS intends to take steps to reduce any adverse effects, these uncertainties may impair CFS's ability to attract, retain and motivate key personnel until the merger is consummated and for a period of time thereafter, and could cause customers and others that deal with CFS to seek to change their existing business relationships with CFS. Employee retention at CFS may be particularly challenging during the pendency of the merger, as employees may experience uncertainty about their roles with the combined company following the merger.

CFS's executive officers and directors have interests in the merger that may be different from the interests of CFS stockholders generally.

When considering the recommendation of the CFS board that CFS stockholders approve the merger, CFS stockholders should be aware that directors and executive officers of CFS have certain interests in the merger that may be different from or in addition to the interests of CFS stockholders generally. These interests include certain change of control agreements and Wintrust's agreement to provide directors and officers insurance to the officers and directors of CFS, subject to limits on availability and cost, for up to six years following the merger. The CFS board was aware of these interests and considered them, among other things, in evaluating and negotiating the merger agreement and transactions contemplated thereby and in recommending that the CFS stockholders approve the merger and other transactions contemplated in the merger agreement. See *The Merger Interests of certain persons in the merger* on page 89.

The shares of Wintrust common stock to be received by CFS stockholders as a result of the merger will have different rights from shares of CFS common stock.

CFS is a Maryland corporation. Wintrust is an Illinois corporation. The rights of holders of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock under Maryland law and CFS's articles of incorporation and amended and restated by-laws are different from holders of Wintrust common stock under Illinois law and Wintrust's articles of incorporation and by-laws. Certain of these differences are described in detail in the section entitled *Comparison of Rights of Wintrust Shareholders and CFS Stockholders* beginning on page 151. After completion of the merger, CFS stockholders (including holders of CFS preferred stock which will be converted into common stock of CFS immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) who receive shares of Wintrust common stock in exchange for their shares of CFS common stock will become Wintrust shareholders, and their rights will be governed by Wintrust's articles of incorporation and by-laws, in addition to laws and requirements that apply to public companies. See *Comparison of Rights of Wintrust Shareholders and CFS Stockholders* beginning on page 151 for a discussion of the different rights associated with Wintrust and CFS stock.

The merger agreement contains provisions that restrict CFS's ability to pursue alternatives to the merger and, in specified circumstances, could require CFS to pay Wintrust a termination fee.

Under the merger agreement, CFS is restricted from seeking or discussing an alternative takeover proposal to the merger. CFS has agreed that, except as described further below, neither it nor any of its representatives will, directly or indirectly: solicit, initiate or encourage, or knowingly facilitate any inquiries or the making of any proposal or offer that constitutes, or could reasonably be expected to lead to, any takeover proposal; enter into any agreement with respect to any takeover proposal; or participate in any discussions or negotiations with, or furnish any information (whether orally or in writing) or access to the business, properties, assets, books or records of CFS or its subsidiaries to, or otherwise cooperate

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with, knowingly assist, or participate in, facilitate or encourage any effort by, any person (or any representative of a person) that has made, is seeking to make, has informed CFS of any intention to make, or has publicly announced an intention to make, any proposal that constitutes, or could reasonably be expected to lead to, any takeover proposal.

If CFS and its subsidiaries have complied with all their obligations contained in their covenant not to solicit alternative takeover proposals, and the CFS board receives a superior proposal and as a result the CFS board

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determines in good faith and after consultation with outside counsel and its financial advisors that a failure to so act would be inconsistent with their directors' duties under Maryland law, then before receipt of stockholder approval of the proposals to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion (but in no event after receipt of such approvals) the CFS board may make a CFS recommendation change and/or, subject to certain restrictions set forth in the merger agreement, terminate the merger agreement in order to enter concurrently into a definitive agreement providing for the implementation of such superior proposal, if after a five business day period of negotiation with Wintrust following the CFS board's decision to make such a CFS recommendation change and/or terminate the merger agreement in order to enter concurrently into a definitive agreement, Wintrust has not made an offer to CFS that is at least as favorable to the stockholders of CFS, as determined in accordance with the terms of the merger agreement.

Completion of the merger is subject to certain conditions, and if these conditions are not satisfied or waived, the merger will not be completed.

The obligations of Wintrust and CFS to complete the merger are subject to satisfaction or waiver (if permitted) of a number of conditions. The satisfaction of all of the required conditions could delay the completion of the merger for a significant period of time or prevent it from occurring. Any delay in completing the merger could cause the combined company not to realize some or all of the benefits that the combined company expects to achieve if the merger is successfully completed within its expected timeframe. Further, there can be no assurance that the conditions to the closing of the merger will be satisfied or waived or that the merger will be completed.

In addition, if the merger is not completed on or before September 30, 2015 (subject to certain extension rights), either Wintrust or CFS may choose not to proceed with the merger. CFS may also terminate the merger agreement under certain circumstances, including among others in order to make a CFS recommendation change and/or concurrently enter into a definitive agreement providing for the implementation of a takeover proposal that is determined by the CFS board to be superior to the merger agreement, subject to the terms and conditions of, and as set forth in, the merger agreement (including an opportunity for Wintrust to match any such proposal). Wintrust may also terminate the merger agreement under certain circumstances.

Failure to complete the merger could negatively impact the stock price and the future business and financial results of CFS.

If the merger is not completed for any reason, including as a result of CFS stockholders failing to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, the ongoing business of CFS may be adversely affected and, without realizing any of the benefits of having completed the merger, CFS would be subject to a number of risks, including the following:

- CFS may be required, under certain circumstances, to pay a termination fee to the other party (see "The Merger Agreement - Termination fee");
- CFS is subject to certain restrictions on the conduct of its business prior to completing the merger, which may adversely affect its abilities to execute certain of its business strategies;

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- CFS may experience negative reactions from the financial markets, including negative impacts on their stock prices or from their customers, regulators and employees;
- CFS has incurred and will continue to incur certain costs and fees associated with the merger and other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement; and
- matters relating to the merger (including integration planning) may require substantial commitments of time and resources by CFS management, which would otherwise have been devoted to day-to-day operations and other opportunities that may have been beneficial to CFS as an independent company.

In addition, Wintrust and CFS could be subject to litigation related to any failure to complete the merger or related to any enforcement proceeding commenced against Wintrust or CFS to perform its obligations under the merger agreement. If the merger is not completed, these risks may materialize and may adversely affect Wintrust's or CFS's businesses, financial condition, financial results and stock price.

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Wintrust and CFS could be subject to legal proceedings in connection with the merger, the outcomes of which are uncertain and which could delay or prevent the completion of the merger.

CFS, Wintrust, Merger Co. and members of their respective boards of directors could be named as defendants in class action lawsuits brought by purported CFS stockholders challenging the proposed merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. Among other remedies, the plaintiffs may seek to enjoin the merger. One of the conditions to the closing of the merger is that no temporary restraining order, preliminary or permanent injunction or other order issued by any court of competent jurisdiction or other legal restraint or prohibition preventing the completion of the merger will be in effect. If plaintiffs are successful in obtaining an injunction prohibiting the defendants from consummating the merger on the agreed terms, then such injunction may prevent the merger from becoming effective, or from becoming effective within the expected timeframe.

Risks relating to CFS's business as a stand-alone company

A return to recessionary conditions could result in increases in CFS's level of non-performing loans and/or reduce demand for CFS's products and services, which would lead to lower revenue, higher loan losses and lower earnings.

Following a national home price peak in mid-2006, falling home prices and sharply reduced sales volumes, along with the collapse of the United States subprime mortgage industry in early 2007, significantly contributed to a recession that officially lasted until June 2009, although the effects continued thereafter. Dramatic declines in real estate values and high levels of foreclosures resulted in significant asset write-downs by financial institutions, which have caused many financial institutions to seek additional capital, to merge with other institutions and, in some cases, to fail. Concerns over the United States credit rating (which was recently downgraded by Standard & Poor's), the European sovereign debt crisis, and continued high unemployment in the United States, among other economic indicators, have contributed to increased volatility in the capital markets and diminished expectations for the economy.

A return of recessionary conditions and/or continued negative developments in the domestic and international credit markets may significantly affect the markets in which CFS does business, the value of CFS's loans and investments, and CFS's ongoing operations, costs and profitability. Further declines in real estate values and sales volumes and continued high unemployment levels may result in higher than expected loan delinquencies, increases in CFS's levels of nonperforming and classified assets and a decline in demand for CFS's products and services. These negative events may cause us to incur losses and may adversely affect CFS's capital, liquidity, and financial condition.

CFS's provision for loan losses has decreased during recent years. However, CFS may be required to make further additions to CFS's allowance for loan losses and to charge-off additional loans in the future. Further, CFS's allowance for loan losses may prove to be insufficient to absorb losses in CFS's loan portfolio.

CFS's allowance for loan losses was \$2.4 million, representing 1.3% of total loans, as of December 31, 2014, compared to an allowance of \$2.5 million, or 1.3% of total loans, as of December 31, 2013, \$3.0 million, or 1.5% of total loans, at December 31, 2012 and \$8.9 million, or 4.3% of total loans, at December 31, 2011. CFS's nonperforming assets have decreased to \$4.6 million, or 1.4% of total assets, at December 31, 2014 from \$23.3 million, or 6.7% of total assets, at December 31, 2010. If the economy and/or the real estate market remains unchanged or further weakens, CFS may be required to add further provisions to CFS's allowance for loan losses as nonperforming assets could continue to increase or

the value of the collateral securing loans may be insufficient to cover any remaining net loan balance, which could have a negative effect on CFS's results of operations.

Like all financial institutions, CFS maintains an allowance for loan losses to provide for loans in CFS's portfolio that may not be repaid in their entirety. CFS believes that CFS's allowance for loan losses is maintained at a level adequate to absorb probable losses inherent in CFS's loan portfolio as of the corresponding balance sheet date. However, CFS's allowance for loan losses may not be sufficient to cover actual loan losses, and future provisions for loan losses could materially adversely affect CFS's operating results. In evaluating the adequacy of CFS's allowance for loan losses, CFS considers such factors as changes in the types and amount of loans in the loan portfolio, historical loss experience, adverse situations that may affect a borrower's ability to repay, estimated value

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of any underlying collateral, personal guarantees, estimated losses relating to specifically identified loans and current economic conditions. This evaluation is inherently subjective as it requires material estimates including, among others, exposure at default, amount and timing of expected future cash flows on affected loans, value of collateral, personal guarantees, estimated losses on specific loans, as well as consideration of general loss experience. All of these estimates may be susceptible to significant change. While management uses the best information available at the time to make loan loss allowance evaluations, adjustments to the allowance may be necessary based on changes in economic and other conditions or changes in accounting guidance. CFS's estimates of the risk of loss and the amount of loss on any loan are complicated by the significant uncertainties surrounding CFS's borrowers' abilities to successfully execute their business models through changing economic environments, the competitive challenges they face, and the effect of current and future economic conditions on collateral values and other factors. Because of the degree of uncertainty and susceptibility of these factors to change, CFS's actual losses may vary materially from CFS's current estimates.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, or FDIC, and the Division of Banking of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, or IDFPFR, as an integral part of their examination process, periodically review CFS's allowance for loan losses and may require us to increase CFS's allowance for loan losses by recognizing additional provisions for loan losses charged to expense, or to decrease CFS's allowance for loan losses by recognizing loan charge-offs. Any such additional provisions for loan losses or charge-offs, as required by these regulatory agencies, could have a material adverse effect on CFS's financial condition and results of operations.

A continued deterioration in national and local economic conditions may negatively impact CFS's financial condition and results of operations.

CFS currently is operating in a challenging and uncertain economic environment, both nationally and in the local markets that CFS serves. Financial institutions continue to be affected by sharp declines in financial and real estate values. Continued declines in real estate values and home sales, and an increase in the financial stress on borrowers stemming from an uncertain economic environment, including rising unemployment, could have an adverse effect on CFS's borrowers or their customers, which could adversely impact the repayment of the loans CFS has made. The overall deterioration in economic conditions also could subject CFS to increased regulatory scrutiny. In addition, a prolonged recession, or further deterioration in local economic conditions, could result in an increase in loan delinquencies, an increase in problem assets and foreclosures and a decline in the value of the collateral for CFS's loans. Furthermore, a prolonged recession or further deterioration in local economic conditions could drive the level of loan losses beyond the level CFS has provided for in CFS's loan loss allowance, which could necessitate increasing CFS's provision for loan losses, which would reduce CFS's earnings. Additionally, the demand for CFS's products and services could be reduced, which would adversely impact CFS's liquidity and the level of revenues CFS generates.

CFS's ability to utilize capital distributions from the Bank is subject to regulatory limits and other restrictions.

A source of CFS's income from which CFS could service its debt and pay its obligations is the receipt of dividends from the Bank. In the event that the Bank is unable to pay dividends to CFS, CFS may not be able to service its debt or pay its obligations. The inability to receive dividends from the Bank may adversely affect CFS's business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects.

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CFS's ability to fully utilize CFS's net deferred tax assets in future periods could be impaired, which will negatively impact CFS's financial condition and results of operations.

During the year ended December 31, 2011, CFS's management determined that realization of a portion of CFS's net deferred tax assets was more likely than not to occur. As a result, CFS incurred a non-cash income tax expense of \$7.1 million related to a valuation allowance on deferred tax assets in 2011. In 2014 management reversed a portion of the valuation allowance. If CFS is unable to continue to generate, or demonstrate that CFS can continue to generate, sufficient taxable income in the near future, then CFS may not be able to fully realize the benefits of its deferred tax assets and may be required to recognize an additional valuation allowance if it is more likely than not that some portion of CFS's deferred tax assets will not be realized. In each future accounting period, CFS's management will consider both positive and negative evidence when considering CFS's ability to utilize CFS's net deferred tax assets.

CFS may not be able to maintain and manage its growth, which may adversely affect CFS's results of operations and financial conditions and the value of CFS's common stock.

CFS's strategy has been to increase the size of CFS's company by opening new offices and by pursuing business development opportunities. CFS has grown rapidly since it commenced operations. CFS can provide no assurance that it will continue to be successful in increasing the volume of loans and deposits at acceptable risk levels and upon acceptable terms while managing the costs and implementation risks associated with CFS's growth strategy. There can be no assurance that CFS's further expansion will be profitable or that CFS will continue to be able to sustain its historical rate of growth, either through internal growth or through successful expansion of CFS's markets, or that CFS will be able to maintain capital sufficient to support CFS's continued growth. If CFS grows too quickly, however, and is not able to control costs and maintain asset quality, rapid growth also could adversely affect CFS's financial performance.

CFS is subject to credit risks in connection with the concentration of adjustable rate loans in CFS's portfolio.

A majority of CFS's loans held for investment are adjustable rate loans. Borrowers with adjustable rate mortgage loans are exposed to increased monthly payments when the related mortgage interest rate adjusts upward under the terms of the loan from the initial fixed rate or low introductory rate, as applicable, to the rate computed in accordance with the applicable index and margin. Any rise in prevailing market interest rates may result in increased payments for borrowers who have adjustable rate mortgage loans, increasing the possibility of default. Borrowers seeking to avoid these increased monthly payments by refinancing their mortgage loans may no longer be able to find available replacement loans at comparably low interest rates. In addition, a decline in housing prices may also leave borrowers with insufficient equity in their homes to permit them to refinance. Borrowers who intend to sell their homes on or before the expiration of the fixed rate periods on their mortgage loans may also find that they cannot sell their properties for an amount equal to or greater than the unpaid principal balance of their loans. These events, along or in combination, may contribute to higher delinquency rates and negatively impact earnings.

Fluctuations in interest rates could reduce CFS's profitability and affect the value of CFS's assets.

Short-term market interest rates (which CFS uses as a guide to price its deposits) have until recently risen from historically low levels, while longer-term market interest rates (which CFS uses as a guide to price its longer-term loans) have not. This flattening of the market yield curve has had a negative impact on CFS's interest rate spread and net interest margin. For the years ended December 31, 2014 and 2013 CFS's net

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interest margin was 3.35% and 3.29%, respectively. If short-term interest rates rise, and if rates on CFS's deposits re-price upwards faster than the rates on CFS's long-term loans and investments, CFS would experience compression of CFS's interest rate spread and net interest margin, which would have a negative effect on CFS's profitability. During 2008, however, the U.S. Federal Reserve decreased its target for the federal funds rate to a range of zero to 0.25%. Decreases in interest rates can result in increased prepayments of loans and mortgage-related securities, as borrowers refinance to reduce their borrowing costs. Under these circumstances, CFS is subject to reinvestment risk as CFS may have to redeploy such loan or securities proceeds into lower-yielding assets, which might also negatively impact CFS's income. For further discussion of how changes in interest rates could impact us, see "Quantitative and Qualitative Market Risks - Interest Rate Risk" on page 143.

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CFS's emphasis on commercial and construction lending may expose CFS to increased lending risks.

At December 31, 2014, CFS's loan portfolio included \$92.7 million, or 50.2% of commercial real estate loans, \$1.9 million, or 1.0% of construction loans, and \$16.0 million, or 8.7% of commercial loans. CFS intends to continue to increase CFS's emphasis on the origination of commercial type lending. However, this type of loan generally exposes a lender to greater risk of non-payment and loss than one- to four family residential mortgage loans because repayment of the loans often depends on the successful operation of the property, and the income stream of the borrowers. Such loans typically involve larger loan balances to single borrowers or groups of related borrowers compared to one- to four family residential mortgage loans. Commercial loans expose us to additional risks since they typically are made on the basis of the borrower's ability to make repayments from the cash flow of the borrower's business and are secured by non-real estate collateral that may depreciate over time. In addition, since such loans generally entail greater risk than one- to four family residential mortgage loans, CFS may need to increase CFS's allowance for loan losses in the future to account for the likely increase in probable incurred credit losses associated with the growth of such loans. Also, many of CFS's commercial borrowers have more than one loan outstanding with CFS. Consequently, an adverse development with respect to one loan or one credit relationship can expose CFS to a significantly greater risk of loss compared to an adverse development with respect to a one- to four-family residential mortgage loan.

Increased and/or special FDIC assessments will hurt CFS's earnings.

The recent economic recession has caused a high level of bank failures, which has dramatically increased FDIC resolution costs and led to a significant reduction in the balance of the Deposit Insurance Fund of the FDIC. As a result, the FDIC has significantly increased the initial base assessment rates paid by financial institutions for deposit insurance. Increases in the base assessment rate have increased CFS's deposit insurance costs and negatively impacted CFS's earnings. In addition, in May 2009, the FDIC imposed a special assessment on all insured institutions. CFS's special assessment, which was reflected in earnings for the quarter ended June 30, 2009, was \$536,000. In lieu of imposing an additional special assessment, the FDIC required all institutions to prepay their assessments for all of 2010, 2011 and 2012, which for us totaled \$2.3 million. Additional increases in the base assessment rate or additional special assessments would negatively impact CFS's earnings.

Regulatory reform may have a material impact on CFS's operations.

On July 21, 2010, the President signed into law the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010, which we refer to as the Dodd-Frank Act. The Dodd-Frank Act restructures the regulation of depository institutions. The Dodd-Frank Act contains several provisions that will have a direct impact on the operations of CFS and the Bank. The legislation contains changes to the laws governing, among other things, FDIC assessments, mortgage originations, holding company capital requirements and risk retention requirements for securitized loans. The Dodd-Frank Act also provides for the creation of a new agency, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, as an independent bureau of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (the Federal Reserve Board), to take over the implementation of federal consumer financial protection and fair lending laws from the depository institution regulators. However, institutions of \$10 billion or fewer in assets, such as the Bank, will continue to be examined for compliance with such laws and regulations by, and subject to the primary enforcement authority of, the prudential regulator rather than the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The Dodd-Frank Act contains various other provisions designed to enhance the regulation of depository institutions and prevent the recurrence of a financial crisis such as occurred in 2008 and 2009. The full impact of the Dodd-Frank Act on CFS's business and operations will not be known for years until regulations implementing the statute are written and adopted. However, the Dodd-Frank Act may have a material impact on CFS's operations, particularly through increased regulatory burden and compliance costs.

CFS needs to generate liquidity to fund CFS's lending activities.

CFS must have adequate cash or borrowing capacity to meet CFS's customers' needs for loans and demand for their deposits. CFS generates liquidity primarily through the origination of new deposits. CFS also has access to secured borrowings, Federal Home Loan Bank borrowings and various other lines of credit. The inability to increase deposits or to access other sources of funds would have a negative effect on CFS's ability to meet customer needs, could slow loan growth and could adversely affect CFS's results of operations.

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CFS's profitability depends significantly on economic conditions in CFS's market.

CFS's success depends to a large degree on the general economic conditions in CFS's market areas. The local economic conditions in these areas have a significant impact on the amount of loans that CFS makes to CFS's borrowers, the ability of CFS's borrowers to repay these loans and the value of the collateral securing these loans. A significant decline in general economic conditions caused by inflation, recession, unemployment or other factors beyond CFS's control would impact these local economic conditions and could negatively affect CFS's financial condition and performance.

If CFS experiences greater loan losses than anticipated, it will have an adverse effect on CFS's net income.

While the risk of nonpayment of loans is inherent in banking, if CFS experiences greater nonpayment levels than CFS anticipates, CFS's earnings and overall financial condition, as well as the value of CFS's common stock, could be adversely affected.

CFS cannot assure you that CFS's monitoring procedures and policies will reduce certain lending risks or that CFS's allowance for loan losses will be adequate to cover actual losses. In addition, as a result of the growth in CFS's loan portfolio, loan losses may be greater than management's estimates. Loan losses can cause insolvency and failure of a financial institution and, in such an event, CFS stockholders could lose their entire investment. In addition, future provisions for loan losses could materially and adversely affect CFS's profitability. Any loan losses will reduce the loan loss allowance. A reduction in the loan loss allowance will be restored by an increase in CFS's provision for loan losses. This would reduce CFS's earnings which could have an adverse effect on CFS's stock price.

If CFS loses key employees with significant business contacts in CFS's market area, CFS's business may suffer.

CFS's success is largely dependent on the personal contacts of CFS's officers and employees in CFS's market area. If CFS loses key employees temporarily or permanently, its business could be hurt. CFS could be particularly hurt if CFS's key employees went to work for CFS's competitors. CFS's future success depends on the continued contributions of CFS's existing senior management personnel.

In order to be profitable, CFS must compete successfully with other financial institutions which have greater resources than CFS does.

The banking business in the Chicago metropolitan area, in general, is extremely competitive. Several of CFS's competitors are larger and have greater resources than CFS does and have been in existence a longer period of time. CFS must overcome historical bank-customer relationships to attract customers away from CFS's competition. CFS competes with the following types of institutions: other commercial banks, savings banks, thrifts, credit unions, consumer finance companies, securities brokerage firms, mortgage brokers, insurance companies, mutual funds and trust companies. Some of CFS's competitors are not regulated as extensively as CFS is and, therefore, may have greater flexibility in competing for business. Some of these competitors are subject to similar regulation but have the advantage of larger established customer bases, higher lending limits, extensive branch networks, numerous automated teller machines, greater advertising-marketing budgets or other factors.

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CFS's legal lending limit is determined by law. The size of the loans which CFS offers to CFS's customers may be less than the size of the loans that larger competitors are able to offer. This limit may affect to some degree CFS's success in establishing relationships with the larger businesses in CFS's market.

New or acquired branch facilities and other facilities may not be profitable.

CFS may not be able to correctly identify profitable locations for new branches and the costs to start up new branch facilities or to acquire existing branches, and the additional costs to operate these facilities, may increase CFS's non-interest expense and decrease earnings in the short term. It may be difficult to adequately and profitably manage CFS's growth through the establishment of these branches. In addition, CFS can provide no assurance that these branch sites will successfully attract enough deposits to offset the expenses of operating these branch sites.

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Any new branches will be subject to regulatory approval, and there can be no assurance that CFS will succeed in securing such approvals.

Government regulations may prevent or impair CFS's ability to pay dividends, engage in acquisitions or operate in other ways.

Current and future legislation and the policies established by federal and state regulatory authorities will affect CFS's operations. CFS is subject to supervision and periodic examination by the Federal Reserve Board. As a state chartered commercial bank, the Bank is also subject to regulation and examination by the FDIC and the IDFP. Banking regulations are designed primarily for the protection of depositors rather than stockholders, and they may limit CFS's growth and the return to investors by restricting its activities, such as: the payment of dividends to stockholders; possible transactions with or acquisitions by other institutions; desired investments; loans and interest rates; interest rates paid on deposits; the possible expansion of branch offices; and the ability to provide securities or trust services.

CFS is registered with the Federal Reserve Board as a bank holding company. CFS cannot predict what changes, if any, will be made to existing federal and state legislation and regulations or the effect that such changes may have on CFS's business. The cost of compliance with regulatory requirements may adversely affect CFS's ability to operate profitably.

CFS's stock trading volume has been low compared to larger bank holding companies. Accordingly, the value of CFS common stock may be subject to sudden decreases due to the volatility of the price of CFS's common stock.

Although CFS's common stock trades on the OTCQB, it is not traded as regularly as the common stock of larger bank holding companies listed on other stock exchanges, such as the New York Stock Exchange or the Nasdaq Stock Market. CFS cannot predict the extent to which investor interest in CFS will lead to a more active trading market in CFS's common stock or how liquid that market might become. A public trading market having the desired characteristics of depth, liquidity and orderliness depends upon the presence in the marketplace of willing buyers and sellers of CFS's common stock at any given time, which presence is dependent upon the individual decisions of investors, over which CFS has no control.

The market price of CFS's common stock may be highly volatile and subject to wide fluctuations in response to numerous factors, including, but not limited to, the factors discussed in other risk factors and the following:

- actual or anticipated fluctuations in CFS's operating results;

- changes in interest rates;

- changes in the legal or regulatory environment in which CFS operates;

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- press releases, announcements or publicity relating to CFS or CFS's competitors or relating to trends in CFS's industry;
- changes in expectations as to CFS's future financial performance, including financial estimates or recommendations by securities analysts and investors;
- future sales of CFS's common stock;
- changes in economic conditions in CFS's marketplace, general conditions in the U.S. economy, financial markets or the banking industry; and
- other developments affecting CFS's competitors or CFS.

These factors may adversely affect the trading price of CFS's common stock, regardless of CFS's actual operating performance. In addition, the stock markets, from time to time, experience extreme price and volume fluctuations that may be unrelated or disproportionate to the operating performance of companies. These broad fluctuations may adversely affect the market price of CFS's common stock, regardless of CFS's trading performance.

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A significant percentage of CFS' s voting securities were sold to investors in CFS' s December 2012 private placement offering and September 2013 private placement offering, and these investors may therefore have the ability to significantly impact certain corporate actions that other stockholders of CFS may not agree with.

A significant percentage of CFS' s voting securities were sold to investors in CFS' s December 2012 private placement offering and September 2013 private placement offering. CFS' s six largest investors each beneficially own more than 5.0% of CFS' s outstanding voting securities and collectively beneficially own approximately 53.3% of CFS' s outstanding voting securities as a result of their participation in CFS' s December 2012 and/or September 2013 private placement offerings. Because the collective voting interests acquired by these investors represent a substantial percentage of CFS' s outstanding voting securities, these investors have the ability to significantly impact the outcome of proposals presented for a vote of CFS stockholders, such as the election of directors, particularly in the event that they vote their shares in a similar manner.

Three of the investors that participated in CFS' s December 2012 private placement offering were each entitled to appoint a member of CFS' s board of directors. Additionally, in connection with the December 2012 private placement offering, CFS agreed to appoint Donald H. Wilson, who was also an investor in the offering, to serve as chairman of the board of directors following the December 2012 private placement offering. These appointees represent four of CFS' s eight directors and may therefore be able to exert significant influence over the board of directors.

On December 21, 2012, CFS consummated a \$24.0 million private placement offering pursuant to the terms of a Securities Purchase Agreement, dated as of November 13, 2012, by and between CFS and more than 60 accredited investors. In accordance with the terms of the Securities Purchase Agreement, three of the investors that participated in CFS' s December 2012 private placement offering were entitled to each appoint a member of CFS' s board of directors. Furthermore, pursuant to the terms of the Securities Purchase Agreement, each of these three investors will have the right to be represented on CFS' s board of directors by one director of its choice for as long as it maintains at least a 2.5% ownership interest in CFS. In addition, under the Securities Purchase Agreement, CFS agreed to appoint Donald H. Wilson, who was also an investor in the offering, to serve as chairman of the board of directors following the December 2012 private placement offering. However, unlike the other three investors that have appointed board representatives, Mr. Wilson does not have the right to continue to serve on the board for so long as he maintains a minimum ownership interest in CFS. The individuals appointed to serve on the board of directors pursuant to the terms of the Securities Purchase Agreement currently comprise four of the eight members of CFS' s board of directors. Although these four individuals constitute less than a majority of CFS' s board of directors, the representation of these investors on the board of directors may increase their ability to influence the board to take certain corporate actions that other stockholders of CFS may not agree with.

CFS' s ability to pay dividends on shares of CFS' s common stock is limited by the terms of CFS' s outstanding shares of preferred stock and CFS' s desire to continue to preserve capital.

Historically, it has been a policy of CFS to pay only small to moderate dividends so as to retain earnings to support growth. However, on October 15, 2008 the board of directors voted to suspend the payment of cash dividends on CFS' s common stock in an effort to conserve capital. The holders of CFS' s outstanding Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares are entitled to participate in all common stock dividends on an as converted basis, and CFS may not pay dividends on CFS' s common stock unless an identical dividend is payable at the same time on the Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares. On March 2, 2015, CFS had 119,829, 65,427 and 5,990 outstanding shares of Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares, respectively each of which is convertible into 100 shares of common stock. In addition, pursuant to the terms of the merger agreement, CFS may not declare or pay any dividends or other distributions prior to the effective time of the merger without prior written consent of Wintrust.

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The market price of CFS's common stock may decline due to the large number of shares that have been registered for resale by certain investors that participated in CFS's December 2012 and September 2013 private placement offerings.

In connection with the private placement offerings that CFS completed in December 2012 and September 2013, CFS has registered with the SEC an aggregate of 21,306,800 shares of common stock that have been issued to investors, or are issuable to investors upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares purchased in the private placement offerings. Prior to the consummation of the December 2012 private placement offering, CFS had a total of 1,245,267 shares of common stock registered with the SEC. Although CFS's common stock trades on the OTCQB, it is not traded as regularly as the common stock of larger bank holding companies listed on other stock exchanges, such as the New York Stock Exchange or the Nasdaq Stock Market. Accordingly, the value of CFS common stock may be subject to decreases due to additional volatility of the price of CFS's common stock caused by an investor or multiple investors seeking to sell a significant number of shares in the open market.

The issuance of additional shares of common stock or other equity securities will further dilute the ownership interests of existing stockholders.

CFS's articles of incorporation authorize CFS's board of directors to issue up to 75,000,000 shares of common stock. On March 2, 2015, CFS had 10,781,988 shares of common stock outstanding and has reserved approximately an additional 22,025,000 shares for issuance upon the conversion of shares of CFS's outstanding preferred stock or to fund future equity awards. Accordingly, CFS's board of directors is currently authorized to issue approximately an additional 42,193,012 shares of common stock. In order to maintain CFS's capital at desired levels or required regulatory levels, or to fund future growth, CFS's board of directors may decide from time to time to issue additional shares of common stock, or securities convertible into, exchangeable for or representing rights to acquire shares of CFS's common stock. The sale of these securities may significantly dilute CFS stockholders' ownership interest as a shareholder and the market price of CFS's common stock. New investors of other equity securities issued by us in the future may also have rights, preferences and privileges senior to CFS's current stockholders which may adversely impact CFS's current stockholders.

CFS may become liable for liquidated damages to certain stockholders if CFS fails to register the resale of their shares, or maintain the effectiveness of the registration statement filed by us, with the SEC.

Pursuant to the terms of a Registration Rights Agreement, dated as of November 13, 2012 (the "Registration Rights Agreement"), CFS is required to file and maintain the effectiveness of a resale registration statement with the SEC with respect to the aggregate amount of shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of the Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares (subject to certain limitations set forth in the Registration Rights Agreement). A resale registration statement must be filed within 30 days after each closing of the investment and must be declared effective (i) within 90 days of each closing of the investment in the event the SEC does not review the registration statement or (ii) within 120 days of each closing of the investment in the event the SEC reviews the registration statement. Failure to meet these deadlines, as well as certain other events, may result in CFS's being obligated to pay holders of registrable securities liquidated damages on each event date and each monthly anniversary of such event until the applicable event is cured. The liquidated damages would equal 1.5% of the aggregate purchase price paid by the holder pursuant to the Securities Purchase Agreement for any registrable securities held by such holder on the event date.

CFS is dependent on CFS's information technology and telecommunications systems and third-party service providers; systems failures, interruptions and security breaches could have a material adverse effect on us.

CFS's business is dependent on the successful and uninterrupted functioning of CFS's information technology and telecommunications systems and third-party service providers. The failure of these systems, or the termination of a third-party software license or service agreement on which any of these systems is based, could interrupt CFS's operations. Because CFS's information technology and telecommunications systems interface with and depend on third-party systems, CFS could experience service denials if demand for such services exceeds capacity or such third-party systems fail or experience interruptions. If significant, sustained or repeated, a system failure or service denial could compromise CFS's ability to operate effectively, damage CFS's reputation, result in a loss of customer business, and/or subject us to additional regulatory scrutiny and possible financial liability, any of which could have a material adverse effect on us.

CFS's third-party service providers may be vulnerable to unauthorized access, computer viruses, phishing schemes and other security breaches. CFS may be required to expend significant additional resources to protect

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against the threat of such security breaches and computer viruses, or to alleviate problems caused by such security breaches or viruses. To the extent that the activities of CFS's third-party service providers or the activities of CFS's customers involve the storage and transmission of confidential information, security breaches and viruses could expose us to claims, regulatory scrutiny, litigation and other possible liabilities.

Security breaches and other disruptions could compromise CFS's information and expose us to liability, which would cause CFS's business and reputation to suffer.

In the ordinary course of CFS's business, CFS collects and stores sensitive data, including CFS's proprietary business information and that of CFS's customers, suppliers and business partners; and personally identifiable information of CFS's customers and employees. The secure processing, maintenance and transmission of this information is critical to CFS's operations and business strategy. CFS, CFS's customers, and other financial institutions with which CFS interact, are subject to ongoing, continuous attempts to penetrate key systems by individual hackers, organized criminals, and in some cases, state-sponsored organizations. Despite CFS's security measures, CFS's information technology and infrastructure may be vulnerable to attacks by hackers or breached due to employee error, malfeasance or other disruptions. Any such breach could compromise CFS's networks and the information stored there could be accessed, publicly disclosed, lost or stolen. Any such unauthorized access, disclosure or other loss of information could result in legal claims or proceedings, liability under laws that protect the privacy of personal information, and regulatory penalties; disrupt CFS's operations and the services CFS provides to customers; damage CFS's reputation; and cause a loss of confidence in CFS's products and services, all of which could adversely affect CFS's business, revenues and competitive position. CFS may be required to spend significant capital and other resources to protect against the threat of security breaches and computer viruses, or to alleviate problems caused by security breaches or viruses.

To remain competitive, CFS must keep pace with technological change.

Financial products and services have become increasingly technology-driven. CFS's ability to meet the needs of CFS's customers competitively, and in a cost-efficient manner, is dependent on the ability to keep pace with technological advances and to invest in new technology as it becomes available. Many of CFS's competitors have greater resources to invest in technology than CFS does and may be better equipped to market new technology-driven products and services. The ability to keep pace with technological change is important, and the failure to do so could have a material adverse impact on CFS's business and therefore on CFS's financial condition and results of operations.

CFS relies on technology to conduct many transactions with CFS's customers and is therefore subject to risks associated with systems failures, interruptions or breaches of security.

Communications and information systems are essential to the conduct of CFS's business, as CFS uses such systems to manage CFS's customer relationships, its general ledger, its deposits, and its loans. While CFS has established policies and procedures to prevent or limit the impact of systems failures, interruptions, and security breaches, there can be no assurance that such events will not occur or that they will be adequately addressed if they do. In addition, any compromise of CFS's security systems could deter customers from using CFS's website and CFS's online banking services, both of which involve the transmission of confidential information. Although CFS relies on commonly used security and processing systems to provide the security and authentication necessary to effect the secure transmission of data, these precautions may not protect CFS's systems from compromises or breaches of security.

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In addition, CFS outsources certain of CFS's data processing to certain third-party providers. If CFS's third-party providers encounter difficulties, or if CFS has difficulty in communicating with them, CFS's ability to adequately process and account for customer transactions could be affected, and CFS's business operations could be adversely impacted. Threats to information security also exist in the processing of customer information through various other vendors and their personnel.

The occurrence of any systems failure, interruption, or breach of security could damage CFS's reputation and result in a loss of customers and business, could subject us to additional regulatory scrutiny, or could expose us to civil litigation and possible financial liability. Any of these occurrences could have a material adverse effect on CFS's financial condition and results of operations.

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Risks relating to the businesses of Wintrust and the combined company

CFS stockholders will not control Wintrust's future operations.

Currently, CFS stockholders own 100% of CFS and have the power to approve or reject any matters requiring stockholder approval under Maryland law and CFS's articles of incorporation and amended and restated by-laws. After the merger, CFS stockholders are expected to become owners of approximately 1% of the outstanding shares of Wintrust common stock. Even if all former CFS stockholders voted together on all matters presented to Wintrust's shareholders, from time to time, the former CFS stockholders most likely would not have a significant impact on the approval or rejection of future Wintrust proposals submitted to a shareholder vote.

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SPECIAL NOTES CONCERNING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This document contains, and the documents into which it may be incorporated by reference may contain, forward-looking statements within the meaning of federal securities laws concerning Wintrust, CFS, the combined company, the proposed merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and other matters. Forward-looking information can be identified through the use of words such as intend, plan, project, expect, anticipate, believe, estimate, contemplate, possible, point, will, may, should, would and statements and information are not historical facts, are premised on many factors and assumptions, and represent only management's expectations, estimates and projections regarding future events. Similarly, these statements are not guarantees of future performance and involve certain risks and uncertainties that are difficult to predict, which may include, but are not limited to, those listed below, the risk factors described in the section entitled "Risk Factors" beginning on page 27 of this proxy statement/prospectus and the risk factors discussed under Item 1A of the Annual Reports on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014 filed by Wintrust and in any of Wintrust's subsequent SEC filings. Wintrust and CFS intend such forward-looking statements to be covered by the safe harbor provisions for forward-looking statements contained in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 and is including this statement for purposes of invoking these safe harbor provisions. Such forward-looking statements may be deemed to include, among other things, statements about the benefits of the proposed merger, including future financial and operating results, the combined company's plans, objectives, expectations and intentions, Wintrust's, CFS's or the combined company's goals, intentions, expectations, business plan and growth strategies, the asset quality of Wintrust's, CFS's or the combined company's loan and investment portfolios and estimates of Wintrust's, CFS's or the combined company's risks and future costs and benefits. Actual results could differ materially from those addressed in the forward-looking statements as a result of numerous factors, including the following:

- failure to obtain applicable regulatory or stockholder approvals in a timely manner or otherwise;
- failure to satisfy other closing conditions to the proposed merger;
- risks that the businesses will not be integrated successfully or that the combined company will not realize estimated cost savings, synergies and growth or that such benefits may take longer to realize than expected;
- failure to realize anticipated benefits of the combined operations;
- risks relating to unanticipated costs of integration;
- the potential impact of announcement or consummation of the proposed merger on relationships with third parties, including customers, employees and competitors;
- ability to hire and retain key personnel;

- ability to attract new customers and retain existing customers in the manner anticipated;
- negative economic conditions that adversely affect the economy, housing prices, the job market and other factors that may affect liquidity and the performance of loan portfolios, particularly in the markets in which the combined company operates;
- the extent of defaults and losses on loan portfolios, which may require further increases in allowances for credit losses;
- estimates of fair value of certain assets and liabilities, which could change in value significantly from period to period;
- the financial success and economic viability of the borrowers of commercial loans;
- market conditions in the commercial real-estate market in the Chicago metropolitan and southern Wisconsin areas;
- the extent of commercial and consumer delinquencies and declines in real estate values, which may require further increases in allowances for loan and lease losses;
- inaccurate assumptions in the analytical and forecasting models used to manage the loan portfolio;

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- changes in the level and volatility of interest rates, the capital markets and other market indices that may affect, among other things, liquidity and the value of certain assets and liabilities;

- competitive pressures in the financial services business which may affect the pricing of loan and deposit products as well as services provided by the combined company (including wealth management services);

- failure to identify and complete favorable acquisitions in the future or unexpected difficulties or developments related to the integration of Wintrust's recent or future acquisitions, including the acquisition of CFS pursuant to the merger agreement;

- unexpected difficulties and losses related to FDIC-assisted acquisitions, including those resulting from loss-sharing arrangements with the FDIC;

- any negative perception of reputation or financial strength;

- ability to raise additional capital on acceptable terms when needed;

- disruption in capital markets, which may lower fair values for investment portfolios;

- ability to use technology to provide products and services that will satisfy customer demands and create efficiencies in operations;

- adverse effects on information technology systems resulting from failures, human error or tampering;

- adverse effects of failures by vendors to provide agreed upon services in the manner and at the cost agreed, particularly information technology vendors;

- increased costs as a result of protecting customers from the impact of stolen debit card information;

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- accuracy and completeness of information received about customers and counterparties to make credit decisions;
- the ability to attract and retain senior management experienced in the banking and financial services industries;
- environmental liability risk associated with lending activities;
- the impact of any claims or legal actions, including any reputational effect;
- losses incurred in connection with repurchases and indemnification payments related to mortgages;
- the loss of customers as a result of technological changes allowing consumers to complete their financial transactions without the use of a bank;
- the soundness of other financial institutions;
- the expenses and delayed returns inherent in opening new branches and de novo banks;
- examinations and challenges by tax authorities;
- changes in accounting standards, rules and interpretations and the impact on the financial statements;
- ability to receive dividends from subsidiaries;
- a decrease in regulatory capital ratios, including as a result of further declines in the value of loan portfolios, or otherwise;
- legislative or regulatory changes, particularly changes in regulation of financial services companies and/or the products and services offered by financial services companies, including those resulting from the Dodd-Frank Act;

- a lowering of credit ratings;
- changes in U.S. monetary policy;
- restrictions upon the ability to market products to consumers and limitations on the ability to profitably operate its mortgage business resulting from the Dodd-Frank Act;

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- increased costs of compliance, heightened regulatory capital requirements and other risks associated with changes in regulation and the current regulatory environment, including the Dodd-Frank Act;

- the impact of heightened capital requirements;

- increases in FDIC insurance premiums, or the collection of special assessments by the FDIC;

- delinquencies or fraud with respect to the premium finance business;

- credit downgrades among commercial and life insurance providers that could negatively affect the value of collateral securing the premium finance loans;

- ability to comply with covenants under credit facilities; and

- fluctuations in the stock market, which may have an adverse impact on the wealth management business and brokerage operation.

Therefore, there can be no assurances that future actual results will correspond to these forward-looking statements. The reader is cautioned not to place undue reliance on any forward-looking statement made by Wintrust or CFS. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date they are made, and neither Wintrust nor CFS undertake any obligation to update any forward-looking statement to reflect the impact of circumstances or events that arise after the date the forward-looking statement was made. Persons are advised, however, to consult further disclosures management makes on related subjects in reports filed with the SEC and in press releases.

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SPECIAL MEETING OF CFS STOCKHOLDERS

CFS's board of directors is using this proxy statement/prospectus to solicit proxies from the holders of CFS common stock, Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares for use at the special meeting of CFS stockholders.

Date, time and place of the special meeting

The special meeting will be held at _____ on _____, 2015 at _____, local time.

Purpose of the special meeting

At the special meeting, CFS's board of directors will ask you to consider and vote upon the following:

- a proposal to approve the merger agreement, dated as of March 2, 2015, among Wintrust Financial Corporation, an Illinois corporation, or Wintrust, Wintrust Merger Sub LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wintrust, or Merger Co., and CFS, which we refer to as the merger agreement, the merger of CFS with and into Merger Co. contemplated by the merger agreement and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. A copy of the merger agreement is included as *Annex A* to the proxy statement/prospectus accompanying this notice;
- a proposal to approve an amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series C Preferred Shares, providing for the automatic conversion of each Series C Preferred Share into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. The purpose of the conversion is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of Series C Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series C Preferred Shares and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. A copy of the amended and restated articles of supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares reflecting the amendment is included as *Annex B* to the proxy statement/prospectus accompanying this notice;
- a proposal to approve an amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series D Preferred Shares, providing for the automatic conversion of each Series D Preferred Share into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. The purpose of the preferred stock conversion is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of the Series D Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series D Preferred Shares and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. A copy of the amended and restated articles of supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares reflecting the amendment is included as *Annex C* to the proxy statement/prospectus accompanying this notice;

- a proposal to approve an amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Convertible Noncumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, or Series E Preferred Shares, providing for the automatic conversion of each Series E Preferred Share into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. The purpose of the preferred stock conversion is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of Series E Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series E Preferred Shares and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. A copy of the amended and restated articles of supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares reflecting the amendment is included as *Annex D* to the proxy statement/prospectus accompanying this notice;

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- a proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers; and
- a proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate, to solicit additional proxies if there are not sufficient votes in favor of the proposals to approve the merger agreement, the merger and other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

Record date and voting rights for the special meeting

CFS has set the close of business on _____, 2015, as the record date for determining the holders of CFS common stock, Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares entitled to notice of and to vote at the special meeting. Only CFS stockholders at the close of business on the record date are entitled to notice of and to vote at the special meeting. As of the record date, there were _____ shares of CFS common stock, _____ Series C Preferred Shares, _____ Series D Preferred Shares and _____ Series E Preferred Shares outstanding and entitled to vote at the special meeting.

Quorum

CFS's by-laws provide that a majority of the outstanding securities of CFS entitled to vote, represented in person or by proxy, shall constitute a quorum. Abstentions are treated as present at the meeting for purposes of determining whether a quorum is present. If you hold your shares in _____ street name and do not provide your broker or other nominee with instructions and your broker or other nominee does not submit a proxy card or otherwise does not vote because the broker or other nominee lacks discretionary authority to vote the shares, your shares will not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum and they will have the same effect as a vote against the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for the preferred stock conversion, as the case may be, and will have no effect on the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers proposal or the proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate.

Vote required

Approval of the merger requires the affirmative vote at the special meeting of (i) two-thirds of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares), which we refer to collectively as the voting securities, voting together as a single class and (ii) a majority of the outstanding shares of each of (A) the Series C Preferred Shares, (B) the Series D Preferred Shares and (C) the Series E Preferred Shares. Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement.

Approval of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series C Preferred Shares requires the affirmative vote of (i) two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities, (ii) a majority of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and (iii) a majority of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares. Approval of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series D Preferred Shares requires the affirmative vote of (i) two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities and (ii) a majority of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares. Approval of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series E Preferred Shares requires the affirmative vote of (i) two-thirds of the outstanding voting securities and (ii) a majority of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares. Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the proposals to approve the

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amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

Approval of the proposals to approve merger-related compensation arrangements for CFS's named executive officers and to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate, to solicit additional proxies if there are not sufficient votes in favor of the proposals to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion requires, in each case, a majority of all the votes cast by the outstanding voting securities at the special meeting if a quorum is present. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the outstanding voting securities present, in person or by proxy, at the special meeting may adjourn the special meeting. Abstentions and failures to vote will have no effect on the approval of the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers.

The failure of a CFS stockholder to vote or to instruct his, her or its broker, bank or nominee to vote if his, her or its shares are held in street name will have the same effect as a vote against the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion and will have no impact on the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements for CFS's named executive officers or the proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate. An abstention, which occurs when a stockholder attends a meeting, either in person or by proxy, but abstains from voting, will have the same effect as voting against the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the proposal to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion and will have no impact on the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements for CFS's named executive officers or the proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate.

Voting agreement

All of the directors and officers of CFS and certain CFS stockholders have committed, among other things, to vote their shares in favor of the merger and any other matter necessary for consummation of the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement (including the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion). The shares subject to the voting agreement represent approximately 10.7% of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock, 31.5% of the outstanding voting securities, 50.1% of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares, 89.1% of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares and 0% of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares, each as of April 28, 2015. Wintrust does not own any shares of CFS common stock. See *The Merger Voting agreement* on page 91 for a description of the provisions of the voting agreement.

Voting; proxies; revocation

Holders of CFS common stock as of the record date may vote by proxy or in person at the special meeting. Votes cast by proxy or in person at the special meeting will be tabulated and certified by Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc.

Voting in person

CFS stockholders who plan to attend the special meeting and wish to vote in person will be given a ballot at the special meeting. Please note, however, that CFS stockholders who hold their shares in street name, which means such shares are held of record by a broker, bank or other nominee, and who wish to vote in person at the special meeting, must bring to the special meeting a proxy from the record holder of the shares authorizing such CFS stockholder to vote at the special meeting.

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Voting by proxy

The vote of each CFS stockholder is very important. Accordingly, CFS stockholders who hold their shares as a record holder should vote by proxy by:

- completing, signing, dating and returning the enclosed proxy card in the accompanying pre-addressed postage-paid envelope;
- calling the toll-free number specified on your proxy card; or
- accessing the Internet website specified on your proxy card.

CFS stockholders should vote their proxy even if they plan to attend the special meeting. CFS stockholders can always change their vote at the special meeting. Voting instructions are included on the enclosed proxy card. If a CFS stockholder properly gives his, her or its proxy and submits it to CFS in time to vote, one of the individuals named as such CFS stockholder's proxy will vote the shares as such CFS stockholder has directed. A proxy card is enclosed for use by CFS stockholder.

The method of voting by proxy differs for shares held as a record holder and shares held in street name. If a CFS stockholder holds shares of CFS common stock as a record holder, he, she or it may vote by completing, dating and signing the enclosed proxy card and promptly returning it in the enclosed, pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope or otherwise mailing it to CFS, or by submitting a proxy over the Internet or by telephone by following the instructions on the enclosed proxy card. If a CFS stockholder holds shares of CFS common stock in street name, which means such shares are held of record by a broker, bank or nominee, the CFS stockholder will receive instructions from his, her or its broker, bank or other nominee that the CFS stockholder must follow in order to vote his, her or its shares. A CFS stockholder's broker, bank or nominee may allow such CFS stockholder to deliver voting instructions over the Internet or by telephone. CFS stockholders who hold their shares in street name should refer to the voting instructions from their broker, bank or nominee that accompany this joint proxy statement/prospectus.

All properly signed proxies that are received prior to the special meeting and that are not revoked will be voted at the special meeting according to the instructions indicated on the proxies or, if no direction is indicated, they will be voted **FOR** the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, **FOR** the proposals approving the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion, **FOR** the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements for CFS's named executive officers and **FOR** the proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate.

How you may revoke or change your vote

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You can revoke your proxy at any time before it is voted at the special meeting by any of the following methods:

- Submitting a later-dated proxy by mail.
- Sending a written notice of revocation of proxy, prior to the taking of the vote at the meeting, to the Corporate Secretary of CFS at:

Community Financial Shares, Inc.

357 Roosevelt Road

Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137

Attention: Christopher P. Barton, Secretary

Facsimile: (630) 545-0399

- Attending the special meeting and voting in person, although your attendance at the special meeting will not in and of itself revoke your proxy. You must also vote your shares at the meeting.

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If your shares are held in the name of a bank, broker or other record holder, you must obtain a proxy, executed in your favor, from the record holder to be able to vote at the annual meeting. CFS stockholders must contact their broker, bank or other nominee to find out how to do so.

Abstentions and failures to vote

The failure of a CFS stockholder to vote or to instruct his, her or its broker, bank or nominee to vote if his, her or its shares are held in street name will have the same effect as a vote against the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion and will have no impact on the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements for CFS's named executive officers or the proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate. An abstention, which occurs when a stockholder attends a meeting, either in person or by proxy, but abstains from voting, will have the same effect as voting against the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion and will have no impact on the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements for CFS's named executive officers or the proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate.

Brokers who are registered stockholders owning shares on behalf of beneficial owners are required under stock exchange rules to obtain the instructions of beneficial owners before casting a vote on certain matters. In the absence of such instructions the broker may not vote the shares on such matters, and such a situation is referred to as a broker non-vote. Failures to vote are not treated as votes cast for purposes of these matters and will not have any impact on the outcome.

Under the rules that govern brokers who have record ownership of shares that are held in street name for their clients, brokers typically have the authority to vote in their discretion on routine proposals when they have not received instructions from beneficial owners. However, brokers are not allowed to exercise their voting discretion with respect to the approval of matters that are non-routine without specific instructions from the beneficial owner. Failures to vote are shares held by a broker or other nominee that are represented at the meeting, but with respect to which the broker or nominee is not instructed by the beneficial owner of such shares to vote on the particular proposal and the broker does not have discretionary voting power on this proposal. If a CFS stockholder's broker holds such stockholder's CFS common stock in street name, the broker will vote such stockholder's shares only if the stockholder provides instructions on how to vote by filling out the voter instruction form sent to the stockholder by his, her or its broker with this proxy statement/prospectus. It is expected that brokers and other nominees will not have discretionary authority to vote on any of the proposals.

Proxy solicitation

CFS is soliciting proxies for the special meeting from CFS stockholders. CFS will bear the entire cost of soliciting proxies from CFS stockholders. In addition to the solicitation of proxies by mail, CFS will request that brokers, banks and other nominees send proxies and proxy materials to the beneficial owners of CFS common stock held by them and secure their voting instructions, if necessary. CFS will reimburse those record holders for their reasonable expenses. CFS has also made arrangements with Laurel Hill Advisory Group, LLC to assist it in soliciting proxies and has agreed to pay Laurel Hill Advisory Group, LLC approximately \$5,500 plus reasonable expenses for these services. CFS also may use several of its regular employees, who will not be specially compensated, to solicit proxies from CFS stockholders, either personally or by telephone or electronic mail.

Other business; adjournments

Only proposals set forth in the notice may be acted upon at the CFS special meeting.

Adjournments may be made for the purpose of, among other things, soliciting additional proxies. Any adjournment may be made from time to time by a majority of the votes cast by the outstanding securities entitled to vote, represented in person or by proxy, at the special meeting, if a quorum is present. In the absence of a quorum,

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holders of a majority of the outstanding securities entitled to vote, represented in person or by proxy, at the special meeting may adjourn the special meeting.

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**PROPOSAL 1 APPROVAL OF THE MERGER AGREEMENT, THE MERGER AND THE OTHER TRANSACTIONS
CONTEMPLATED BY THE MERGER AGREEMENT**

General

The first proposal to be considered by CFS stockholders, which will be considered by holders of CFS common stock and holders of shares of CFS preferred stock, will be a proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. You should carefully read this proxy statement in its entirety for more detailed information concerning the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated in the merger agreement. In particular, you should read in its entirety the merger agreement, which is attached as *Annex A* to this proxy statement/prospectus. In addition, see the sections entitled *The Merger*, beginning on page 63, and *The Merger Agreement*, beginning on page 94.

The proposal

At the CFS special meeting, holders of the CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares, voting together as a single class, will be asked to vote on the approval of the merger agreement, the merger and other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. In addition, holders of each of the Series C Preferred Shares, the Series D Preferred Shares and the Series E Preferred Shares voting as separate classes will be asked to vote as well.

Approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the preferred stock conversion is a closing condition for completion of the merger. The merger will not be completed unless CFS stockholders approve the merger. Even if the merger receives the requisite votes for stockholder approval, the merger will not be completed if any of the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares or Series E Preferred Shares are not approved by the requisite vote of stockholders.

Vote required and CFS board recommendation

The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares), voting together as a single class, is required to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement.

In addition, a majority of the outstanding shares of each of the Series C Preferred Shares, the Series D Preferred Shares and the Series E Preferred Shares is required to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement.

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Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. If you return a properly executed proxy card, but do not indicate instructions on your proxy card, your shares represented by such proxy card will be voted **FOR** the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement.

CFS's board of directors unanimously recommends that CFS stockholders vote FOR approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement.

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PROPOSAL 2 AMENDMENT TO THE ARTICLES SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF CFS FOR THE SERIES C PREFERRED SHARES

General

The second proposal to be considered by CFS stockholders, which will be considered by holders of CFS common stock and holders of Series C Preferred Shares, will be the approval of a proposed amendment of the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares. The proposed amendment provides for, among other matters, the automatic conversion of each Series C Preferred Share into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger, without any action on the part of the holder of such Series C Preferred Share. The purpose of the amendment is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of the Series C Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series C Preferred Shares and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

The proposal

The articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation for the Series C Preferred Shares, which form part of the articles of incorporation of CFS, govern the Series C Preferred Shares. The current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares contain certain provisions that allow for a holder of Series C Preferred Shares to, under certain conditions and subject to certain ownership restrictions and anti-dilution provisions, elect to convert each Series C Preferred Share into the number of shares of CFS common stock equal to the then-applicable conversion rate, as defined in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares, which applicable conversion rate is currently 100 shares of CFS common stock, at such holder's discretion. See *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series C Preferred Shares* for a summary of the preferred stock conversion provisions in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares. The articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares also provide that, upon a change of control of CFS as defined therein, which definition would include completion of the merger, each holder of Series C Preferred Shares would receive, upon election of such holder, an amount equal to the greater of (i) the sum of (A) \$100.00 per Series C Preferred Share (as adjusted for any split, subdivision, combination or consolidation, recapitalization or similar event with respect to the Series C Preferred Share) and (B) the amount of any declared, but unpaid, distributions to the date of payment and (ii) the amount such holder would have received if such Series C Preferred Share had been fully converted into shares of CFS common stock in accordance with the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares (without regard to any limitations on the conversion of the Series C Preferred Shares contained in such articles supplementary) immediately prior to such liquidation, dissolution or winding up (such greater amount of the foregoing clauses (i) and (ii), the Series C liquidation preference). See *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series C Preferred Shares* for a summary of the change of control provisions in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares. The per share amount of the Series C liquidation preference that would be received upon completion of the merger is equal to the per share merger consideration such holder would have received if such holder had elected to convert such holder's Series C Preferred Shares into shares of CFS common stock prior to the completion of the merger.

The merger agreement provides that, as a condition to the completion of the merger, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares will be amended as set forth in *Annex B*. The proposed amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares provides that, immediately prior to completion of the merger, each Series C Preferred Share will automatically convert into 100 shares of CFS common stock, without any action on the part of holder of such Series C Preferred Shares. In addition, the proposed amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares provides that the merger would be exempt from and would not trigger the change of control provisions contained in the current

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articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares that would otherwise be triggered by the merger. The purpose of the amendment is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of the Series C Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are

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entitled under the terms of the Series C Preferred Shares and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

Effect of the amendment

As a result of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares (assuming such amendment is approved by the requisite number of stockholders), each Series C Preferred Share would automatically convert into 100 shares of common stock of CFS immediately prior to the effective time of the merger, without any action on the part of the holder of such Series C Preferred Share. As such, upon the effective time of the merger, each such share of common stock of CFS would be converted into the right to receive the merger consideration and would be treated in the same manner as all other shares of common stock of CFS, and the merger would not trigger the change of control provisions contained in the current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares. See The Merger Agreement Consideration to be received in the merger for a detailed description of the method for determining the per share merger consideration and The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series C Preferred Shares for a description of the change of control provisions contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares. The per share merger consideration that each holder of Series C Preferred Shares would receive would be equal to the amount of the merger consideration to which such holder is entitled under the terms of the Series C Preferred Shares.

This amendment has been declared advisable by the unanimous vote of the CFS board of directors.

Description of the Series C Preferred Shares

For a summary of the material terms and provisions of the preferences, limitations, voting powers and relative rights of the Series C Preferred Shares, see The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series C Preferred Shares. You should also read the full text of the amended and restated articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares reflecting the amendment set forth in *Annex B*.

Vote required and CFS board recommendation

The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares), voting together as a single class, is required to approve a proposed amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS with respect to the Series C Preferred Shares.

Additionally, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares require that this proposed amendment be approved by each of (i) a majority of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares and (ii) a majority of the outstanding shares of

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CFS common stock, voting as separate classes.

Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the proposal to approve the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series C Preferred Shares. If you return a properly executed proxy card, but do not indicate instructions on your proxy card, your shares of CFS common stock represented by such proxy card will be voted **FOR** the proposal to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares.

Approval of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares is a closing condition for the merger. **The merger and the conversion of CFS preferred stock into CFS common stock will not be completed unless CFS stockholders approve this amendment. Even if this amendment receives the requisite votes for approval, the merger and the preferred stock conversion**

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will not be completed unless CFS stockholders also approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the other amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

The CFS board unanimously recommends that CFS stockholders vote FOR the proposal to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares.

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PROPOSAL 3 AMENDMENT TO THE ARTICLES SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF CFS FOR THE SERIES D PREFERRED SHARES

General

The third proposal to be considered by CFS stockholders, which will be considered by holders of CFS common stock and holders of Series D Preferred Shares, will be the approval of a proposed amendment of the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares. The proposed amendment provides for, among other matters, the automatic conversion of each Series D Preferred Share into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger, without any action on the part of the holder of such Series D Preferred Share. The purpose of the amendment is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of the Series D Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series D Preferred Shares and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

The proposal

The articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation for the Series D Preferred Shares, which form part of the articles of incorporation of CFS, govern the Series D Preferred Shares. The current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares contain certain provisions that allow for a holder of Series D Preferred Shares to, under certain conditions and subject to certain ownership restrictions and anti-dilution provisions, elect to convert each Series D Preferred Share into a Series C Preferred Share. See *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series D Preferred Shares* for a summary of the preferred stock conversion provisions in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares. The current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares allow for a holder of such Series C Preferred Shares to, under certain conditions and subject to certain ownership restrictions and anti-dilution provisions, elect to convert each Series C Preferred Share into the number of shares of CFS common stock equal to the then-applicable conversion rate, as defined in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares, which applicable conversion rate is currently 100 shares of CFS common stock, at such holder's discretion. See *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series C Preferred Shares*.

The articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares also provide that, upon a change of control of CFS as defined in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares, which definition would include completion of the merger, each holder of Series D Preferred Shares would receive, upon election of such holder, *and solely with respect to any or all of the Series C Preferred Shares held by such holder*, an amount equal to the greater of (i) the sum of (A) \$100.00 per Series D Preferred Share (as adjusted for any split, subdivision, combination or consolidation, recapitalization or similar event with respect to the Series D Preferred Share) and (B) the amount of any declared, but unpaid, distributions to the date of payment and (ii) the amount such holder would have received if such Series D Preferred Share had been fully converted into shares of CFS common stock in accordance with the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares immediately prior to such liquidation, dissolution or winding up (such greater amount of the foregoing clauses (i) and (ii), the Series D liquidation preference). See *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series D Preferred Shares* for a summary of the change of control provisions in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares. As such, unless this proposal to approve the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS is approved, holders of Series D Preferred Shares may only receive a payment upon a change of control of CFS (including completion of the merger) if such holder elects to convert such Series D Preferred Shares into Series C Preferred Shares prior to such change of control to receive the Series C liquidation preference. The per share amount of the Series C liquidation preference that would be received upon completion of the merger is equal to the per share merger consideration such holder would have received if such holder had elected to convert such holder's Series D Preferred Shares into Series C Preferred Shares and

subsequently elected to convert such holder's Series C Preferred Shares into shares of CFS common stock prior to the completion of the merger.

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The merger agreement provides that, as a condition to the completion of the merger, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares will be amended as set forth in *Annex C*. The proposed amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares provides that, immediately prior to completion of the merger, each Series D Preferred Share will automatically convert into 100 shares of CFS common stock, without any action on the part of holder of such Series D Preferred Shares. In addition, the proposed amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares provides that the merger would be exempt from and would not trigger the change of control provisions contained in the current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares that would otherwise be triggered by the merger. See *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series D Preferred Shares* for a summary of the change of control provisions in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares. The purpose of the amendment is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of the Series D Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series D Preferred Shares without any further action on the part of the holder and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

Effect of the amendment

As a result of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares (assuming such amendment is approved by the requisite number of stockholders), each Series D Preferred Share would automatically convert into 100 shares of common stock of CFS immediately prior to the effective time of the merger, without any action on the part of the holder of such Series D Preferred Share. As such, upon the effective time of the merger, each such share of common stock of CFS would be converted into the right to receive the merger consideration and would be treated in the same manner as all other shares of common stock of CFS, and the merger would not trigger the change of control provisions contained in the current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares. See *The Merger Agreement Consideration to be received in the merger* for a detailed description of the method for determining the per share merger consideration and *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series D Preferred Shares* for a description of the change of control provisions contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares. The per share merger consideration that each holder of Series D Preferred Shares would receive would be equal to the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series D Preferred Shares. This amendment has been declared advisable by the unanimous vote of the CFS board.

Description of the Series D Preferred Shares

For a summary of the material terms and provisions of the preferences, limitations, voting powers and relative rights of the Series D Preferred Shares, see *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series D Preferred Shares*. You should also read the full text of the amended and restated articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares reflecting the amendment set forth in *Annex C*.

Vote required and CFS board recommendation

The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares), voting together as a single class, is required

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to approve a proposed amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS with respect to the Series D Preferred Shares.

Additionally, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares require that the proposed amendment be approved by a majority of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares.

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Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the proposal to approve the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series D Preferred Shares. If you return a properly executed proxy card, but do not indicate instructions on your proxy card, your shares of CFS common stock represented by such proxy card will be voted **FOR** the proposal to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares.

Approval of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares is a closing condition for the merger. **The merger and the conversion of CFS preferred stock into CFS common stock will not be completed unless CFS stockholders approve this amendment. Even if this amendment receives the requisite votes for approval, the merger and the preferred stock conversion will not be completed unless CFS stockholders also approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the other amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.**

The CFS board unanimously recommends that CFS stockholders vote FOR the proposal to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares.

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PROPOSAL 4 AMENDMENT TO THE ARTICLES SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF CFS FOR THE SERIES E PREFERRED SHARES

General

The fourth proposal to be considered by CFS stockholders, which will be considered by holders of CFS common stock and holders of Series E Preferred Shares, will be the approval of a proposed amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares. The proposed amendment provides for, among other things, the automatic conversion of each Series E Preferred Share into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger, without any action on the part of the holder of such Series E Preferred Share. The purpose of the amendment is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of the Series E Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series E Preferred Shares and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

The proposal

The articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation for the Series E Preferred Shares, which form part of the articles of incorporation of CFS, govern the Series E Preferred Shares. The current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares contain certain provisions that allow for a holder of Series E Preferred Shares to, under certain conditions and subject to certain ownership restrictions and anti-dilution provisions, elect to convert each Series E Preferred Share into a Series C Preferred Share. See *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series E Preferred Shares* for a summary of the preferred stock conversion provisions in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares. The current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares allow for a holder of such Series C Preferred Shares to, under certain conditions and subject to certain ownership restrictions and anti-dilution provisions, elect to convert each Series C Preferred Share into the number of shares of CFS common stock equal to the then-applicable conversion rate, as defined in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares, which applicable conversion rate is currently 100 shares of CFS common stock, at such holder's discretion. See *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series C Preferred Shares*.

The articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares also provide that, upon a change of control of CFS as defined in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares, which definition would include completion of the merger, each holder of Series E Preferred Shares would receive, upon election of such holder, *and solely with respect to any or all of the Series C Preferred Shares held by such holder*, an amount equal to the greater of (i) the sum of (A) \$100.00 per Series E Preferred Share (as adjusted for any split, subdivision, combination or consolidation, recapitalization or similar event with respect to the Series E Preferred Share) and (B) the amount of any declared, but unpaid, distributions to the date of payment and (ii) the amount such holder would have received if such Series E Preferred Share had been fully converted into shares of CFS common stock in accordance with the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares immediately prior to such liquidation, dissolution or winding up. See *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series E Preferred Shares* for a summary of the change of control provisions in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares. As such, unless this proposal to approve the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS is approved, holders of Series E Preferred Shares may only receive a payment upon a change of control of CFS (including completion of the merger) if such holder elects to convert such Series E Preferred Shares into Series C Preferred Shares prior to such change of control to receive the Series C liquidation preference. The per share amount of the Series C liquidation preference that would be received upon completion of the merger is equal to the per share merger consideration such holder would have received if such holder had elected to convert such holder's Series E Preferred Shares into Series C Preferred Shares and subsequently elected to convert such holder's Series C Preferred Shares into shares of CFS common stock prior to

the completion of the merger.

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The merger agreement provides that, as a condition to the completion of the merger, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares will be amended as set forth in *Annex D*. The proposed amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares provides that, immediately prior to completion of the merger, each Series E Preferred Share will automatically convert into 100 shares of CFS common stock, without any action on the part of holder of such Series E Preferred Shares. In addition, the proposed amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares provides that the merger would be exempt from and would not trigger the change of control provisions contained in the current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares that would otherwise be triggered by the merger. See *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series E Preferred Shares* for a summary of the change of control provisions in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares. The purpose of the amendment is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of the Series E Preferred Shares with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series E Preferred Shares without any further action on the part of the holder and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

Effect of the amendment

As a result of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares (assuming such amendment is approved by the requisite number of stockholders), each Series E Preferred Share would automatically convert into 100 shares of common stock of CFS immediately prior to the effective time of the merger, without any action on the part of the holder of such Series E Preferred Share. As such, upon the effective time of the merger, each such share of common stock of CFS would be converted into the right to receive the merger consideration and would be treated in the same manner as all other shares of common stock of CFS, and the merger would not trigger the change of control provisions contained in the current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares. See *The Merger Agreement Consideration to be received in the merger* for a detailed description of the method for determining the per share merger consideration and *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series E Preferred Shares* for a description of the change of control provisions contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares. The per share merger consideration that each holder of Series E Preferred Shares would receive would be equal to the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of the Series E Preferred Shares. This amendment has been declared advisable by the unanimous vote of the CFS board.

Description of the Series E Preferred Shares

For a summary of the material terms and provisions of the preferences, limitations, voting powers and relative rights of the Series E Preferred Shares, see *The Preferred Stock Conversion Description of CFS preferred stock Series E Preferred Shares*. You should also read the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares and the full text of the amended and restated articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares reflecting the amendment set forth in *Annex D*.

Vote required and CFS board recommendation

The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares), voting together as a single class, is required

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to approve a proposed amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS with respect to the Series E Preferred Shares.

Additionally, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares require that this proposed amendment be approved by a majority of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares.

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Abstentions and failures to vote have the effect of votes against the approval of the proposal to approve the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion with respect to the Series E Preferred Shares.

Approval of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares is a closing condition for the merger. **The merger and the conversion of CFS preferred stock into CFS common stock will not be completed unless CFS stockholders approve this amendment. Even if this amendment receives the requisite votes for approval, the merger and the preferred stock conversion will not be completed unless CFS stockholders also approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the other amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.**

The CFS board unanimously recommends that CFS stockholders vote FOR the proposal to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares.

Table of Contents**PROPOSAL 5 ADVISORY VOTE ON MERGER-RELATED COMPENSATION FOR CFS S NAMED EXECUTIVE OFFICERS****General**

The fifth proposal to be considered by CFS stockholders, which will be considered by holders of CFS common stock and holders of Series C Preferred Shares, will be a proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation for CFS s named executive officers. This section sets forth the information required by Item 402(t) of Regulation S-K regarding the compensation for each named executive officer of CFS that is based on or otherwise relates to the merger. This compensation is referred to as golden parachute compensation by the applicable SEC disclosure rules, and in this section we use such term to describe the merger-related compensation payable to CFS s named executive officers. The golden parachute compensation payable to CFS s named executive officers is subject to a non-binding, advisory vote of CFS stockholders, as described in this section.

The amounts indicated below are estimates of amounts that would be payable to the named executive officers, and such estimates are based on multiple assumptions that may or may not actually occur, including assumptions described in this proxy statement/prospectus. Some of the assumptions are based on information not currently available and, as a result, the actual amounts, if any, to be received by any named executive officer may differ in material respects from the amounts set forth below. All dollar amounts set forth below have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Golden Parachute Payments(1)

| Named Executive Officer | Cash(2) | Equity(3) | Perquisites/ Benefits(4) | Total |
|--|----------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Donald H. Wilson | \$ 250,000 | \$ 0 | \$ 0 | \$ 250,000 |
| <i>President & Chief Executive Officer</i> | | | | |
| Jeffrey A. Vock | 114,660 | 100 | 8,629 | 123,389 |
| <i>Vice President, Assistant Secretary</i> | | | | |
| Christopher P. Barton | 106,675 | 0 | 8,629 | 115,304 |
| <i>Vice President & Secretary</i> | | | | |

(1) All amounts reflected in the table are attributable to double-trigger arrangements (*i.e.*, the amounts are triggered by the change in control that will occur upon completion of the merger and payment is conditioned upon the officer s qualifying termination of employment following the merger effective time), except for cancellation of outstanding options, which occurred in April 2015 pursuant to the merger agreement and with respect to which payment is not conditioned upon the officer s qualifying termination of employment.

(2) All amounts reflected in the column are lump sum cash severance payments and double trigger in nature, namely, eligibility to receive this payment is conditioned on the occurrence of a change of control and the officer s qualifying termination of employment within a certain time period following the change of control. To be eligible for the payment, Mr. Wilson must have a qualifying termination of employment within 12 months following the change of control, and Messrs. Vock and Barton must have a qualifying termination of employment within 18 months following the change of control.

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(3) All amounts reflected in this column are single trigger in nature, namely, eligibility to receive this payment is conditioned solely on the occurrence of a change of control. Specifically, amounts in this column are related to the consideration paid for the cancellation of underwater stock options held by each officer.

(4) All amounts reflected in the column reflect the value of continuing medical and life insurance and are double trigger in nature. Only Messrs. Vock and Barton are eligible for such payments and must have a qualifying termination of employment within 18 months following the change of control.

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Advisory vote on merger-related compensation for CFS's named executive officers

Pursuant to the Dodd-Frank Act and Rule 14a-21(c) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the Exchange Act), CFS is seeking stockholder approval of a non-binding, advisory proposal to approve the compensation of CFS's named executive officers that is based on or otherwise relates to the merger as disclosed above in this section. The non-binding, advisory proposal gives CFS stockholders the opportunity to express their views on the merger-related compensation of CFS's named executive officers.

Accordingly, CFS is requesting holders of CFS common stock and Series C Preferred Shares to approve the following resolution, on a non-binding, advisory basis:

RESOLVED, that the compensation that may be paid or become payable to CFS's named executive officers, in connection with the merger, and the agreements or understandings pursuant to which such compensation may be paid or become payable, in each case as disclosed pursuant to Item 402(t) of Regulation S-K in Proposal 5 Advisory vote on merger-related compensation for CFS's named executive officers, are hereby APPROVED.

Vote required and CFS board recommendation

The vote on this non-binding, advisory proposal is a vote separate and apart from the vote to approve the merger. Accordingly, you may vote not to approve this non-binding, advisory proposal on merger-related compensation for CFS's named executive officers and vote to approve the merger agreement, the merger and other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and vice versa. Because the vote is advisory in nature, it will not be binding on CFS, regardless of whether the merger is approved. Approval of the non-binding, advisory proposal on merger-related compensation that may be received by CFS's named executive officers in connection with the merger is not a condition to closing of the merger, and failure to approve this advisory matter will have no effect on the vote to approve the merger agreement, the merger and other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. Because the merger-related compensation for CFS's named executive officers is almost entirely based on contractual arrangements with the named executive officers, such compensation will be payable, regardless of the outcome of this advisory vote, if the merger is approved (subject only to the contractual conditions applicable thereto) and the merger is completed.

A majority of all votes cast by the outstanding shares of common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares), voting together as a single class, at the special meeting at which a quorum is present is required to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers. Abstentions and failures to vote will have no effect on the approval of the proposal to approve, on a non-binding, advisory basis, merger-related compensation arrangements with CFS's named executive officers.

CFS's board of directors unanimously recommends that CFS stockholders vote FOR the advisory vote on merger-related compensation for CFS's named executive officers.

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PROPOSAL 6 AUTHORITY TO ADJOURN THE SPECIAL MEETING

General

The sixth proposal to be considered by CFS stockholders, which will be considered by holders of CFS common stock and holders of Series C Preferred Shares if necessary or appropriate, will be a proposal to adjourn the special meeting to a later date or time, including to solicit additional proxies in favor of the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement or the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion if there are insufficient votes at the time of the special meeting to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement or the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

Vote required and CFS board recommendation

A majority of the votes cast by the outstanding shares of common stock and Series C Preferred Shares (holders of Series C Preferred Shares casting the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date, without regard to any limitation on the conversion of such Series C Preferred Shares contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares), voting together as a single class, if a quorum is present at the special meeting is required to approve the proposal to adjourn the special meeting, if necessary or appropriate to solicit additional proxies to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the outstanding voting securities present in person or by proxy at the special meeting may adjourn the special meeting. Abstentions and failures to vote will count toward the establishment of a quorum. If you return a properly executed proxy card, but do not indicate instructions on your proxy card, your shares of CFS common stock represented by such proxy card will be voted **FOR** the proposal to adjourn the special meeting to a later date or time if necessary or appropriate.

The board unanimously recommends that stockholders vote FOR the proposal to adjourn the special meeting to a later date or time if necessary or appropriate, including to solicit additional proxies in favor of the proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the proposals to approve the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion if there are insufficient votes at the time of the special meeting to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement or the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

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THE MERGER

This section of the proxy statement/prospectus describes material aspects of the merger. While Wintrust and CFS believe that the description covers the material terms of the merger and the related transactions, this summary may not contain all of the information that is important to you. You should carefully read this entire proxy statement/prospectus, the attached Annexes, and the other documents to which this proxy statement/prospectus refers for a more complete understanding of the merger. The merger agreement attached hereto as Annex A, not this summary, is the legal document which governs the merger.

General

The CFS board of directors is using this proxy statement/prospectus to solicit proxies from the holders of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock for use at the CFS special meeting, at which holders of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock will be asked to vote on a proposal to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement. When the merger is consummated, CFS will merge with and into Merger Co. and will cease to exist. Merger Co. will survive the merger and remain a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wintrust. In addition, the merger agreement provides that CFS's articles of incorporation will be amended to provide for, among other things, the automatic conversion of each share of CFS preferred stock into common stock of CFS immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. See The Preferred Stock Conversion, Proposal 2 Amendment to the Articles Supplementary to the Articles of Incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares, Proposal 3 Amendment to the Articles Supplementary to the Articles of Incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares and Proposal 4 Amendment to the Articles Supplementary to the Articles of Incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares for more information on the proposed amendments and the preferred stock conversion of CFS preferred stock. At the effective time of the merger, holders of CFS common stock (which holders will include holders of CFS preferred stock which will have automatically converted into shares of common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger in accordance with the terms of the merger agreement) will exchange their shares for cash and shares of Wintrust common stock, subject to adjustment as set forth in the merger agreement. Each share of CFS common stock will be exchanged for the per share merger consideration, which the parties expect to consist of approximately 50% in cash and approximately 50% in shares of Wintrust common stock the stock component of which cannot be determined until two trading days before completion of the merger. See The Merger Agreement Consideration to be received in the merger for a detailed description of the method for determining the per share merger consideration.

Only whole shares of Wintrust common stock will be issued in the merger. As a result, cash will be paid instead of any fractional shares based on the reference price of Wintrust's common stock during the reference period. Shares of CFS common stock held by CFS stockholders who have exercised and perfected their appraisal rights will not be converted into merger consideration. At the effective time of the merger, CFS options will be terminated, cancelled and redeemed by CFS, and no merger consideration will be exchanged therefor.

The companies

Wintrust

Wintrust Financial Corporation, an Illinois corporation which was incorporated in 1992, is a financial holding company based in Rosemont, Illinois. Wintrust provides community-oriented, personal and commercial banking services to customers located in the Chicago

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metropolitan area and in southern Wisconsin through its fifteen wholly-owned banking subsidiaries, as well as the origination and purchase of residential mortgages for sale into the secondary market through Wintrust Mortgage, a division of Barrington Bank and Trust Company, N.A. Wintrust provides specialty finance services, including financing for the payment of commercial insurance premiums and life insurance premiums on a national basis through its wholly-owned subsidiary, First Insurance Funding Corporation, and in Canada through its premium finance company, First Insurance Funding of Canada, and short-term accounts receivable financing and outsourced administrative services through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Tricom, Inc. of Milwaukee. Wintrust also provides a full range of wealth management services primarily to customers in the Chicago metropolitan area and in southern Wisconsin through three separate

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subsidiaries, The Chicago Trust Company, N.A., Wayne Hummer Investments, LLC and Great Lakes Advisors, LLC.

As of December 31, 2014, Wintrust had total assets of approximately \$20 billion, total loans, excluding loans held-for-sale and covered loans, of approximately \$14.4 billion, total deposits of approximately \$16.3 billion, and total shareholders' equity of approximately \$2.1 billion.

Wintrust common stock is traded on NASDAQ under the ticker symbol WTFC.

Financial and other information relating to Wintrust, including information relating to Wintrust's current directors and executive officers, is set forth in Wintrust's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, Wintrust's Proxy Statement for its 2015 Annual Meeting of Shareholders filed with the SEC on April 10, 2015 and Wintrust's Current Reports on Form 8-K filed during 2015, which are incorporated by reference to this proxy statement/prospectus. Copies of these documents may be obtained from Wintrust as indicated under "Where You Can Find More Information" on page 173. See "Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference" on page 173.

Wintrust Merger Sub LLC

Wintrust Merger Sub LLC, an Illinois limited liability company, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wintrust and was formed solely for the purpose of consummating the merger, and has not carried on any activities to date, except for activities incidental to its formation and activities undertaken in connection with the merger.

Community Financial Shares, Inc.

Community Financial Shares, Inc., a Maryland corporation, is a bank holding company headquartered in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. Its primary business is operating its bank subsidiary, Community Bank Wheaton/Glen Ellyn, an Illinois state bank with three banking locations in Wheaton, Illinois and one in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. CFS began operations in 1994.

As of December 31, 2014, CFS had consolidated total assets of approximately \$343 million, deposits of approximately \$305 million and stockholders' equity of approximately \$28.6 million.

CFS common stock is traded on the over-the-counter market and is quoted on the OTCQB under the symbol CFIS.

The conversion of the CFS preferred stock

The merger agreement provides that, as a condition to the completion of the merger, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock, each of which forms part of the articles of incorporation of CFS, will be amended as set forth in *Annex B, Annex C or Annex D*, as applicable. The purpose of the preferred stock conversion is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of CFS preferred stock with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which they are entitled under the terms of CFS preferred stock and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. See *Proposal 2 Amendments to the Articles Supplementary to the Articles of Incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares*, *Proposal 3 Amendments to the Articles Supplementary to the Articles of Incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares*, *Proposal 4 Amendments to the Articles Supplementary to the Articles of Incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares*, and *The Preferred Stock Conversion* for more information about the preferred stock conversion.

Approval of these amendments is a closing condition for completion of the merger. If any of the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares or Series E Preferred Shares is not approved by the requisite vote of stockholders, the merger will not be completed. In addition, even if each of these amendments receives the requisite stockholder

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votes for approval, the merger and the preferred stock conversion will not be completed unless CFS stockholders also approve the merger.

Background of the merger

CFS's board of directors and senior management regularly review and evaluate the organization's business, strategic direction, performance, prospects and strategic alternatives. In the context of such reviews, the strategic alternatives considered by the CFS board have included, among other things, continuing its on-going operations as an independent institution, acquiring other depository institutions, opening new branch offices, buying other financial services firms engaged in complementary lines of business and entering into a merger or acquisition transaction with a similarly sized or larger institution.

The board of directors and senior management of CFS have been aware in recent years of changes in the financial services industry and the regulatory environment as well as the competitive challenges facing a financial institution such as CFS. These challenges have included increasing government regulation, increasing expense burdens and commitments for technology and training, an interest rate environment that has resulted in pressure on interest rate spreads and margins and increasing competition in the delivery of financial products and services combined with increased customer expectations for the availability of sophisticated financial products and services from financial institutions.

During the first half of 2013, Donald H. Wilson, who at the time was the Chairman of the board of directors of CFS and was subsequently appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of CFS on August 15, 2013, had informal discussions and meetings with several financial institutions to gauge whether there was any interest in a possible strategic transaction with CFS, including among other possibilities, the potential acquisition of CFS. Some of these discussions were facilitated through introductions made by a representative of FIG Partners, L.L.C., which we refer to as FIG. FIG had previously served as placement agent for CFS in connection with the issuance of CFS preferred stock and CFS common stock by CFS in 2012 and 2013. These discussions were informal in nature and part of Mr. Wilson's ongoing responsibilities as Chairman to build relationships with a range of potential strategic partners, including organizations that were both larger and smaller than CFS.

On June 3, 2013, a representative of FIG arranged an informal meeting between Mr. Wilson and Edward J. Wehmer, the President and Chief Executive Officer of Wintrust. During this meeting, the parties discussed, among other things, the state of the financial services industry, the business, operations and historical financial results of each respective organization and the possible interest of Wintrust in a strategic transaction with CFS. The discussions during this meeting were general in nature and were intended to build a relationship for potential future discussions in the event that the board of directors of CFS determined that exploring a strategic transaction was in the best interest of CFS and its stockholders. Mr. Wilson would routinely update the board of directors of CFS regarding informal discussions of this nature and, at the CFS board meeting held on June 13, 2013, he updated the board regarding his discussion with Mr. Wehmer.

Approximately one month later, Mr. Wehmer contacted FIG and indicated that Wintrust was interested in having further preliminary discussions with CFS regarding a possible strategic transaction. Mr. Wehmer sent FIG a sample of Wintrust's standard due diligence review list for merger transactions, which was subsequently forwarded to Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wehmer indicated that Wintrust's initial due diligence review would likely consist of a one to two day review of certain credit-related records, and based on this initial review, Wintrust would then evaluate and determine whether it was interested in proceeding to a more thorough due diligence process. Mr. Wilson notified the board of directors of CFS about the potential interest from Wintrust at a regular meeting of the board held on July 18, 2013 and received authorization from the board to provide financial and credit information to Wintrust in order to determine its level of interest in a possible strategic transaction. Mr. Wilson also advised the board that he had not received any other indications of interest in a strategic transaction with CFS during his informal discussions and meetings with other financial institutions. Wintrust subsequently reviewed credit-related records posted to an electronic data room established by CFS for this purpose and also conducted an on-site review of certain credit-related records at CFS's main office in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

On October 11, 2013, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Wehmer met again, along with another director of CFS and a representative from FIG, and discussed, among other things, the potential benefits from a market perspective of a

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possible strategic transaction between the parties, along with the credit culture of CFS and its operations. An overview of the preliminary credit review was discussed, and Mr. Wehmer indicated that Wintrust was interested in reviewing other aspects of CFS's business and operations. Following this meeting, Wintrust requested and reviewed certain additional business, financial and credit information regarding CFS. During this period, Mr. Wilson provided periodic updates to the members of the board of directors regarding these discussions.

On December 13, 2013, following several weeks of intermittent informational exchanges, Mr. Wehmer indicated to FIG that Wintrust had a serious interest in entering into a strategic transaction with CFS. At the regular meeting of the board of directors of CFS held a few days later on December 19, 2013, Mr. Wilson provided the board with an update regarding the ongoing discussions with Wintrust and its level of interest in exploring a possible strategic transaction, as well as an outline of the typical merger process provided by FIG. At the meeting, the board discussed the advantages and disadvantages of remaining an independent operating concern, the historical performance and strategic direction of CFS and the liquidity for CFS's stockholders if CFS would remain independent. As part of this discussion, the board discussed the range of possible valuations for a strategic transaction and potential transaction partners. In addition, they considered the increasing level of competition in Chicago, anticipated increases in regulatory costs and capital requirements, the continuing low interest rate environment and trends in mergers and acquisitions in the financial services sector. At the conclusion of the meeting, the board authorized management to continue discussions with Wintrust and to report back to the board.

On January 13, 2014, senior management of CFS and Wintrust, along with a representative from FIG, met at the headquarters of Wintrust in Rosemont, Illinois. During this meeting, the parties discussed CFS's business, organizational structure and potential structures of a possible strategic transaction. The parties also discussed aspects of potential business integration, including key employee reporting relationships and employee compensation matters. Specific larger credit relationships were reviewed, their valuation levels were discussed, and CFS agreed to provide additional information supporting current valuations within approximately one week.

During the regular meeting of the board of directors of CFS held on January 16, 2014, Mr. Wilson provided the board with an update regarding the ongoing discussions with Wintrust. Following this discussion, the board authorized management to continue to explore a possible strategic transaction with Wintrust.

On January 19, 2014, Mr. Wehmer sent to a representative of FIG correspondence expressing an interest in a transaction involving the acquisition of CFS, and on the following day, Mr. Wehmer notified FIG during a telephone conversation that Wintrust was planning on sending FIG a non-binding indication of interest that would contemplate a merger transaction in which Wintrust would propose to pay an aggregate merger consideration of \$42.5 million for all of the outstanding capital stock of CFS, or approximately \$1.42 per share of common stock and preferred stock (on an as-converted basis), payable 50% in cash and 50% in common stock of Wintrust.

On February 3, 2014, FIG provided to CFS a detailed analysis of the financial terms proposed by Wintrust, including analysis regarding comparable transactions in the Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area and the Midwest and FIG's initial conclusions regarding the proposed financial terms of a possible strategic transaction under a variety of pricing scenarios. This analysis was provided to the members of the board on February 6, 2014.

On February 4, 2014, Wintrust provided to CFS a non-binding indication of interest for a proposed merger transaction with CFS, along with a draft confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement. Consistent with the earlier discussion between FIG and Wintrust, this indication of interest proposed an aggregate merger consideration of \$42.5 million for all of the outstanding capital stock of CFS, or approximately \$1.42 per share of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock (on an as-converted basis), payable 50% in cash and 50% in common stock of Wintrust. This indication of interest included several financial covenants by CFS, including a requirement that CFS have a specified minimum net worth at the

time of closing. The proposed offer was subject to completion of due diligence by Wintrust and other customary conditions. The indication of interest also required CFS to agree to a 120-day exclusivity period to try to reach an agreement on the proposed merger transaction, during which time CFS would be precluded from contacting or soliciting offers from, or engaging in discussions with, other potential transaction partners. Mr. Wilson informed the board regarding the indication of interest from Wintrust that same day and provided the indication of interest to the board.

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Upon receipt of the indication of interest from Wintrust, Mr. Wilson contacted Godfrey & Kahn, S.C., which we refer to as Godfrey & Kahn, to provide legal services in connection with the review of CFS's strategic alternatives, including entry into a possible strategic transaction. During this period, CFS also formally engaged FIG to represent CFS as its investment banker and financial advisor in connection with its continued exploration of a possible strategic transaction. Godfrey & Kahn assisted with the review and negotiation of an engagement letter with FIG, and on February 14, 2014, the board of directors of CFS held a special telephonic meeting of the board of directors to review and discuss the previously provided indication of interest, to review, finalize and approve the terms of FIG's engagement, and to approve and ratify the engagement of Godfrey & Kahn to assist with the review of CFS's strategic alternatives. Prior to this meeting, the board also was provided with an analysis from FIG regarding other potential transaction partners in the marketplace, along with an outline from Godfrey & Kahn regarding the typical transaction process for the sale of a company; this outline included, among other things, a summary of the process for the consideration of other potential transaction partners, the important components of a letter of intent and merger agreement, and the securities law and regulatory requirements for a transaction. During this meeting, the board of directors also discussed its fiduciary duties in connection with a possible strategic transaction with Wintrust, and in particular, the potential need to conduct a market check to solicit offers from other potential transaction partners in the event that CFS agreed to negotiate exclusively with Wintrust. Also on February 14, 2014, the board of directors constituted an executive strategic committee of the board consisting of four directors, three of which were independent directors, to provide guidance to management in connection with the review and negotiation of a possible strategic transaction during intervals between regular meetings of the board.

The engagement letter with FIG was executed on February 14, 2014, following receipt of board approval. The engagement letter included a representation and warranty by FIG that it was not aware of any actual or potential conflicts of interests that would preclude it from rendering financial advisory services to CFS.

Following receipt of the indication of interest from Wintrust, Mr. Wilson had numerous discussions with representatives from FIG and Godfrey & Kahn about CFS's strategic alternatives, including entry into a merger or acquisition transaction, how to respond to the indication of interest, the process to be used to identify other parties interested in a possible strategic transaction, and the fiduciary duties of the board of directors in considering possible strategic alternatives.

During its regular board meeting on February 20, 2014, the board of directors of CFS reviewed and discussed the indication of interest from Wintrust, along with the February 3rd analysis prepared by FIG regarding the financial terms of the proposed merger transaction. A representative of FIG was present at this meeting. The board discussed the advantages and disadvantages of remaining an independent concern, and the long-term prospects and strategic direction of the organization, and ultimately determined that the exploration of a possible strategic transaction was in the best interest of CFS and its stockholders. During this meeting, the board discussed whether CFS should pursue a formal process of identifying parties that may be interested in a possible strategic transaction. In evaluating whether to approach additional parties, the board of directors and management considered and discussed its views that the confidentiality of any such process should be maintained, as well as the competitive concerns that could arise in connection with contacting certain parties and the increase in the likelihood that the process may not remain confidential as the number of parties contacted increased. Ultimately, the board determined that it would be appropriate and advisable to solicit competing offers from a limited group of third parties that may be interested in a possible strategic transaction unless Wintrust was willing to significantly increase its proposed merger consideration. To that end, the board authorized management, through FIG, to propose a counter offer to Wintrust, the revised terms of which were discussed by the board.

On February 24, 2014, FIG communicated to Wintrust that while CFS would be willing to consider a proposed merger transaction with Wintrust, CFS would not agree to negotiate a merger transaction with Wintrust on an exclusive basis unless Wintrust increased its proposed merger consideration to at least \$1.60 per share of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock (on an as-converted basis). CFS also requested a number of other changes to the terms proposed by Wintrust in the indication of interest, including the elimination of an escrow of a portion of the merger consideration to fund indemnification obligations on the part of CFS and a change in the calculation of the proposed minimum net worth covenant for CFS. Wintrust advised FIG that while it was willing to shorten the exclusivity period to 60 days and would be willing to consider certain other substantive changes to the indication of interest, it was unwilling to increase the proposed merger consideration.

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On February 25, 2014, Mr. Wilson provided a written update to the members of the executive strategic committee regarding this discussion, and consistent with the earlier direction from the board, indicated that FIG would solicit indications of interest from other parties that may be interested in a possible strategic transaction with CFS. FIG subsequently developed confidential marketing materials concerning CFS, reviewed the list of potential financial and strategic transaction partners previously discussed with the board and discussed with management its views as to the likely level of interest of different parties and the advantages and disadvantages of each potential partner.

Thereafter, FIG began contacting third parties that might be interested in a possible strategic transaction with CFS and distributed confidentiality agreements to any parties that confirmed such an interest. FIG provided copies of the confidential marketing materials to each such party that executed a confidentiality agreement. FIG contacted four potential financial and strategic parties on behalf of CFS, and three executed the confidentiality agreement and received confidential marketing materials with respect to CFS. During this period, based on his personal contacts, Mr. Wilson also separately contacted two other third parties, neither of which expressed any interest in a possible strategic transaction with CFS.

Since the regular meeting of the board of directors of CFS was not scheduled until March 20, 2014, the executive strategic committee of the board, along with a representative of FIG, held a telephonic meeting on March 11, 2014 to review and discuss the status of the solicitation process. During this meeting, FIG advised the executive strategic committee that one party, which we refer to as Company A, had indicated it was highly interested in a possible strategic transaction with CFS, and two other parties had expressed some level of interest, but it was uncertain whether either would submit a formal offer. The executive strategic committee requested that FIG again contact Wintrust about increasing its offer. Mr. Wilson provided a written update to the full board regarding these discussions later in the afternoon.

A follow-up telephonic meeting of the executive strategic committee was held on March 14, 2014 to discuss the status of the solicitation process, the level of interest from other parties and the appropriate response to any indications of interest. A representative from FIG participated in this call. Although no formal offers had been submitted, the executive strategic committee determined that CFS should continue to pursue any potential leads from the solicitation process, including following up with Company A regarding the amount of any potential offer. The executive strategic committee also discussed the proposed offer from Wintrust. The representative from FIG advised the committee that Wintrust had agreed earlier in the day to increase its offer from an aggregate purchase price of \$42.5 million to \$43.0 million, but was unwilling to increase its offer beyond this amount. Given the uncertainty regarding offers from other parties, the executive strategic committee agreed to continue discussions with Wintrust and to try to reach an agreement on an acceptable price.

On March 14, 2014, Company A, which had earlier indicated that it was highly interested in a possible strategic transaction with CFS, contacted a representative of FIG to reiterate its level of interest. However, during a subsequent telephone conversation with a representative of FIG on March 17, 2014, Company A indicated that its offer would likely be close to tangible book value, which was well below the proposed merger consideration offered by Wintrust. By this point in time, FIG had also confirmed that the other two parties who had previously expressed some level of interest were not planning on submitting offers. Based on the lack of interest from potential parties and the substantially lower intended proposal from Company A, and consistent with the earlier direction of the executive strategic committee, FIG contacted Wintrust on March 18, 2014 to try to reach an agreement on an acceptable price and to propose changes to the previously provided indication of interest.

Prior to receipt of any formal response from Wintrust, Company A contacted FIG the following morning on March 19, 2014 to discuss its interest in a possible strategic transaction with CFS. During this discussion, Company A indicated it was planning on reassessing its earlier valuation and would get back to FIG shortly. During a subsequent discussion with Mr. Wilson on March 20, 2014, Company A indicated that it was interested in submitting an indication of interest to acquire CFS at a price in the range of \$1.50 to \$1.60 per share. Later that day, while the board of directors of CFS was in session at its regular monthly meeting, Company A sent FIG a written preliminary non-binding indication of interest.

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During the March 20, 2014 regular meeting of the board of directors of CFS, a representative from FIG and Mr. Wilson reviewed the results of the solicitation process with CFS's board and senior management. Of the three

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parties that had executed confidentiality agreements and received copies of the marketing materials, Company A was the only party that had expressed an interest in submitting an offer regarding a possible strategic transaction with CFS; at the time of the meeting, CFS had not yet received the written preliminary non-binding indication of interest from Company A. FIG and the board discussed the price range of the proposal from Company A, the reputation of Company A, the strategic opportunity offered by the proposed merger transaction with Company A and the perceived ability of Company A to consummate the proposed merger transaction. FIG also reviewed with the board recent Midwest transactions and nationwide transactions, and information about the current banking market and valuations. The board members asked FIG questions regarding the terms that Company A was expected to offer. The board then discussed the advisability of continuing to explore a possible strategic transaction with Company A and the steps required to complete such a strategic transaction. During this discussion, FIG recommended to the board that CFS engage in further discussions with Company A to better clarify and define the parameters of the proposed offer since the price range was too wide-ranging and the form of consideration was unclear. At the conclusion of the meeting, the board authorized management to continue discussions with Company A in order to more clearly define the offer price and terms of a potential transaction. However, given the fact that CFS had not yet received a formal indication of interest from Company A, the uncertainty posed by Company A's offer since it was subject to due diligence and the fact that Wintrust had already conducted an extensive due diligence review of CFS, the board authorized CFS to proceed with its discussions and negotiations with Wintrust unless there was significant progress with Company A.

During the March 20, 2014 board meeting, the board of directors of CFS also reviewed and approved the terms and conditions of proposed change in control agreements for Mr. Wilson and Douglas D. Howe, an executive vice president of CFS and the Bank. The proposed terms of the change in control agreements included a double-trigger feature in which a change in control itself would not trigger the lump sum cash payment. Under the change in control agreements, each of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Howe would be entitled to a lump sum cash payment equal to twelve-months of the base salary of each executive officer in the event of a change in control followed by the termination of his employment within twelve months thereafter. Historically, the Bank had in place change in control agreements with the senior executive officers of the Bank. When Messrs. Wilson and Howe were hired on August 15, 2013 and January 1, 2014, respectively, the board of directors discussed entering into change in control agreements with these executive officers, consistent with its prior practices, in order to ensure their full and active support during any strategic transaction; the board of directors also discussed the grant of stock options which would align individual performance with the interest of the stockholders in the growth and performance of CFS. However, during the period when Mr. Wilson and Mr. Howe were hired, CFS was subject to a written agreement with the Federal Reserve, and the Bank was subject to a consent order with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, which precluded or required regulatory approval of certain executive compensation arrangements, including change in control agreements. On January 10, 2014, the consent order was terminated. The regulatory approval requirement for certain executive compensation arrangements remained in place for a period of time after this; however, the approval process was expected to be shorter as a result of the termination of the consent order. During the March 20, 2014 meeting, the board of directors of CFS elected to proceed with the process of requesting regulatory approval of change in control agreements for Messrs. Wilson and Howe, and approved the terms of proposed change in control agreements at this meeting, subject to regulatory approval. The proposed change in control agreements were later restructured as obligations of the Bank, and regulatory approval was obtained from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation on May 12, 2014. The board of directors of the Bank would later approve and ratify the terms of the change in control agreements during its board meeting in May, and shortly after this, the change in control agreements were executed on May 16, 2014. Further information on the change in control agreements is included in *The Merger* *Interests of certain persons in the merger*.

After the March 20, 2014 board meeting, Mr. Wilson informed Company A regarding the board's concerns over the wide-ranging and non-specific nature of its offer, including the broad price range and uncertainty over the form of consideration, and indicated that CFS was planning on continuing its negotiations with another party unless these issues could be addressed. On the following day, the Chief Executive Officer of Company A came to Mr. Wilson's office to reiterate and emphasize Company A's serious interest in a possible strategic transaction and to further discuss the proposed terms of such a transaction. During this meeting, Company A agreed to increase its offer to a range of \$1.57 to \$1.62 per share, subject to due diligence and other customary conditions. Further communications occurred between Mr. Wilson and Company A over the following two days, and on March 24, 2014, Company A sent Mr. Wilson an e-mail confirming that it would be sending a revised indication of interest

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reflecting the terms previously discussed by the parties. On March 25, 2014, Mr. Wilson provided the members of the board of directors with a written update regarding these discussions, along with a copy of the e-mail from Company A.

Later in the day on March 25, 2014, Company A sent FIG a revised written preliminary non-binding indication of interest that contemplated a merger transaction pursuant to which CFS stockholders would receive consideration with a value in the range of \$1.57 to \$1.62 per common share and preferred share (on an as-converted basis), in a mix of cash and Company A common stock (in a ratio ranging between 50%-70% stock) in exchange for their shares of CFS common and CFS preferred stock, subject to completion by Company A of its due diligence of CFS and satisfaction of other conditions.

FIG notified Wintrust on the same day that it had received a substantially higher offer from another party, and later that day, Wintrust informed FIG that it was no longer interested in exploring a strategic transaction with CFS.

On March 26, 2014, the board of directors of CFS, along with a representative of FIG, met to review and discuss the revised indication of interest received from Company A. During this meeting, the board recommended that CFS proceed with further discussions with Company A. The board unanimously decided that CFS should move forward by inviting Company A to conduct additional due diligence in order to obtain a final offer. The board determined not to seek additional offers at that time because of the extensiveness of the process already undertaken and the favorable terms of Company A's proposal. CFS and Company A subsequently negotiated and, on April 8, 2014, entered into a confidentiality agreement, which included a 60-day exclusive negotiating period with Company A.

On April 9, 2014, Mr. Wilson provided the members of the board of directors of CFS with a written update regarding the due diligence process, and on April 17, 2014, the board discussed the proposed merger transaction with Company A at its regular board of directors meeting. Over the following four-week period, Company A engaged in extensive due diligence of CFS's business and operations, including a review of its credit files, and Mr. Wilson provided periodic updates to the board.

On May 15, 2014, the board of directors of CFS reviewed and discussed the status of due diligence by Company A and the negotiation of the proposed merger transaction during its regular meeting. Senior management and representatives of FIG and Godfrey & Kahn were present at the meeting. A representative of Godfrey & Kahn gave a comprehensive presentation concerning the fiduciary duties of the board of directors when considering possible strategic alternatives, including a possible sale of the company, and engaged in extensive discussion with the directors regarding these duties. Several representatives from FIG also gave a presentation regarding the historical and projected financial, statistical and other information regarding Company A, including an analysis of its business and its common stock. Following the financial and legal presentations, the board of directors engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the prospects of CFS in light of the risks and uncertainties related to increased competition in CFS's market area, anticipated increase in regulatory and compliance costs, and the continuing low interest rate environment. After discussion, the board of directors of CFS authorized management and its legal and financial advisors to continue the discussions and negotiations with Company A. The board also determined during this meeting that in the event that the negotiations were successful, it would be prudent to obtain a fairness opinion from another investment banking firm because certain principals of FIG owned shares of CFS common stock or CFS preferred stock. While ownership by certain of FIG's principals of shares of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock was not viewed by the board as a conflict of interest because the interests of the FIG representatives as CFS stockholders were generally aligned with the interest of other stockholders, the board determined that a fairness opinion from another investment banking firm would provide additional assurances to stockholders regarding the impartiality of the process used to review and evaluate the fairness of a potential transaction.

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Over the course of the subsequent weeks, representatives of CFS and Company A conducted due diligence involving senior executives from both companies as well as their outside legal and financial advisors. On or around May 27, 2014, Company A notified CFS that it was planning to reduce its offer to approximately \$1.40 to \$1.45 per share of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock (on an as-converted basis), largely as a result of its determination of the value of CFS's real estate. The board of directors held special telephonic meetings on May 29, 2014 and June 6, 2014 to review and discuss Company A's amended offer. Representatives of FIG and Godfrey &

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Kahn participated telephonically at both meetings. During these meetings, there was a substantial discussion among board members regarding the amended offer. A representative of FIG provided an updated analysis of the proposed consideration in order to assist the board in evaluating and responding to the amended offer, and ultimately, making a recommendation to the stockholders. After evaluating the range of alternative responses to the amended offer, the board of directors authorized management and FIG to propose a counter offer to Company A requesting an increase in the per share merger consideration. Later in June 2014, FIG prepared an analysis of the proposed merger transaction with Company A for the board of directors, which analysis included, among other things, an analysis of different pricing scenarios.

On June 19, 2014, the board of directors of CFS established a formal review committee of the board, consisting of four independent directors, to review, evaluate, and make recommendations to the full board regarding the terms and conditions of a definitive merger agreement. This review committee replaced the executive strategic committee established by the CFS board on February 14, 2014.

Substantial discussions occurred among the management of CFS and Company A over the course of the next few months, and ultimately, Company A agreed to a price of \$1.48 per share of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock (on an as-converted basis), subject to a possible adjustment to \$1.45 per share. On August 13, 2014, Company A delivered a first draft of a definitive merger agreement. Over the next three months, CFS and Company A and their respective financial and legal advisors engaged in substantial negotiations regarding the covenants, conditions and contingencies in the proposed merger agreement. During these negotiations, CFS was represented by Godfrey & Kahn and Kilpatrick, Townsend & Stockton LLP, which we refer to as Kilpatrick. Kilpatrick is CFS's long-standing securities counsel and the firm was retained to assist with the review and analysis of Maryland corporate law issues. During this period, the board of directors of CFS and the review committee met or held several teleconference meetings to review and discuss the price offered by Company A and the terms and conditions of the proposed merger agreement.

While the proposed merger agreement was being negotiated over this three-month period, there were mounting concerns on the part of management and the board regarding the inability of the parties to reach agreement on a definitive merger agreement and the execution risk related to a potential merger transaction with Company A, including the possible reduction in the merger consideration to \$1.45 per share. During the negotiations, the exclusivity period in the confidentiality agreement with Company A precluding any discussions or negotiations with other parties relating to another strategic transaction was extended three times in order to try to reach agreement on open issues. By the time the final extension of the exclusivity period expired on September 14, 2014, a number of significant issues remained unresolved, and management and the board of directors of CFS were concerned regarding whether the parties would be able to reach agreement on a definitive merger agreement and execute the proposed merger transaction. Outstanding issues in the merger agreement included, among other things, restrictions on the ability of the board to consider alternative merger proposals, the amount and triggering events for the payment of termination fees, the inclusion of certain real estate contingencies, and the termination of certain customer relationships. In addition, Company A had requested that the consummation of the transaction be subject to the satisfaction of a post-signing due diligence contingency.

The board of directors of CFS held a special meeting on September 23, 2014 to review and discuss the status of negotiations and the material terms of the proposed merger agreement with Company A. During this meeting, Mr. Wilson advised the board that on September 18, 2014, FIG had received an unsolicited e-mail from Mr. Wehmer at Wintrust inquiring whether CFS was still considering a possible strategic transaction. Although the exclusivity period had expired by this time, the board of directors decided to continue its discussions with Company A for a limited period of time in order to try to resolve the outstanding areas of concern, and FIG was directed to not respond to the inquiry from Wintrust at the time. The board of directors also directed that Mr. Wilson notify Company A that it had received an inquiry from another financial institution and that CFS would terminate discussions if significant progress was not made in the near term. After the meeting, Mr. Wilson notified Company A regarding the board's concerns, the inquiry from another financial institution and the need to resolve the outstanding issues by the end of the week.

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On September 29, 2014, the board of directors of CFS held a special meeting to review and discuss the status of negotiations and the material terms of the proposed merger agreement with Company A. During this meeting, the board of directors determined that there was an impasse in negotiations and that the outstanding

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business and legal issues had not been satisfactorily resolved. Further, the board concluded that there continued to be significant execution risk related to the proposed merger transaction with Company A. After extensive discussion, the board of directors authorized management to terminate discussions with Company A.

During the special meeting of the board of directors of CFS held on September 29, 2014, the board again discussed the long-term business prospects of CFS, including the risks and opportunities relating to achievement of CFS's strategic business plan, the time frame to enhance profitability and achieve growth, the capital and financial resources necessary to conduct its business and to grow and the overall long-term value of CFS's stock. Based on the discussion, the board concluded that it would be in the best interests of CFS and its stockholders to pursue a possible strategic transaction with another financial institution. During this meeting, a representative of FIG advised the board that based on the recent inquiry from Mr. Wehmer at Wintrust, along with the earlier indication of interest, he believed that Wintrust would be interested in reopening discussions regarding a possible transaction with CFS. Given the recent process that CFS had gone through, including FIG's solicitation of interest from other parties, along with Wintrust's earlier interest in CFS, the board of directors determined that soliciting other offers from other parties would not be productive, especially given the lack of interest from other parties earlier in the process and the fact that CFS had not received any other contacts from parties interested in discussing a possible strategic transaction involving CFS. Additionally, the board of directors concluded that a potential transaction with Wintrust presented low-execution risk given its experience and reputation in effecting bank acquisitions. Accordingly, the board of directors authorized management and FIG to reopen discussions with Wintrust and report back to the board the result of those discussions.

Following the September 29, 2014 board meeting, a representative of FIG contacted Wintrust about CFS's desire to reopen discussions regarding the possible merger transaction with CFS. During this call, Wintrust indicated that it was still interested in pursuing a merger transaction with CFS, but that it would need to supplement its earlier due diligence process. CFS provided access to an electronic data room for Wintrust to conduct additional due diligence, and during the month of October detailed management meetings and calls were held to ensure that all requested information and materials were included in the electronic data room and to clarify questions as they arose. Wintrust also conducted an on-site review of CFS's credit files and operational and regulatory compliance procedures.

On November 4, 2014, Wintrust sent Mr. Wilson a non-binding indication of interest. This indication of interest, which was subject to satisfactory completion of due diligence by Wintrust, included an aggregate merger consideration of \$43.0 million for CFS, or approximately \$1.44 per share of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock (on an as-converted basis). The proposed merger consideration was payable in 50% in cash and 50% in common stock of Wintrust, and included a variable exchange ratio with a collar determined at the time of signing. There was no financing contingency for the transaction. The review committee of the board of directors of CFS met on November 10, 2014 to review and consider the response to Wintrust's indication of interest. Representatives of Godfrey & Kahn and FIG were present at this meeting. After discussing and evaluating the range of alternative responses to the indication of interest from Wintrust, the review committee authorized management and FIG to continue discussions with Wintrust and to report back to the full board. During the week of November 10, several discussions ensued among FIG, management of CFS and Wintrust regarding the indication of interest, and on November 11, 2014, during a meeting with the respective management teams of CFS and Wintrust and a representative of FIG, Wintrust agreed to increase its proposed merger consideration to \$44.0 million for CFS, or approximately \$1.47 per share of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock (on an as-converted basis).

On November 13, 2014, the board of directors held a special telephonic meeting to review and consider the revised offer from Wintrust. The board reviewed the long-term prospects of CFS and again concluded that it was in the best interest of CFS and its stockholders to pursue a strategic transaction with another financial institution. The board then discussed and evaluated the proposed offer from Wintrust. During this discussion, board members requested additional information from FIG regarding the proposed purchase price as well as the long-term value of Wintrust's stock and the prospects of its business. A discussion ensued regarding the proposed purchase price. At the conclusion of the meeting, the board authorized CFS to agree to the terms of the indication of interest and to enter into negotiations with Wintrust regarding a definitive agreement.

Following this meeting, Wintrust continued to review due diligence information posted to the electronic data room and CFS reviewed and responded to additional requests for information. On December 15, 2014,

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Wintrust's legal counsel, Schiff Hardin LLP, which we refer to as Schiff Hardin, delivered a first draft of a definitive merger agreement. From December 15, 2014 through the end of February 2015, CFS, Wintrust, and their respective legal advisors at Godfrey & Kahn, Kilpatrick and Schiff Hardin engaged in extensive due diligence, negotiated the terms of the proposed merger agreement and the voting agreement to be entered into by certain stockholders of CFS, reviewed disclosure schedules to the proposed merger agreement and exchanged comments and revised drafts of the agreements. During this period, counsel for CFS and counsel for Wintrust exchanged multiple drafts of the proposed merger agreement, several of which were provided to board members. Mr. Wilson also provided periodic written updates to the board regarding the negotiation process and outstanding issues. In the course of the discussions between counsel for CFS and counsel for Wintrust, counsel for Wintrust expressed Wintrust's desire to provide in the proposed merger agreement that, in order to facilitate the proposed transaction, CFS's articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation for each series of CFS preferred stock be amended prior to closing to provide for automatic conversion of CFS preferred stock into CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

On January 23, 2015, CFS retained D.A. Davidson, to deliver an opinion with respect to the fairness of the merger consideration to CFS's stockholders from a financial point of view. As noted earlier, the board of directors had earlier concluded that it would be prudent to obtain a fairness opinion from another investment banking firm because certain principals of FIG owned CFS common stock or CFS preferred stock.

On February 3, 2015, members of CFS's management met with senior management of Wintrust at its headquarters to conduct a business and financial due diligence review of Wintrust in light of the portion of the per share merger consideration payable in Wintrust common stock. Among other things, CFS discussed with Wintrust management and reviewed Wintrust internal and third party loan review reports, internal audit reports, minutes of the audit committee and the full board, budget and financial projections, capital stress test results, summary reports on CFS's investment portfolio and rate risk position, and letters and reports from accountants and external auditors.

In the meantime, while the proposed merger agreement with Wintrust was being negotiated, Wintrust continued its ongoing due diligence review of CFS's business and operations. In mid-February 2015, Wintrust notified CFS about potential adjustments in the per share merger consideration as a result of its review of CFS's tax records. In particular, as a result of the reassessment of the value of the net operating loss carryover available of CFS and the amount of bad debt deductions claimed by CFS in prior tax years, it was determined that the net operating losses available to an acquirer would be less than those projected by CFS and that the eventual amount of the bad debt reserve that would need to be recaptured upon the consummation of the transaction would be substantially more.

Wintrust proposed a reduction in the merger consideration to account for the reduction in the value of the tax benefit from the net operating losses and the tax cost of the recapture of the larger bad debt reserve. The board of directors of CFS reviewed and discussed these tax matters at its regular board meeting on February 19, 2015. During this meeting, the board of directors of CFS concluded that if CFS reopened the solicitation process, these tax issues would need to be disclosed and a similar adjustment likely would be necessary for any other offers that it received. After again reviewing its strategic alternatives, the board of directors of CFS unanimously concluded that exploring a possible strategic transaction continued to be in the best interest of CFS and its stockholders and that CFS should continue its negotiations with Wintrust. Over the course of the next two weeks, CFS, Wintrust, and their respective accounting firms and tax counsel, reviewed and discussed possible adjustments in the merger consideration in extensive detail, and the parties ultimately agreed to reduce the aggregate merger consideration from \$44,000,000, or approximately \$1.47 per share of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock (on an as-converted basis), to \$42,375,000, or approximately \$1.42 per share of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock (on an as-converted basis). The parties also agreed to increase the minimum adjusted net worth covenant of CFS from \$27,500,000 to \$28,250,000. If, at consummation of the proposed merger transaction with Wintrust, the minimum adjusted net worth of CFS is lower than this threshold, the merger consideration will be reduced on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

During the week of February 23, 2015, all other remaining matters, including the agreed upon aggregate merger consideration of \$42,375,000, were resolved and the final terms of proposed merger agreement and the related documents were negotiated by CFS and Wintrust and their

respective legal advisors. In order to facilitate the proposed merger transaction, as requested by Wintrust, the final terms of the proposed merger agreement provided

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that CFS's articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation for each series of preferred stock of CFS would be amended prior to the closing to provide for, among other things, the automatic conversion of each share of CFS preferred stock into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

On February 26, 2015, CFS's board of directors met during its regular board meeting to review the proposed merger transaction as set forth in the proposed merger agreement and related documents negotiated by CFS and Wintrust and their respective advisors. Also attending telephonically, were representatives of Godfrey & Kahn, FIG and D.A. Davidson. Prior to the meeting, the board of directors received copies of the proposed merger agreement and the voting agreement to be entered into by the directors, officer and certain other stockholders of CFS. During this session, a representative of Godfrey & Kahn reviewed in detail with the board the terms of the current draft of the proposed merger agreement and related voting agreement, including the scope of the representations and warranties, the nature of CFS's operating covenants prior to closing, the provision relating to non-solicitation of competing transactions, the proposed closing conditions and the termination provisions. The representative from Godfrey & Kahn also discussed with the board of directors the legal standards applicable to the board's decisions and actions with respect to the proposed merger agreement and the voting agreements. D.A. Davidson provided a financial analysis to the board of the proposed merger transaction with Wintrust and reviewed in detail with the board the terms of the merger consideration. D.A. Davidson also discussed with the board in detail its fairness opinion, including the analysis it undertook and its conclusions. FIG also provided an analysis of the financial terms of the proposed transaction relative to other transactions in the Chicago market and the Midwest. The CFS board engaged in a discussion with CFS's advisors regarding the proposed draft of the proposed merger agreement, including the final business terms of the proposed merger transaction and basis for the fairness analysis.

On March 2, 2015, the board of directors of CFS held a special meeting to review and discuss the final terms of the merger. Also attending telephonically, were representatives of Godfrey & Kahn, FIG and D.A. Davidson. D.A. Davidson provided additional information to the board regarding the basis for its fairness analysis, including a net present value analysis of CFS, and then delivered its opinion that, as of the date of such opinion and subject to the qualifications, limitations and assumptions set forth therein, the consideration to be received by holders of CFS preferred stock and CFS common stock in the proposed merger transaction is fair to such stockholders from a financial point of view. Representatives of FIG confirmed that FIG's formal analysis supported the advisability of the proposed merger transaction.

After the conclusion of the presentations and discussions at the March 2, 2015 meeting, and after discussion and analysis among the members of the board of directors of CFS, including consideration of the factors described under "The Merger" CFS's reasons for the merger and recommendation of the board of directors, the board of directors of CFS determined that the merger and the transactions contemplated by the proposed merger agreement were advisable to and in the best interests of CFS and unanimously approved the proposed merger agreement and the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for preferred stock conversion, and resolved to recommend that CFS's stockholders approve the merger and the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS, and authorized Mr. Wilson to execute the proposed merger agreement and additional documentation on behalf of CFS. After this meeting, CFS and Wintrust entered into the merger agreement included in *Annex A* to this proxy statement/prospectus.

CFS and Wintrust issued a joint press release later in the afternoon on March 2, 2015 announcing the execution of the merger agreement.

Opinion of CFS's financial advisor

On January 23, 2015, CFS entered into a letter agreement with D.A. Davidson to provide the CFS's board of directors with an opinion as to the fairness, from a financial point of view, of the consideration to be paid in connection with the merger. CFS engaged D.A. Davidson because D.A. Davidson is a nationally recognized investment banking firm with substantial experience in transactions similar to the merger and is

familiar with CFS and its business. As part of its investment banking business, D.A. Davidson is continually engaged in the valuation of financial institutions and their securities in connection with mergers and acquisitions and other corporate transactions.

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On February 26, 2015 and March 2, 2015, CFS's board of directors held meetings to evaluate the proposed merger. At both of these meetings, D.A. Davidson reviewed the financial aspects of the proposed merger, and at the March 2, 2015 meeting, D.A. Davidson rendered an opinion to CFS's board that, as of such date and based upon and subject to assumptions made, procedures followed, matters considered and limitations on the review undertaken, the per share merger consideration to be paid to the holders of CFS common stock and the holders of shares of each class of CFS preferred stock in the merger is fair, from a financial point of view, to each such holder.

The full text of Davidson's written opinion, dated March 2, 2015, is attached to this proxy statement as *Annex F* and is incorporated herein by reference. The description of the opinion set forth herein is qualified in its entirety by reference to the full text of such opinion. CFS's shareholders are urged to read the opinion in its entirety.

Davidson's opinion speaks only as of the date of the opinion and D.A. Davidson undertakes no obligation to revise or update its opinion. The opinion is directed to CFS's board of directors and addresses only the fairness, from a financial point of view, of the per share merger consideration to be paid to the holders of CFS common stock and the holders of shares of each class of CFS preferred stock in the proposed merger. The opinion does not address, and D.A. Davidson expresses no view or opinion with respect to, (i) the underlying business decision by CFS to engage in the merger, (ii) the relative merits of the merger as compared to any alternative business transactions or strategies, or whether such alternative transactions or strategies could be achieved or are available, or (iii) any legal, regulatory, tax or accounting matters relating to CFS, its shareholders or relating to or arising out of the merger. The opinion expresses no view or opinion as to any other term or aspect of the merger or the merger agreement. CFS determined the consideration through the negotiation process. The opinion does not constitute a recommendation to any CFS shareholder as to how such shareholder should vote or act with respect to the merger or any matter relating thereto. The opinion does not express any view as to the fairness of the amount or nature of the compensation to any of CFS's officers, directors or employees, or any class of such persons, relative to the per share merger consideration. The opinion has been reviewed and approved by Davidson's Fairness Opinion Committee in conformity with its policies and procedures established under the requirements of Rule 5150 of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority.

Davidson has reviewed the registration statement on Form S-4 of which this proxy statement is a part and consented to the inclusion of its opinion to CFS's board of directors as *Annex F* of this proxy statement and to the references to D.A. Davidson and its opinion contained herein.

In connection with rendering its opinion, D.A. Davidson reviewed, analyzed and relied upon material bearing upon the merger and the financial and operating condition of CFS and Wintrust and the merger, including among other things, the following:

- the merger agreement;
- certain financial statements and other historical financial and business information about CFS and Wintrust made available to D.A. Davidson from published sources and/or from the internal records of CFS that D.A. Davidson deemed relevant;
- certain documents related to the issuances of each class of CFS preferred stock;

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- internal financial projections for CFS for the years ending December 31, 2015, December 31, 2016 and December 31, 2017 as set forth below under the heading "Financial Forecasts of CFS" as provided by senior management of CFS and estimated earnings for the years thereafter, in each case as discussed with senior management of CFS;
- certain publicly available analyst earnings estimates for Wintrust for the years ending December 31, 2015 and December 31, 2016 and the long-term growth rate thereof estimated by analysts for the years thereafter;
- the current market environment generally and the banking environment in particular;

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- the financial terms of certain other transactions in the financial institutions industry, to the extent publicly available;
- the market and trading characteristics of public companies and public bank holding companies in particular;
- the pro forma financial impact of the merger, taking into consideration the amounts and timing of the transaction costs and cost savings;
- the net present value of CFS with consideration of the projected financial results;
- the net present value of CFS and Wintrust, on a pro forma basis with the pro forma financial impact of the merger, with consideration of the projected financial results; and
- such other financial studies, analyses and investigations and financial, economic and market criteria and other information as D.A. Davidson considered relevant including discussions with management and other representatives and advisors of CFS and Wintrust concerning the business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects of CFS and Wintrust.

In arriving at its opinion, D.A. Davidson has assumed and relied upon the accuracy and completeness of all information supplied or otherwise made available to Davidson, discussed with or reviewed by or for Davidson, or publicly available, and D.A. Davidson has not assumed responsibility for independently verifying such information or undertaken an independent evaluation or appraisal of any of the assets or liabilities (contingent or otherwise) of CFS, nor did D.A. Davidson make an independent appraisal or analysis of CFS with respect to the merger. In addition, D.A. Davidson has not assumed any obligation to conduct, nor has D.A. Davidson conducted any physical inspection of the properties or facilities of CFS. With respect to the financial forecasts and other analyses, D.A. Davidson has further relied on the assurances of management of CFS that they are not aware of any facts or circumstances that would make any of such information inaccurate or misleading. D.A. Davidson did not make an independent evaluation or appraisal of the specific assets or liabilities including the amount of any fair value adjustments per FASB 141(R). D.A. Davidson did not make an independent evaluation of the adequacy of the allowance for loan losses of CFS or Wintrust nor has D.A. Davidson reviewed any individual credit files relating to CFS or Wintrust. D.A. Davidson has assumed that the respective allowances for loan losses for both CFS and Wintrust are adequate to cover such losses and will be adequate on a pro forma basis for the combined entity. D.A. Davidson has assumed that there has been no material change in CFS's assets, financial condition, results of operations, cash flows, business or prospects since the date of the most recent financial statements provided to D. A. Davidson. D.A. Davidson has assumed in all respects material to its analysis that CFS will remain as going concerns for all periods relevant to its analysis. D.A. Davidson has also assumed that all of the representations and warranties contained in the merger agreement and all related agreements (as qualified by any disclosure schedules in respect thereof) are true and correct in all respects material to Davidson's analysis, and that the merger will be consummated in accordance with the terms of the merger agreement, without waiver, modification or amendment of any term, condition or covenant thereof the effect of which would be in any respect material to Davidson's analysis. D.A. Davidson also have assumed that all material governmental, regulatory or other consents, approvals, and waivers necessary for the consummation of the merger will be obtained without any material adverse effect on CFS or the contemplated benefits of the merger. Davidson's opinion is necessarily based upon information available to D.A. Davidson and economic, market, financial and other conditions as they exist and can be evaluated on the date the fairness opinion letter was delivered to CFS's board of directors.

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Set forth below is a summary of the material financial analyses performed by D.A. Davidson in connection with rendering its opinion. The summary of the analyses of D.A. Davidson set forth below is not a complete description of the analysis underlying its opinion, and the order in which these analyses are described below is not indicative of any relative weight or importance given to those analyses by Davidson. The following summaries of financial analyses include information presented in tabular format. You should read these tables together with the full text of the summary financial analyses, as the tables alone are not a complete description of the analyses.

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Unless otherwise indicated, the following quantitative information, to the extent it is based on market data, is based on market data as of February 24, 2015 and is not necessarily indicative of market conditions after such date.

Summary of Proposal

Davidson reviewed the financial terms of the proposed transaction. As set forth in the Agreement, each outstanding share of each class of CFS preferred stock will be converted into shares of CFS common stock, and thereafter, each outstanding share of CFS common stock will be converted into the right to receive, subject to adjustment pursuant to Section 6.10(b) of the merger agreement, the per share merger consideration consisting of (a) an amount in cash equal to the per share cash consideration, plus (b) a number of shares of Wintrust common stock equal to the per share stock consideration determined in accordance with the merger agreement. The merger agreement provides that the aggregate merger consideration will be \$42,375,000, subject to adjustment pursuant to Section 6.10(b) of the merger agreement. Based upon the pro forma 29,906,588 shares of CFS common stock outstanding immediately following the conversion of each class of CFS preferred stock into shares of CFS common stock as of March 2, 2015, D.A. Davidson calculated the per share merger consideration to be \$1.42 per share. The terms and conditions of the merger are more fully described in the merger agreement. Based upon financial information as of or for the twelve month period ended December 31, 2014, D.A. Davidson calculated the following transaction ratios:

Transaction Ratios

| | |
|---|--------|
| | 7.9x |
| Transaction Price / Net Income (2014) - Before DTA Reversal | 29.7x |
| Transaction Price / Net Income (2014) - Tax-Adjusted | 45.7x |
| Transaction Price / Book Value Per Share | 148.3% |
| Transaction Price / Tangible Book Value Per Share | 148.3% |
| Tangible Book Premium / Core Deposits (1) | 4.9% |
| Premium to Company's Closing Price as of 2/24/2015 (2) | 18.08% |

(1) Core deposits exclude time deposits with account balances greater than \$100,000. Tangible book premium / core deposits calculated by dividing the excess or deficit of the aggregate transaction value compared to tangible book value by core deposits

(2) Based on CFS's Closing Price as of 2/24/2015 of \$1.20 per share

CFS Comparable Companies Analysis

Davidson used publicly available information to compare selected financial and market trading information for CFS and a group of 16 financial institutions selected by Davidson, based on its judgment and experience, which: (i) were banks with common stock listed on the over-the-counter markets (OTC); (ii) were headquartered in the Midwest, including Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin; (iii) had total assets between \$200.0 million and \$500.0 million; (iv) had a ratio of nonperforming assets to total assets below 4.00%; and (v) had a return on average assets that was between 0.00% and 1.00% for the three-month period ended December 31, 2014. The 16 financial institutions were as follows:

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Birmingham Bloomfield Bancshares, Inc.
CNB Corporation
Comunibanc Corporation
Consumers Bancorp, Inc.
County Bank Corp
Eastern Michigan Financial Corporation
First Citizens Nat 1 Bank of Upper Sandusky
First Ottawa Bancshares, Inc.

First Robinson Financial Corporation
HCB Financial Corporation
HFB Financial Corporation
Iowa First Bancshares Corp.
Killbuck Bancshares, Inc.
Ohio Legacy Corp
Wells Financial Corp.
West Shore Bank Corporation

Note: Does not reflect impact from pending acquisitions or acquisitions closed after December 31, 2014

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The analysis compared publicly available financial and market trading information for CFS and the data for the 16 financial institutions identified above as of and for the three-month period ended December 31, 2014. D.A. Davidson incorporated a control premium of 30.0% based on the average of premiums observed on other transactions in the industry since 2000 and applied it to the median implied non-control value of \$0.80 per share to calculate an implied value of \$1.05 per share. The table below compares the data for CFS and the data for the 16 financial institutions identified above, with pricing data as of February 24, 2015.

Financial Condition and Performance

| | Company | Median | Comparable Companies | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| | | | Average | Minimum | Maximum |
| Total Assets (in millions) | \$ 343.0 | \$ 281.6 | \$ 311.0 | \$ 207.0 | \$ 480.0 |
| Non-Performing Assets / Total Assets | 1.43% | 1.53% | 1.38% | 0.04% | 3.10% |
| Texas Ratio (1) | 16.25% | 14.04% | 13.55% | 0.35% | 27.42% |
| Tangible Common Equity Ratio | 8.33% | 9.61% | 9.90% | 7.39% | 17.76% |
| Loan / Deposit Ratio | 60.58% | 72.62% | 73.51% | 48.67% | 116.70% |
| Net Interest Margin (Most Recent Quarter) | 3.39% | 3.53% | 3.54% | 2.94% | 4.17% |
| Efficiency Ratio (Most Recent Quarter) | 94.35% | 71.86% | 73.04% | 59.73% | 89.20% |
| Return on Average Tangible Common Equity (Most Recent Quarter) | 2.10% | 8.06% | 7.71% | 1.23% | 11.90% |
| Return on Average Assets (Most Recent Quarter) | 0.17% | 0.80% | 0.72% | 0.22% | 0.97% |

Market Performance Multiples

| | Transaction Multiples | Company | Median | Comparable Companies | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------|
| | | | | Average | Minimum | Maximum |
| Market Capitalization (in millions) | | \$ 12.9 | \$ 21.9 | \$ 27.7 | \$ 14.9 | \$ 67.7 |
| Price / Tangible Book Value Per Share | 148.3% | 125.6% | 84.2% | 88.3% | 64.0% | 146.3% |
| Price / Book Value Per Share | 148.3% | 125.6% | 81.9% | 87.2% | 64.0% | 142.2% |
| Price / LTM Earnings Per Share | 45.7x | NM | 12.7x | 13.6x | 8.4x | 23.6x |

(1) Texas ratio is calculated as the sum of non-performing assets and loans 90 days or more past due divided by the sum of tangible common equity and loan loss reserves

Wintrust Comparable Companies Analysis

Davidson used publicly available information to compare selected financial and market trading information for Wintrust and a group of 16 financial institutions selected by D.A. Davidson which: (i) were banks with common stock listed on NASDAQ or NYSE; (ii) were

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headquartered in the Midwest, including Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin; (iii) had total assets between \$5.0 billion and \$50.0 billion; and (iv) had a ratio of nonperforming assets to total assets below 5.00%. These 16 financial institutions were as follows:

Associated Banc-Corp
Chemical Financial Corporation
Commerce Bancshares, Inc.
First Financial Bancorp.
First Merchants Corporation
First Midwest Bancorp, Inc.
FirstMerit Corporation
Great Western Bancorp, Inc.

Heartland Financial USA, Inc.
MB Financial, Inc.
Old National Bancorp
Park National Corporation
PrivateBancorp, Inc.
Talmer Bancorp, Inc.
TCF Financial Corporation
UMB Financial Corporation

Note: Does not reflect impact from pending acquisitions or acquisitions closed after December 31, 2014

The analysis compared publicly available financial and market trading information for Wintrust and the data for the 16 financial institutions identified above as of and for the three-month period ended December 31, 2014. The table below compares the data for Wintrust and the data for the comparable companies, with pricing data as of February 24, 2015. The 2015 and 2016 earnings per share estimates used in the table below were based on average FactSet Research Systems, Inc. consensus earnings estimates for Wintrust and the 16 financial institutions identified above.

Table of Contents**Financial Condition and Performance**

| | Wintrust | Median | Comparable Companies | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|----------------------|------------|-------------|
| | | | Average | Minimum | Maximum |
| Total Assets (in millions) | \$ 20,010.7 | \$ 10,644.4 | \$ 13,302.7 | \$ 5,824.1 | \$ 26,821.8 |
| Non-Performing Assets / Total Assets | 0.93% | 1.12% | 1.25% | 0.16% | 4.43% |
| Texas Ratio (1) | 12.79% | 11.84% | 14.11% | 2.16% | 48.29% |
| Tangible Common Equity Ratio | 7.75% | 8.40% | 8.68% | 6.16% | 12.78% |
| Loan / Deposit Ratio | 89.89% | 84.99% | 84.58% | 54.83% | 106.16% |
| Net Interest Margin (Most Recent Quarter) | 3.46% | 3.74% | 3.59% | 2.52% | 4.49% |
| Efficiency Ratio (Most Recent Quarter) | 65.75% | 64.62% | 64.34% | 48.53% | 79.97% |
| Return on Average Tangible Common Equity (Most Recent Quarter) | 9.91% | 11.23% | 11.02% | 4.81% | 15.60% |
| Return on Average Assets (Most Recent Quarter) | 0.79% | 0.98% | 0.92% | 0.53% | 1.37% |

Market Performance Multiples

| | Wintrust | Median | Comparable Companies | | |
|--|------------|------------|----------------------|----------|------------|
| | | | Average | Minimum | Maximum |
| Market Capitalization (in millions) | \$ 2,238.7 | \$ 1,516.8 | \$ 1,892.6 | \$ 613.4 | \$ 4,080.4 |
| Price / Tangible Book Value Per Share | 147.4% | 171.3% | 171.6% | 131.3% | 212.2% |
| Price / Book Value Per Share | 115.2% | 126.7% | 134.9% | 89.1% | 190.2% |
| Price / LTM Earnings Per Share | 16.1x | 16.0x | 16.1x | 11.5x | 24.1x |
| Price / 2015 Est. Earnings Per Share (2) | 14.8x | 14.7x | 14.4x | 11.9x | 17.1x |
| Price / 2016 Est. Earnings Per Share (2) | 13.3x | 12.9x | 13.0x | 11.2x | 15.6x |

(1) Texas ratio is calculated as the sum of non-performing assets and loans 90 days or more past due divided by the sum of tangible common equity and loan loss reserves

(2) Earnings per share estimates based on average FactSet Research Systems, Inc. consensus earnings estimates

Precedent Transactions Analysis

Davidson reviewed three sets of comparable merger and acquisition transactions. The sets of mergers and acquisitions included: (1) Nationwide Transactions, (2) Midwest Transactions, and (3) Chicago Transactions.

Nationwide Transactions included 16 transactions selected by Davidson, based on its judgment and experience, where:

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- the transaction was announced between January 1, 2013 and February 24, 2015;
- the transaction involved selling companies headquartered nationwide;
- the merger consideration consisted of all stock or a mix stock and cash;
- the selling company's total assets were between \$200.0 million and \$600.0 million;
- the non-performing assets to total assets ratio of the selling company was less than 3.00%;
- the return on average assets of the selling company was between 0.00% and 0.75% over the preceding twelve months; and
- the selling company had a tangible common equity to tangible assets ratio under 12.00%.

Midwest Transactions included 14 transactions selected by Davidson, based on its judgment and experience, where:

- the transaction was announced between January 1, 2013 and February 24, 2015;
- the transaction involved selling companies headquartered in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin;
- the selling company's total assets were between \$200.0 million and \$800.0 million;

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- the non-performing assets to total assets ratio of the selling company was less than 4.00%; and
- the return on average assets of the selling company was between 0.00% and 1.00% over the preceding twelve months.

Chicago Transactions included 8 transactions, based on its judgment and experience, where:

- the transaction was announced between January 1, 2010 and February 24, 2015;
- the transaction involved banks headquartered in the Chicago Metropolitan Standard Area; and
- the selling company's total assets were less than \$1.0 billion.

The following tables set forth the transactions included in Nationwide Transactions, Midwest Transactions, and Chicago Transactions, and are sorted by announcement date:

Nationwide Transactions

| Announcement Date | Acquirer | Target |
|-------------------|--|---|
| 1/27/2015* | United Community Banks, Inc. | MoneyTree Corporation |
| 12/22/2014* | Stupp Bros., Inc. | Southern Bancshares Corp. |
| 10/20/2014 | ServisFirst Bancshares, Inc. | Metro Bancshares, Inc. |
| 10/03/2014* | IBERIABANK Corporation | Florida Bank Group, Inc. |
| 7/08/2014 | First Midwest Bancorp, Inc. | Great Lakes Financial Resources, Inc. |
| 6/06/2014 | Charles Investment Group, LLC | United Group Banking Co. of Florida, Inc. |
| 4/22/2014 | Heritage Financial Group, Inc. | Alarion Financial Services, Inc. |
| 4/04/2014 | Peoples Bancorp Inc. | Ohio Heritage Bancorp, Inc. |
| 2/11/2014 | IBERIABANK Corporation | First Private Holdings, Inc. |
| 10/21/2013 | Institution for Savings in Newburyport | Mission Community Bancorp |
| 9/09/2013 | Cardinal Financial Corporation | United Financial Banking Companies, Inc. |
| 8/15/2013 | Mascoma Mutual Fin. Services Corp. | Rumson-Fair Haven Bank & Trust Co. |
| 7/15/2013 | Wilshire Bancorp, Inc. | Saehan Bancorp |
| 6/21/2013 | Croghan Bancshares, Inc. | Indebancorp |
| 3/27/2013 | Glacier Bancorp, Inc. | North Cascades Bancshares, Inc. |
| 2/14/2013 | QCR Holdings, Inc. | Community National Bancorporation |

**Indicates the transaction was pending as of February 24, 2015.*

Midwest Transactions

| Announcement Date | Acquirer | Target |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 12/22/2014* | Stupp Bros., Inc. | Southern Commercial Bank |
| 10/14/2014 | Wintrust Financial Corporation | Delavan Bancshares, Inc. |
| 9/26/2014 | First Busey Corporation | Herget Financial Corp. |
| 8/04/2014* | Peoples Bancorp Inc. | NB&T Financial Group, Inc. |
| 7/08/2014 | First Midwest Bancorp, Inc. | Great Lakes Financial Resources, Inc. |
| 5/23/2014 | First Business Financial Services, Inc. | Aslin Group, Inc. |
| 4/07/2014 | MainSource Financial Group, Inc. | MBT Bancorp |
| 4/04/2014 | Peoples Bancorp Inc. | Ohio Heritage Bancorp, Inc. |
| 2/25/2014 | Southern Missouri Bancorp, Inc. | Peoples Service Company |
| 12/20/2013 | First Financial Bancorp. | Insight Bank |
| 6/21/2013 | Croghan Bancshares, Inc. | Indebancorp |
| 6/12/2013 | Heartland Financial USA, Inc. | Morrill Bancshares, Inc. |
| 3/26/2013 | CNB Financial Corporation | FC Banc Corp. |
| 2/14/2013 | QCR Holdings, Inc. | Community National Bancorporation |

**Indicates the transaction was pending as of February 24, 2015.*

Table of Contents**Chicago Transactions**

| Announcement Date | Acquirer | Target |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 11/14/2014* | Royal Financial, Inc. | PNA Bank |
| 7/08/2014 | First Midwest Bancorp, Inc. | Great Lakes Financial Resources, Inc. |
| 7/31/2013 | Wintrust Financial Corporation | Diamond Bancorp, Inc. |
| 4/16/2013 | BBCN Bancorp, Inc. | Foster Bankshares, Inc. |
| 1/22/2013 | Wintrust Financial Corporation | First Lansing Bancorp, Inc. |
| 9/18/2012 | Wintrust Financial Corporation | HPK Financial Corporation |
| 7/26/2011 | Wintrust Financial Corporation | Elgin State Bancorp, Inc. |
| 9/13/2010 | BankFinancial Corporation | DG Bancorp, Inc. |

*Indicates the transaction was pending as of February 24, 2015.

For each transaction referred to above, D.A. Davidson compared, among other things, the following implied ratios:

- transaction price compared to earnings per share for the last twelve months, based on the latest publicly available financial statements of the target company prior to the announcement of the transaction; and
- transaction price compared to tangible book value per share, based on the latest publicly available financial statements of the target company prior to the announcement of the transaction.

As illustrated in the following table, D.A. Davidson compared the multiples implied by the proposed merger to the multiples of the comparable transaction groups and other operating financial data where relevant. The table below sets forth the data for the comparable transaction groups as of the last twelve months ended prior to the transaction announcement and CFS data for the last twelve months ended December 31, 2014.

Financial Condition and Performance

| | Nationwide | | | | | Midwest | | | | Chicago | | | |
|---|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|
| | CFS | Median | Average | Minimum | Maximum | Median | Average | Minimum | Maximum | Median | Average | Minimum | Maximum |
| Total Assets (in millions) | \$ 343.0 | \$ 340.0 | \$ 360.0 | \$ 211.3 | \$ 581.5 | \$ 273.1 | \$ 358.7 | \$ 200.2 | \$ 752.3 | \$ 329.8 | \$ 318.3 | \$ 99.0 | \$ 581.5 |
| Return on Average Assets (Last Twelve Months) | 0.27% | 0.54% | 0.46% | 0.02% | 0.75% | 0.71% | 0.69% | 0.37% | 0.98% | -0.29% | -0.62% | -4.00% | 1.45% |
| Return on Average Equity (Last Twelve Months) | 3.69% | 5.45% | 4.77% | 0.18% | 7.96% | 6.60% | 6.78% | 3.57% | 10.52% | -4.85% | -12.39% | -57.49% | 31.95% |
| Tangible Common Equity Ratio | 8.33% | 9.59% | 9.30% | 6.33% | 11.80% | 10.18% | 9.91% | 6.64% | 13.05% | 6.00% | 6.22% | 1.99% | 10.84% |

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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Efficiency Ratio (Last Twelve Months) | 84.6% | 80.5% | 81.4% | 68.7% | 106.1% | 71.1% | 72.3% | 62.5% | 84.0% | 87.2% | 92.1% | 78.8% | 136.4% |
| Non-Performing Assets / Total Assets | 1.43% | 1.63% | 1.46% | 0.00% | 2.85% | 1.87% | 1.80% | 0.48% | 3.27% | 7.57% | 8.12% | 2.21% | 13.77% |
| Loan Loss Reserves / Non-Performing Loans | 90.2% | 84.0% | 129.8% | 45.0% | 436.3% | 77.0% | 98.0% | 31.6% | 414.2% | 45.6% | 45.7% | 21.7% | 86.8% |

Transaction Multiples

| | CFS | Nationwide | | | | Midwest | | | | Chicago | | | |
|---|--------|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | Median | Average | Minimum | Maximum | Median | Average | Minimum | Maximum | Median | Minimum | Average | Maximum |
| Transaction Price / Last Twelve Months Earnings Per Share | 45.7x | 20.2x | 20.7x | 18.5x | 26.5x | 19.4x | 18.9x | 10.9x | 26.5x | 16.9x | 16.9x | 14.6x | 19.1x |
| Transaction Price / Tangible Book Value Per Share | 148.3% | 139.9% | 143.5% | 104.1% | 199.8% | 135.8% | 133.9% | 104.1% | 166.0% | 74.1% | 72.5% | 15.0% | 137.7% |

Net Present Value Analysis

Davidson performed an analysis that estimated the net present value per share of CFS common stock on a fully-diluted basis under various circumstances. The analysis considered: (i) CFS management's financial forecasts for the years ending December 31, 2015, December 31, 2016 and December 31, 2017; and (ii) estimated earnings for the years thereafter, as discussed with CFS management, in each case, as set forth under Financial Forecasts of CFS. To approximate the terminal value of CFS common stock at December 31, 2020, D.A. Davidson applied price to earnings multiples of 15.0x to 20.0x and multiples of tangible book value ranging from 125.0% to 175.0%. The income streams and terminal values were then discounted to present values using different discount rates ranging from 12.00% to 15.00% chosen to reflect different assumptions regarding required rates of return of holders or prospective buyers of CFS common stock. In evaluating the discount rate, D.A. Davidson used industry standard

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methods of adding the current risk-free rate, which is based on the 10-year Treasury yield, plus the published Ibbotson Equity Risk Premium, plus the published Ibbotson Size Premium, and plus the published Ibbotson Industry Premium.

At the March 2, 2015 CFS board of directors meeting, D.A. Davidson noted that the net present value analysis is a widely used valuation methodology, but the results of such methodology are highly dependent upon the numerous assumptions that must be made, and the results thereof are not necessarily indicative of actual values or future results.

As illustrated in the following tables, the analysis indicates an imputed range of values per share of CFS common stock of \$0.52 to \$0.79 when applying the price to earnings multiples to the financial forecasts and \$0.76 to \$1.22 when applying the multiples of tangible book value to the financial forecasts.

Earnings Per Share Multiples

| Discount Rate | Earnings Per Share Multiple | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--|
| | 15.0x | 16.0x | 17.0x | 18.0x | 18.0x | 19.0x | 20.0x | |
| 12.00% | \$ 0.60 | \$ 0.64 | \$ 0.68 | \$ 0.70 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.75 | \$ 0.79 | |
| 12.50% | \$ 0.58 | \$ 0.62 | \$ 0.66 | \$ 0.68 | \$ 0.70 | \$ 0.74 | \$ 0.78 | |
| 13.00% | \$ 0.57 | \$ 0.61 | \$ 0.65 | \$ 0.66 | \$ 0.68 | \$ 0.72 | \$ 0.76 | |
| 13.50% | \$ 0.56 | \$ 0.59 | \$ 0.63 | \$ 0.65 | \$ 0.67 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.74 | |
| 14.00% | \$ 0.55 | \$ 0.58 | \$ 0.62 | \$ 0.64 | \$ 0.65 | \$ 0.69 | \$ 0.73 | |
| 14.50% | \$ 0.53 | \$ 0.57 | \$ 0.60 | \$ 0.62 | \$ 0.64 | \$ 0.68 | \$ 0.71 | |
| 15.00% | \$ 0.52 | \$ 0.56 | \$ 0.59 | \$ 0.61 | \$ 0.63 | \$ 0.66 | \$ 0.70 | |

Tangible Book Value Multiples

| Discount Rate | Tangible Book Value Per Share Multiple | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 125.0% | 130.0% | 140.0% | 150.0% | 160.0% | 170.0% | 175.0% |
| 9.50% | \$ 0.87 | \$ 0.91 | \$ 0.98 | \$ 1.05 | \$ 1.12 | \$ 1.18 | \$ 1.22 |
| 10.50% | \$ 0.85 | \$ 0.89 | \$ 0.95 | \$ 1.02 | \$ 1.09 | \$ 1.16 | \$ 1.19 |
| 11.50% | \$ 0.83 | \$ 0.87 | \$ 0.93 | \$ 1.00 | \$ 1.07 | \$ 1.13 | \$ 1.17 |
| 12.50% | \$ 0.82 | \$ 0.85 | \$ 0.91 | \$ 0.98 | \$ 1.04 | \$ 1.11 | \$ 1.14 |
| 13.50% | \$ 0.80 | \$ 0.83 | \$ 0.89 | \$ 0.96 | \$ 1.02 | \$ 1.08 | \$ 1.12 |
| 14.50% | \$ 0.78 | \$ 0.81 | \$ 0.87 | \$ 0.94 | \$ 1.00 | \$ 1.06 | \$ 1.09 |
| 15.50% | \$ 0.76 | \$ 0.79 | \$ 0.85 | \$ 0.92 | \$ 0.98 | \$ 1.04 | \$ 1.07 |

Market Premium Analysis

Davidson performed an analysis of the per share consideration premium to recently observed market prices for CFS stockholders. The analysis assumed consideration of \$1.42 per share and was based on CFS closing market prices observed up to and including February 24, 2015. The analysis included premiums based on the closing price on February 24, 2015, a ten day average price, twenty day average price, thirty day

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average price, sixty day average price, ninety day average price, a fifty-two week high price and a fifty-two week low price, all for the periods ending February 24, 2015.

Table of ContentsPremiums to Market Prices**Premium to Market Price**

| Period | Price | Premium |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Current Stock Price | \$ 1.20 | 18.1% |
| Avg. Stock Price - 10 Day | \$ 1.17 | 21.2% |
| Avg. Stock Price - 20 Day | \$ 1.03 | 37.6% |
| Avg. Stock Price - 30 Day | \$ 0.98 | 44.1% |
| Avg. Stock Price - 60 Day | \$ 0.94 | 50.7% |
| Avg. Stock Price - 90 Day | \$ 0.93 | 52.4% |
| 52-Week High | \$ 1.20 | 18.1% |
| 52-Week Low | \$ 0.85 | 66.7% |

Note: Based on closing market prices for the periods ending 2/24/2015

Davidson prepared its analyses for purposes of providing its opinion to CFS's board of directors as to the fairness, from a financial point of view, of the per share merger consideration to be paid to the holders of the CFS common stock and the holders of shares of each class of CFS preferred stock, in the proposed merger and to assist CFS's board of directors in analyzing the proposed merger. The analyses do not purport to be appraisals or necessarily reflect the prices at which businesses or securities actually may be sold. Analyses based upon forecasts of future results are not necessarily indicative of actual future results, which may be significantly more or less favorable than those suggested by these analyses. Because these analyses are inherently subject to uncertainty, being based upon numerous factors or events beyond the control of the parties and their respective advisors, none of CFS, Wintrust or D.A. Davidson or any other person assumes responsibility if future results are materially different from those forecasted.

Davidson's opinion was one of many factors considered by CFS's board of directors in its evaluation of the merger and should not be viewed as determinative of the views of the board of directors of CFS or management with respect to the merger or the per share merger consideration.

Davidson and its affiliates, as part of their investment banking business, are continually engaged in performing financial analyses with respect to businesses and their securities in connection with mergers and acquisitions, negotiated underwritings, competitive biddings, secondary distributions of listed and unlisted securities, private placements and other transactions. D.A. Davidson is a full service securities firm engaged, either directly or through its affiliates, in securities trading, investment management, financial planning and benefits counseling, financing and brokerage activities for both companies and individuals. In the ordinary course of these activities, D.A. Davidson and its affiliates may provide such services to the CFS, Wintrust and their respective affiliates, may actively trade the debt and equity securities (or related derivative securities) of CFS and Wintrust for their own account and for the accounts of their customers and may at any time hold long and short positions of such securities. CFS selected D.A. Davidson as its financial advisor because it is a recognized investment banking firm that has substantial experience in transactions similar to the merger. Pursuant to a letter agreement dated January 23, 2015, CFS engaged D.A. Davidson as its financial advisor in connection with the contemplated transaction. Pursuant to the terms of the letter agreement, CFS agreed to pay D.A. Davidson a cash fee of \$65,000 concurrently with the rendering of its opinion. CFS has also agreed to reimburse D.A. Davidson for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses up to \$3,000, including fees of counsel, and to indemnify D.A. Davidson and certain related persons against specified liabilities, including liabilities under the federal securities laws, relating to or arising out of its engagement.

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Davidson has not, in the past, provided any investment banking services to CFS and its affiliates, has not had a material relationship with CFS and its affiliates and has not received compensation and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for any such services. During the two years preceding the date of the opinion, D.A. Davidson received no compensation from CFS. Davidson, however, may provide investment banking services to the combined company in the future and may receive future compensation.

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CFS's reasons for the merger and recommendation of the board of directors

CFS's board of directors has concluded that the merger offers CFS stockholders an attractive opportunity to achieve the board's strategic business objectives, including increasing stockholder value, growing the size of the business and enhancing liquidity for CFS's stockholder. In addition, CFS board of directors believes that the customers and communities served by the Bank will benefit from the merger.

In deciding to approve the merger agreement and the transactions contemplated thereby, CFS's board of directors consulted with CFS's management, as well as its legal counsel and financial advisors, and considered numerous factors, including the following:

- information with respect to the businesses, earnings, operations, financial condition, prospects, capital levels and asset quality of CFS and Wintrust, both individually and as a combined company;
- the perceived risks and uncertainties attendant to CFS's operations as an independent banking organization, including the risks and uncertainties related to the continuing low-interest rate environment, competition in CFS's market area, increased regulatory costs and increased capital requirements;
- based on the closing price of Wintrust common stock on March 2, 2015 and CFS's December 31, 2014 unaudited balance sheet, the aggregate merger consideration was priced at a multiple of approximately 148.3% of the tangible book value of CFS (after giving effect to the conversion of all of the CFS preferred stock into shares of CFS common stock);
- Davidson's opinion, subject to the various assumptions, qualifications and limitations set forth in such fairness opinion, that the per share merger consideration is fair, from a financial point of view, to the holders of CFS common stock and each class of CFS preferred stock, respectively;
- the value to be received by CFS stockholders in the merger as compared to value projected for CFS as an independent entity;
- the market value of Wintrust common stock prior to the execution of the merger agreement and the prospects for future appreciation as a result of Wintrust's strategic initiatives;
- Wintrust's strategy to seek profitable future expansion in the Chicago metropolitan area, leading to continued growth in overall stockholder value;

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- the fact that Wintrust enjoys relatively high trading volumes on NASDAQ, and the merger would provide access to a more robust trading market for CFS stockholders whose shares currently are thinly traded over-the-counter on OTCQB, as well as enhanced access to capital markets to finance the combined company's capital requirements; and
- the likelihood that the merger will be approved by the relevant bank regulatory authorities without undue burden and in a timely manner.

The above discussion of the information and factors considered by CFS's board of directors is not intended to be exhaustive, but includes a description of all material factors considered by CFS's board. In view of the wide variety of factors considered by the CFS board of directors in connection with its evaluation of the merger, the CFS board did not consider it practical to, nor did it attempt to, quantify, rank or otherwise assign relative weights to the specific factors that it considered. In considering the factors described above, individual directors may have given differing weights to different factors. CFS's board of directors collectively made its determination with respect to the merger based on the conclusion reached by its members, based on the factors that each of them considered appropriate, that the merger is in the best interests of CFS stockholders.

CFS's board of directors believes that the merger is in the best interests of CFS. CFS's board of directors unanimously approved the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion and recommends that stockholders vote FOR approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and FOR the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion.

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Certain directors and officers of CFS and the Bank have interests in the merger different from or in addition to their interests as stockholders generally, including certain cash payments that will be made as a result of the merger under various benefit plans and agreements currently in place in order to terminate such agreements. You may wish to consider these interests in evaluating CFS's board of directors' recommendation that you vote in favor of the merger. See "The Merger - Interests of certain persons in the merger." All of CFS's directors and officers have agreed to vote their shares at the special meeting in favor of the merger and the amendment to the articles of incorporation and any other matter necessary for consummation of the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement.

Wintrust's reasons for the merger

Wintrust's board of directors believes that the merger is in the best interests of Wintrust and its shareholders. In deciding to approve the merger, Wintrust's board of directors considered a number of factors, including:

- management's view that the acquisition provides an attractive opportunity to expand and complement its existing market presence in the Wheaton and Glen Ellyn communities;
- CFS's community banking orientation and its compatibility with Wintrust and its subsidiaries;
- a review of the demographic, economic and financial characteristics of the markets in which CFS operates, including existing and potential competition and history of the market areas with respect to financial institutions;
- management's review of CFS's business, operations, earnings and financial condition, including capital levels and asset quality of the Bank;
- efficiencies to come from integrating certain of CFS's operations into Wintrust's existing operations; and
- the prospects for the approval of the merger by the relevant bank regulatory authorities without undue burden and in a timely manner.

The above discussion of the information and factors considered by Wintrust's board of directors is not intended to be exhaustive, but includes a description of all material factors considered by Wintrust's board. In view of the wide variety of factors considered by the Wintrust board of directors in connection with its evaluation of the merger, the Wintrust board did not consider it practical to, nor did it attempt to, quantify, rank or otherwise assign relative weights to the specific factors that it considered. In considering the factors described above, individual directors may have given differing weights to different factors. Wintrust's board of directors collectively made its determination with respect to the merger based on the conclusion reached by its members, based on the factors that each of them considered appropriate, that the merger is in the

best interests of Wintrust's shareholders.

Material U.S. federal income tax consequences of the merger

Subject to the assumptions and limitations discussed below, the following discussion sets forth the material U.S. federal income tax consequences of the merger to CFS stockholders who are U.S. holders (as defined below) of CFS common stock (including those U.S. holders whose CFS preferred stock is converted into CFS common stock immediately before the merger). This discussion is based on the Internal Revenue Code (the Code) and the related tax regulations issued by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, or Treasury Regulations, administrative interpretations and court decisions in effect as of the date of this proxy statement/prospectus, all of which are subject to change, possibly with retroactive effect. Any change could affect the accuracy of the statements and the conclusions discussed below and the tax consequences of the merger. This discussion does not address all issues that may be applicable to holders who acquired shares of CFS common stock pursuant to the exercise of options or otherwise as compensation. Furthermore, this discussion does not address any alternative minimum tax or any state, local or foreign tax considerations. **We urge you to consult your own tax advisor as to the specific tax consequences of the merger, including the applicable federal, state, local and foreign tax consequences to you of the merger.**

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For purposes of this discussion, a U.S. holder is a beneficial owner of CFS common stock who for U.S. federal income tax purposes is:

- a citizen or resident of the U.S.;

- a corporation, or an entity treated as a corporation, created or organized in or under the laws of the U.S. or any state or political subdivision thereof and taxed under Subchapter C of the Code;

- a trust that (1) is subject to (A) the primary supervision of a court within the U.S. and (B) the authority of one or more U.S. persons to control all substantial decisions of the trust or (2) has a valid election in effect under applicable Treasury Regulations to be treated as a U.S. person; or

- an estate that is subject to U.S. federal income tax on its income regardless of its source.

If a corporation taxed under Subchapter S of the Code, referred to as an S corporation, or a partnership (including for this purpose any entity treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes) holds CFS common stock, the tax treatment of a shareholder or partner generally will depend on the status of the shareholder or partner and the activities of the S corporation or partnership. If you are a shareholder of an S corporation or partner of a partnership holding CFS common stock, you should consult your tax advisor.

This discussion addresses only those CFS stockholders that hold their CFS common stock as a capital asset within the meaning of Section 1221 of the Code, and does not address all the U.S. federal income tax consequences that may be relevant to particular CFS stockholders in light of their individual circumstances or to CFS stockholders that are subject to special rules, such as:

- financial institutions;

- pass-through entities or investors in pass-through entities;

- persons who are subject to the alternative minimum tax;

- insurance companies;

- tax-exempt organizations;
- dealers in securities;
- traders in securities that elect to use a mark-to-market method of accounting;
- persons who exercise and perfect appraisal rights;
- persons who hold CFS common stock as part of a straddle, hedge, appreciated financial position, synthetic security, constructive sale, conversion transaction or other integrated investment or risk reduction transaction;
- certain expatriates or persons that have a functional currency other than the U.S. dollar;
- regulated investment companies;
- persons who are not U.S. holders; and
- stockholders who acquired their shares of CFS common stock through the exercise of an employee stock option or otherwise as compensation or through a tax-qualified retirement plan.

In addition, the discussion does not address any alternative minimum tax consequences nor does it address any state, local or foreign tax consequences of the merger.

The following discussion is based on the Code, its legislative history, existing and proposed regulations thereunder and published rulings and decisions, all as currently in effect as of the date hereof, and all of which are subject to change, possibly with retroactive effect. Any such change could affect the continuing validity of this discussion.

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Wintrust and CFS have structured the merger to qualify as a reorganization within the meaning of Section 368(a) of the Code. The obligation of CFS to complete the merger is conditioned upon the receipt of an opinion from Godfrey & Kahn, counsel to CFS, to the effect that the merger will constitute a reorganization within the meaning of Section 368(a) of the Code and that no gain or loss will be recognized by the holders of shares of CFS common stock upon the receipt of shares of Wintrust common stock in exchange for their shares of CFS common stock, except to the extent of any cash consideration received in the merger and any cash received instead of fractional shares of Wintrust common stock. This opinion will be based on the facts, representations, covenants and assumptions set forth in such opinion that are consistent with the state of facts existing as of the closing date of the merger. The accuracy of such facts, representations and assumptions, and the parties' compliance with such covenants, could affect the conclusions set forth in such opinion. This opinion is not binding on the Internal Revenue Service or the courts. Wintrust and CFS have not requested and do not intend to request any ruling from the Internal Revenue Service as to the U.S. federal income tax consequences of the merger. Accordingly, each CFS stockholder should consult its tax advisor with respect to the particular tax consequences of the merger to such holder.

Material U.S. Federal Tax Consequences of the Merger Generally to U.S. Holders of CFS Common Stock. On the basis of the opinion delivered in connection herewith, and subject to the limitations and assumptions described therein:

- gain (but not loss) will be recognized by the U.S. holders in an amount equal to the lesser of (1) the amount by which the sum of the fair market value of the Wintrust common stock and cash received by a U.S. holder of CFS common stock exceeds such holder's cost basis in its CFS common stock, and (2) the amount of cash received by such holder of CFS common stock (except with respect to any cash received instead of fractional share interests in Wintrust common stock, as discussed in the section entitled "Cash Received Instead of a Fractional Share of Wintrust Common Stock");
- the aggregate basis of the Wintrust common stock received in the merger will be the same as the aggregate basis of the CFS common stock for which it is exchanged, decreased by the amount of cash received in the merger (except with respect to any cash received instead of fractional share interests in Wintrust common stock), decreased by any basis attributable to fractional share interests in Wintrust common stock for which cash is received, and increased by the amount of gain recognized on the exchange (regardless of whether such gain is classified as capital gain, or as dividend income, as discussed below, but excluding any gain or loss recognized with respect to fractional share interests in Wintrust common stock for which cash is received); and
- the holding period of Wintrust common stock received in exchange for shares of CFS common stock will include the holding period of the CFS common stock for which it is exchanged.

If U.S. holders of CFS common stock acquired different blocks of CFS common stock at different times or at different prices, any gain or loss will be determined separately with respect to each block of CFS common stock and such holders' basis and holding periods in their shares of Wintrust common stock will be determined with reference to each block of CFS common stock. Any such holders should consult their tax advisors regarding the manner in which cash and Wintrust common stock received in the exchange should be allocated among different blocks of CFS common stock and with respect to identifying the bases or holding periods of the particular shares of Wintrust common stock received in the merger.

Gain that U.S. holders of CFS common stock recognize in connection with the merger generally will constitute capital gain and will constitute long-term capital gain if such holders have held (or are treated as having held) their CFS common stock for more than one year as of the date of the merger. Long-term capital gain of non-corporate U.S. holders of CFS common stock is generally taxed at preferential rates. In some cases,

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if a U.S. holder actually or constructively owns Wintrust stock other than Wintrust stock received pursuant to the merger, the recognized gain could be treated as having the effect of a distribution of a dividend under the tests set forth in Section 302 of the Code, in which case such gain would be treated as dividend income to the extent of such holder's ratable share of undistributed earnings and profits. Because the possibility of dividend treatment depends primarily upon each holder's particular circumstances, including the application of the constructive ownership rules, holders of CFS common stock should consult their tax advisors regarding the application of the foregoing rules to their particular circumstances.

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Cash Received Instead of a Fractional Share of Wintrust Common Stock. A holder of CFS common stock who receives cash instead of a fractional share of Wintrust common stock will generally be treated as having received the fractional share pursuant to the merger and then as having sold that fractional share of Wintrust common stock for cash. As a result, a holder of CFS common stock will generally recognize gain or loss equal to the difference between the amount of cash received and the basis in its fractional share interest as set forth above. Except as described above, this gain or loss will generally be capital gain or loss, and will be long-term capital gain or loss if, as of the effective date of the merger, the holding period for such fractional share is greater than one year. The deductibility of capital losses is subject to limitations.

Medicare Tax. A U.S. holder of CFS common stock who is an individual is generally subject to a 3.8% tax on the lesser of: (i) his or her net investment income, as defined in Section 1411 of the Code, for the relevant taxable year; or (ii) the excess of his or her modified adjusted gross income for the taxable year over a certain threshold (between \$125,000 and \$250,000 depending on the individual's U.S. federal income tax filing status). A similar regime applies to estates and trusts. Net investment income generally includes any gain recognized in connection with the merger (including any gain that is capital gain or that is treated as a dividend).

Backup Withholding and Information Reporting. Payments of cash to a U.S. holder of CFS common stock may, under certain circumstances, be subject to information reporting and backup withholding, unless such holder provides proof of an applicable exemption satisfactory to Wintrust and the exchange agent or furnishes its taxpayer identification number, and otherwise complies with all applicable requirements of the backup withholding rules. Any amounts withheld from payments to a U.S. holder under the backup withholding rules are not additional tax and will be allowed as a refund or credit against the holder's U.S. federal income tax liability, provided the required information is furnished to the Internal Revenue Service.

Information Reporting by Significant Shareholders. A U.S. holder of CFS common stock who receives Wintrust common stock as a result of the merger will be required to retain records pertaining to the merger. Each U.S. holder of CFS common stock who is required to file a U.S. federal income tax return and who is a significant holder that receives Wintrust common stock in the merger will be required to file a statement with such U.S. federal income tax return in accordance with Section 1.368-3 of the Treasury Regulations setting forth such holder's basis in the CFS common stock surrendered and the fair market value of the Wintrust common stock and cash received in the merger. A significant holder is a holder of CFS common stock who, immediately before the merger, owned at least 1% of the outstanding stock of CFS or securities of CFS with a basis for federal income taxes of at least \$1 million.

The discussion set forth above does not address all U.S. federal income tax consequences that may be relevant to U.S. holders of CFS common stock and may not be applicable to such holders that are subject to special rules. It is not a complete analysis or discussion of all potential tax effects that may be important to you. Thus, you are strongly encouraged to consult your tax advisor as to the specific tax consequences resulting from the merger, including tax return reporting requirements, the applicability and effect of federal, state, local, and other tax laws and the effect of any proposed changes in the tax laws.

Regulatory approvals

The merger cannot proceed without obtaining all requisite regulatory approvals. Wintrust and CFS have agreed to take all appropriate actions necessary to obtain the required approvals.

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The merger of Wintrust and CFS is subject to prior approval of the Federal Reserve. Wintrust submitted an application with the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago on March 18, 2015 seeking the necessary approvals.

The merger may not be consummated until 15 days after receipt of Federal Reserve approval, during which time the United States Department of Justice may challenge the merger on antitrust grounds. The commencement of an antitrust action would stay the effectiveness of the Federal Reserve's approval, unless a court specifically orders otherwise.

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Interests of certain persons in the merger

General. Members of the board of directors and executive officers of CFS and the Bank may have interests in the merger that are different from, or are in addition to, the interests of CFS shareholders generally. The CFS board of directors was aware of these interests and considered them, among other matters, in approving the merger agreement and determining to recommend to CFS stockholders to vote for adoption of the merger agreement. As of March 31, 2015, CFS's directors and executive officers owned, in the aggregate, 845,419 shares of CFS common stock, representing approximately 7.8% of CFS's outstanding shares of common stock; 22,000 Series C Preferred Shares, representing approximately 18.4% of CFS's outstanding Series C Preferred Shares; 0 shares of Series D Preferred Shares; and 0 shares of the Series E Preferred Shares.

Change of Control Agreements. The Bank has previously entered into change of control agreements with Donald Wilson, Douglas Howe, Christopher Barton, Jeffrey Vock, and Eric Wedeen.

Change of Control Agreements for Messrs. Wilson and Howe. The change of control agreements for Messrs. Wilson and Howe each provide that if, within one year following a change of control of CFS or the Bank (as defined in the change of control agreements), (i) the Bank terminates the executive's employment other than for cause (as defined in the change of control agreements), death or disability or (ii) the executive terminates his employment as a result of (1) a material reduction in the executive's base salary or incentive compensation opportunity, (2) a material reduction in the executive's authority, duties or responsibilities with the Bank, (3) a requirement to be based at any office location more than 50 miles from the location where the executive was principally employed immediately preceding a change of control, or (4) a material breach by the Bank or its successor or assign, of the executive's change of control agreement, then the Bank shall make a lump sum cash payment to the executive within 60 days of his termination of employment equal to 12 months of the greater of (i) the executive's monthly base salary as of the date of termination or (ii) the executive's monthly base salary on the date the change of control of the Bank occurs. In addition, each executive will generally be entitled to receive all amounts or benefits to which he is entitled prior to his date of termination under any plan, program, policy, practice, contract or agreement of the Bank. The payment of such severance benefit to an executive will be contingent upon the executive's execution of a waiver and release of claims to the Bank within 30 days of his termination date and will be subject to certain excise tax limitations and the provisions of Section 409A of the Code.

Change of Control Agreements for Messrs. Barton, Vock, and Wedeen. The change of control agreements for Messrs. Barton, Vock, and Wedeen provide for benefits to be provided by the Bank to the executive officers upon the occurrence of certain events within 18 months after a change of control of CFS or the Bank. Each such letter agreement provides for the payment of severance benefits, if, at any time within 18 months following a change of control, the officer's employment is terminated as a result of (i) his disability, death or retirement pursuant to any retirement plan or policy of the Bank of general application to key employees; (ii) the essential elements of the officer's position being materially reduced without good cause, each without the officer's voluntary consent; (iii) a material reduction in the officer's aggregate compensation, not related to or resulting from documented, diminished performance; or (iv) the officer being required to regularly perform services at a location which is greater than 50 miles from his principal office at the time of the change of control.

The severance benefits to be provided under the agreements with Messrs. Barton, Vock, and Wedeen are an immediate lump-sum cash payment equal to nine months of the terminated executive's current annual salary, and continued medical and life insurance coverage to the officer and his family for a maximum of nine months.

Change of Control Payments to Executives

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| Executive | Cash (1) | Equity(2) | Perquisites/ Benefits(3) | Total |
|--|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Donald H. Wilson <i>President & Chief Executive Officer</i> | \$ 250,000 | \$ 0 | \$ 0 | \$ 250,000 |
| Douglas Howe <i>Executive Vice President</i> | \$ 125,000 | \$ 0 | \$ 0 | \$ 125,000 |
| Eric J. Wedeen <i>Chief Financial Officer</i> | \$ 89,606 | \$ 100 | \$ 12,389 | \$ 102,095 |
| Jeffrey A. Vock <i>Vice President, Assistant Secretary</i> | \$ 114,660 | \$ 100 | \$ 8,629 | \$ 123,389 |
| Christopher P. Barton <i>Vice President & Secretary</i> | \$ 106,675 | \$ 0 | \$ 8,629 | \$ 115,304 |

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(1) All amounts reflected in the column are lump sum cash severance payments and double trigger in nature, namely, eligibility to receive this payment is conditioned on the occurrence of a change of control and the officer's qualifying termination of employment within a certain time period following the change of control. To be eligible for the payment, Messrs. Wilson and Howe must have a qualifying termination of employment within 12 months following the change of control, and Messrs. Wedeen, Vock, and Barton must have a qualifying termination of employment within 18 months following the change of control.

(2) All amounts reflected in this column are single trigger in nature, namely, eligibility to receive this payment is conditioned solely on the occurrence of a change of control. Specifically, amounts in this column are related to the consideration paid for the cancellation of underwater stock options held by each officer.

(3) All amounts reflected in the column reflect the value of continuing medical and life insurance and are double trigger in nature. Only Messrs. Wedeen, Vock, and Barton are eligible for such payments and must have a qualifying termination of employment within 18 months following the change of control.

Continued Director and Officer Liability Coverage. Pursuant to the terms of the merger agreement, Wintrust has agreed to provide to each person who serves as a director or officer of CFS or its subsidiaries after the effective time substantially the same insurance coverage against personal liability for actions taken after the effective time as is provided to other directors and officers of Wintrust and its subsidiary banks. In addition, Wintrust agreed to pay for insurance coverage for up to six years following the effective time under a policy of directors' and officers' liability and other professional insurance for actions taken on or prior to the effective time of the merger, so long as the premium or premiums of such policy do not exceed \$200,000. If such coverage cannot be purchased for \$200,000 or less, CFS and its subsidiaries will obtain as much comparable insurance as is available for \$200,000. If the insurer declines to provide the policy prior to the closing date, or after the effective time terminates the policy, CFS (if prior to the closing date) or Wintrust (if after the effective time) must obtain the best coverage available, as determined in the reasonable judgment of CFS or Wintrust, as applicable.

Director Deferred Compensation. Certain of the current members of the Bank have entered into a Directors Deferred Compensation Agreement, pursuant to which fees payable to an individual for his service as a director, including but not limited to annual fees, meeting fees, and committee fees, may be deferred. Commencing on the first day of the calendar month following the director's Separation from Service (within the meaning of Section 409A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended), the amounts attributable to the director's deferred account shall be paid in accordance with their distribution elections. Upon Separation from Service in connection with the merger, directors Dr. Penny Belke and Dr. Ray Dieter will begin receiving payouts of deferred compensation pursuant to their Directors Deferred Compensation Agreements. As of February 28, 2015, their accrued balances of deferred compensation plus interest earned were \$115,460 and \$272,079, respectively, and their monthly payouts will be approximately \$1,924 (monthly for five years) and \$6,802 (quarterly for ten years), respectively.

Director Retirement Plan. Directors of the Bank have accrued amounts under the Director's Retirement Plan. Although the plan was discontinued as of November 21, 2013, and the accrual of benefits terminated as of November 30, 2013, vesting of previously accrued benefits continues to occur based on years of board service. However, upon a change in control all amounts accrued under the plan will automatically vest.

Payment of the benefits under the plan after a change in control will be made in accordance with each director's prior valid election either (i) in a lump sum as soon as practicable following the change in control or 120 equal monthly installments on the first day of each month commencing with the month following the change of control or (ii) for directors who did not make an election to be paid upon a change of control, in a lump sum or 120 monthly equal installments following the director's separation from service. If a director has elected a lump sum

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payment, the monthly installments shall be discounted to the lump sum payment date, using a discount rate at 6%, to determine the amount of the lump sum payment. If the value of a director's vested benefit under the plan is \$10,000 or less, the benefit will automatically be paid in a lump sum as soon as practicable following the change in control or separation from service.

Upon a change of control, directors Dr. Penny Belke, Dr. Ray Dieter, Ms. Mary Beth Moran, and Mr. John Mulherin would be owed \$46,800, \$78,000, \$46,800, and \$78,000, respectively, or the present value equivalents of such amounts, under the plan.

Options. Pursuant to the terms of the merger agreement, each option granted by the Company under the terms of the Community Financial Shares, Inc. Non-Qualified Stock Option Plan, as amended, to purchase CFS common stock that is outstanding and unexercised as of the date of the merger agreement was terminated and cancelled and redeemed by CFS. Upon Messrs. Wedeen's and Vock's execution of an option termination agreement, CFS paid a total consideration of \$100 each to Mr. Weeden and Mr. Vock for the cancellation of all options they hold.

Voting agreement

All of the directors and officers of CFS and certain other stockholders of CFS entered into a voting agreement with Wintrust. Under this agreement, these stockholders have each agreed to vote their respective shares of CFS stock:

- in favor of the merger agreement and the transactions contemplated thereby;
- in favor of the approval of any proposal to adjourn or postpone the meeting to a later date, if requested by Wintrust or Merger Co.;
- against any action, proposal, transaction or agreement that would result in a breach of any term or obligation of CFS under the merger agreement;
- against any action or agreement that would impede, interfere with, prevent or attempt to discourage the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement;
- against any other proposed transaction or series of transactions involving or affecting CFS or the Bank (or the securities or assets of either) that, if effected, would constitute an acquisition of control of either CFS or the Bank, which we refer to as a takeover proposal; and
- in favor of any other matter necessary for the consummation of the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement.

Furthermore, each of these stockholders has also agreed not to transfer or otherwise dispose of, or enter into any derivatives arrangement with respect to, any shares of CFS stock that they own, grant any proxies, deposit any shares of CFS stock into a voting trust or enter into any other voting agreement with respect to any shares of CFS stock that they own, create or permit to exist any encumbrance on any shares of CFS that they own, take or permit any other action that would in any way restrict, limit or interfere with the performance of their obligations under the voting agreement or the transactions contemplated by the voting agreement or otherwise make any of their representations or warranties in the voting agreement untrue or incorrect in any material respect or, without the prior approval of Wintrust, directly or indirectly solicit, initiate, encourage or facilitate any takeover proposal, or enter into an agreement with respect to, or initiate or participate in any negotiations or discussions concerning any takeover proposal or furnish any information to any person proposing or seeking any takeover proposal. The shares subject to the voting agreement represent approximately 10.7% of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock, 31.5% of the outstanding voting securities, 50.1% of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares, 89.1% of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares and 0% of the outstanding Series E Preferred Shares, each as of April 28, 2015. The voting agreement will terminate upon the earlier of the effective time of the merger or termination of the merger agreement in accordance with its terms.

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Resale of Wintrust common stock

The shares of Wintrust common stock to be issued in connection with the merger will be registered under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, which we refer to as the Securities Act, and will be freely transferable, except for shares issued to any shareholder who may be deemed to be an affiliate of Wintrust for purposes of Rule 144 under the Securities Act. Persons who may be deemed to be affiliates of Wintrust include individuals or entities that control, are controlled by, or are under common control with, Wintrust and may include the executive officers, directors and significant shareholders of Wintrust.

CFS stockholder appraisal rights

In connection with the merger, record holders of CFS common stock, including former holders of CFS preferred stock whose shares were converted into CFS common stock immediately prior to the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion, shall be entitled to appraisal rights under the Maryland General Corporation Law, which we refer to as the MGCL. The preservation and exercise of appraisal rights are conditioned on strict adherence to the applicable provisions of the MGCL. Each stockholder desiring to exercise appraisal rights should refer to Title 3, Subtitle 2 of the MGCL, a copy of which is attached as *Annex E* to this proxy statement/prospectus, for a complete statement of their rights and the steps which must be followed in connection with the exercise of those rights. *The following summary of the rights of objecting stockholders does not purport to be a complete statement of the procedures to be followed by stockholders of CFS desiring to exercise and perfect their appraisal rights.*

Under the MGCL, a stockholder of CFS will be entitled to demand and receive payment of the fair value of its shares of common stock from CFS instead of receiving the merger consideration. However, a stockholder who wants to receive fair value for its shares must follow specific procedures. Such stockholder must:

- (a) before or at the meeting at which the merger will be considered, file with CFS a written objection to the merger;
- (b) not vote in favor of the merger; and
- (c) make written demand on Wintrust, within 20 days after the articles of merger relating to the merger, which we refer to as the articles of merger, have been accepted for record by the State Department of Assessments and Taxation of Maryland, which we refer to as the SDAT, for payment for the stockholder's stock, stating the number and class of shares for which the stockholder demands payment.

Any stockholder who fails to comply with the requirements described above will be bound by the terms of the merger.

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A stockholder demanding payment for shares has no right to receive any dividends or distributions payable to stockholders of record after the close of business on the date of the stockholders' vote on the merger and shall cease to have any right as a stockholder with respect to such shares, except the right to receive payment of the fair value thereof.

A demand for payment may be withdrawn only with the consent of Wintrust. The rights of a stockholder who demands payment are restored in full, if (i) the demand for payment is withdrawn, (ii) a petition for an appraisal is not filed within the time required by the MGCL, (iii) a court determines that the stockholder is not entitled to relief or (iv) the transaction objected to is abandoned or rescinded. The restoration of a stockholder's rights entitles the stockholder to receive the dividends, distributions and other rights the stockholder would have received if the demand for payment had not been made. However, the restoration does not prejudice any corporate proceedings taken before the restoration.

Wintrust is required to promptly notify each objecting stockholder in writing of the date of acceptance of the articles of merger for record by the SDAT. Wintrust may send a written offer to each objecting stockholder to pay for its shares at what Wintrust considers to be the fair value thereof. Within 50 days after the SDAT accepts the

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articles of merger for record, either Wintrust or any objecting stockholder who has not received payment for its shares may petition a court of equity in the appropriate county in Maryland for an appraisal to determine the fair value of the shares.

Wintrust does not presently intend to file an appraisal petition and stockholders seeking to exercise and perfect appraisal rights should not assume that Wintrust will file such a petition or that Wintrust will initiate any negotiations with respect to the fair value of such shares. Accordingly, stockholders of CFS who desire to have their shares appraised should initiate any petitions necessary for the perfection of their appraisal rights within the time periods and in the manner prescribed in the MGCL.

If the court finds that an objecting stockholder is entitled to an appraisal of its shares, the court is required to appoint three disinterested appraisers to determine the fair value of the shares on terms and conditions the court determines proper. The appraisers must, within 60 days after appointment (or such longer period as the court may direct), file with the court and mail to each party to the proceeding their report stating their conclusion as to the fair value of such shares. Fair value is determined as of the close of business on the day the stockholders vote on the merger and may not include any appreciation or depreciation which directly or indirectly results from the merger or from its proposal.

Within 15 days after the filing of the report, any party may object to such report and request a hearing on it. The court must, upon motion of any party, enter an order either confirming, modifying or rejecting such report and, if confirmed or modified, enter judgment for the appraised value of the shares. If the appraisers' report is rejected, the court may determine the fair value of the shares of common stock of the objecting stockholders or may remit the proceeding to the same or other appraisers. Any judgment entered pursuant to a court proceeding shall include interest from the date of the stockholders' vote on the action to which objection was made. Costs of the proceeding shall be determined by the court and may be assessed against Wintrust or, under certain circumstances, the objecting stockholder, or both.

At any time after the filing of a petition for appraisal, the court may require objecting stockholders to submit their certificates representing the shares to the clerk of the court for notation of the pendency of the appraisal proceeding.

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THE MERGER AGREEMENT

The following is a summary of the material terms of the merger agreement. This summary does not purport to describe all the terms of the merger agreement and is qualified by reference to the complete text of the merger agreement which is attached as Annex A to this proxy statement/prospectus and is incorporated by reference into this proxy statement/prospectus. You should read the merger agreement completely and carefully as it, rather than this description, is the legal document that governs the merger.

The text of the merger agreement has been included to provide you with information regarding its terms. The terms of the merger agreement (such as the representations and warranties) are intended to govern the contractual rights and relationships, and allocate risks, between the parties in relation to the merger. The merger agreement contains representations and warranties Wintrust and CFS made to each other as of specific dates. The representations and warranties were negotiated between the parties with the principal purpose of setting forth their respective rights with respect to their obligations to complete the merger. The statements embodied in those representations and warranties may be subject to important limitations and qualifications as set forth therein, including a contractual standard of materiality different from that generally applicable under federal securities laws.

General

The merger agreement provides for the merger of CFS with and into Merger Co., with Merger Co. continuing as the surviving corporation. After the consummation of the merger, Merger Co. will continue to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wintrust.

Closing and effective time

Closing. The closing of the merger will take place on the fifth business day following the satisfaction of the conditions to closing set forth in the merger agreement, or on another date that both parties mutually agree upon. This date is sometimes referred to in this proxy statement/prospectus as the closing date. See Conditions to completion of the merger below for a more complete description of the conditions that must be satisfied prior to closing.

Completion of the merger. The merger will become effective on the date and time at which the articles of merger have both been filed with and accepted for record by the Secretary of State of the State of Illinois, which we refer to as the IL SOS, and SDAT, or at such other date and time as is agreed among the parties and specified in the articles of merger, provided that such date and time does not exceed 30 days from the date the articles of merger are accepted for record by each of the IL SOS and the SDAT. The time at which the merger becomes effective is sometimes referred to in this proxy statement/prospectus as the effective time.

Consideration to be received in the merger

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CFS common stock. If the merger is completed, the shares of CFS common stock which you own immediately before the completion of the merger (including shares of common stock issuable upon conversion of the CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) will be converted into the right to receive cash and shares of Wintrust common stock, subject in each case to the adjustment procedures described below under Adjustment to merger consideration. The aggregate merger consideration to be paid by Wintrust to CFS stockholders is expected to be approximately \$42,375,000, subject to possible downward adjustment as described below. Assuming that the reference price as described below is between \$42.50 and \$52.50, approximately 50% of the aggregate merger consideration will be paid in shares of Wintrust common stock and approximately 50% will be paid in cash.

Assuming no adjustment to the merger consideration and that the currently outstanding 10,781,988 shares of CFS common stock and 191,246 shares of CFS preferred stock remain unchanged at the closing, based on a reference price of \$, which is equal to the reference price if it were calculated as of , 2015, the latest practicable date prior to the date of this proxy statement/prospectus, the merger consideration that a CFS stockholder

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(including holders of CFS preferred stock converted into CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) would be entitled to receive for each share of CFS common stock would be \$ in cash and shares of Wintrust common stock. In each case assuming no adjustment to the merger consideration and that the currently outstanding 10,781,988 shares of CFS common stock and 191,246 shares of CFS preferred stock remain unchanged at the closing, if the reference price were equal to the minimum of \$42.50, each share of CFS common stock (including shares of common stock issuable upon conversion of the preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) would be converted into the right to receive \$0.71 in cash and 0.017 shares of Wintrust common stock, and if the reference price were equal to the maximum of \$52.50, each share of CFS common stock (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of the CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) would be entitled to receive \$0.71 in cash and 0.013 shares of Wintrust common stock. Assuming no adjustment to the merger consideration and assuming that the reference price is between \$42.50 and \$52.50, we estimate that Wintrust may issue up to 498,530 shares of Wintrust common stock to CFS stockholders as contemplated by the merger agreement.

Cash consideration. Subject to possible downward adjustment, for each share of CFS common stock outstanding immediately prior to the effective time, you will be entitled to receive cash equal to (i) the product obtained by multiplying (a) \$42,375,000 by (b) 0.5, with the resultant amount divided by (ii) the number of shares of CFS common stock issued and outstanding immediately prior to the effective time, rounded to the nearest \$0.01, which we refer to as the per share cash consideration.

Stock consideration. Subject to possible downward adjustment, for each share of CFS common stock outstanding immediately prior to the effective time, you will be entitled to receive a number of shares of Wintrust common stock equal to (i) the quotient obtained by dividing (a) the aggregate share amount (as defined below) by (b) the number of shares of CFS common stock issued and outstanding immediately prior to the effective time of the merger, multiplied by (ii) 0.5, such product rounded to the nearest thousandth of a share (0.001), which we refer to as the per share stock consideration.

The merger agreement provides that the aggregate share amount will be determined as follows:

If the reference price is at least \$42.50 and no more than \$52.50, the aggregate share amount will be the number of shares of Wintrust common stock equal to the quotient (rounded up to the nearest whole share) obtained by dividing (i) \$42,375,000 by (ii) the reference price;

- if the reference price is less than \$42.50, the aggregate share amount will be 997,059 shares of Wintrust common stock (the number of shares determined by dividing \$42,375,000 by \$42.50, rounded up to the nearest whole share); and
- if the reference price is greater than \$52.50, the aggregate share amount will be 807,143 shares of Wintrust common stock (the number of shares determined by dividing \$42,375,000 by \$52.50, rounded up to the nearest whole share).

CFS may terminate the merger agreement if the reference price is less than \$39.50 and Wintrust may terminate the merger agreement if the reference price is more than \$55.50, in each case if CFS and Wintrust are in good faith unable, after five business days' notice of such termination, to reach agreement as to an amendment to the merger agreement containing terms acceptable to Wintrust and CFS so that the merger and the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement may be effected.

The following table illustrates the per share value of merger consideration that CFS stockholders will receive in the merger based on a range of reference prices, assuming the currently outstanding 10,781,988 shares of CFS common stock and 191,246 shares of CFS preferred stock remain unchanged immediately prior to the effective time of the merger. The table is for illustrative purposes only. The mathematical average, calculated for the ten trading day period ending on the second trading day preceding the closing date, which were refer to as the reference period, of the volume-weighted average price of a share of Wintrust common stock for each trading day during the reference period as displayed under the heading "Bloomberg VWAP" on the Bloomberg page for Wintrust will establish the actual reference price and therefore the actual aggregate share amount and merger consideration. The

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table assumes the closing price of Wintrust's common stock on the date of the merger is the same as the reference price during the reference period. The actual trading price of Wintrust common stock is subject to market fluctuations, and CFS stockholders will not be entitled to receive additional shares in the merger if the trading price of Wintrust's common stock on the closing date is less than the average during the reference period nor will they receive fewer shares in the merger if the trading price of Wintrust's common stock on the closing date is greater than the average during the reference period.

Per Share Merger Consideration

| Reference price | Per Share Cash Consideration | Per Share Stock Consideration(1) | Total Per Share Consideration |
|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| \$ 39.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.67 | \$ 1.38 |
| \$ 40.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.68 | \$ 1.39 |
| \$ 40.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.69 | \$ 1.40 |
| \$ 41.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.70 | \$ 1.41 |
| \$ 41.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 1.42 |
| \$ 42.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 1.42 |
| \$ 42.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.72 | \$ 1.43 |
| \$ 43.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.69 | \$ 1.40 |
| \$ 43.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.70 | \$ 1.41 |
| \$ 44.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.70 | \$ 1.41 |
| \$ 44.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 1.42 |
| \$ 45.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.72 | \$ 1.43 |
| \$ 45.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.73 | \$ 1.44 |
| \$ 46.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.69 | \$ 1.40 |
| \$ 46.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.70 | \$ 1.41 |
| \$ 47.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 1.42 |
| \$ 47.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 1.42 |
| \$ 48.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.72 | \$ 1.43 |
| \$ 48.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.73 | \$ 1.44 |
| \$ 49.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.69 | \$ 1.40 |
| \$ 49.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.69 | \$ 1.40 |
| \$ 50.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.70 | \$ 1.41 |
| \$ 50.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 1.42 |
| \$ 51.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 1.42 |
| \$ 51.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.72 | \$ 1.43 |
| \$ 52.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.73 | \$ 1.44 |
| \$ 52.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.68 | \$ 1.39 |
| \$ 53.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.69 | \$ 1.40 |
| \$ 53.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.70 | \$ 1.41 |
| \$ 54.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.70 | \$ 1.41 |
| \$ 54.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 1.42 |
| \$ 55.00 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.72 | \$ 1.43 |
| \$ 55.50 | \$ 0.71 | \$ 0.72 | \$ 1.43 |

(1) The numbers in this column represent the value of the shares of Wintrust common stock which you will receive for each share of CFS common stock that you own, subject to the assumption that the closing price of Wintrust's common stock on the date of the merger is the same as the reference price during the reference period.

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Adjustment to merger consideration. Five business days prior to the closing date, CFS will deliver to Wintrust balance sheets, which we refer to as the closing balance sheets, for CFS and each of its subsidiaries as of the closing date reflecting CFS's good faith estimate of the accounts of CFS and its subsidiaries. The closing

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balance sheets will be prepared in conformity with past practices and policies of CFS and its subsidiaries and in accordance with GAAP, subject to adjustment to reflect that (i) the outstanding indebtedness of CFS does not exceed \$3,609,000, which indebtedness will be assumed by Wintrust, and (ii) the Bank's reserve for loan losses at not less than 1.25% of its net loans. If the closing balance sheets reflect that CFS stockholders' equity, as determined pursuant to the merger agreement, is less than the \$28,250,000, then, subject to CFS's termination right described below under Termination, the merger consideration will be reduced dollar-for-dollar by an amount equal to such shortfall. Any such reduction will be allocated equally to the cash and stock portions of the per share merger consideration.

Fractional shares

No fractional shares of Wintrust common stock will be issued in the merger. Instead, Wintrust will pay to each holder of CFS common stock issued and outstanding immediately prior to the effective time who would otherwise be entitled to a fractional share of Wintrust common stock an amount in cash (without interest) rounded to the nearest whole cent, determined by multiplying the reference price by the fractional share of Wintrust common stock to which such CFS stockholder would otherwise be entitled.

Treatment of CFS options

Pursuant to the merger agreement, in April 2015, each outstanding and unexercised option to acquire a share of CFS common stock, which we refer to as a CFS option, was terminated and cancelled and redeemed by CFS, and no per share merger consideration will be exchanged therefor. CFS will grant no further options or purchase rights of any kind under CFS option plan, which CFS will terminate as of the effective time.

Exchange of certificates

The conversion of the shares of CFS common stock (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) into the right to receive the merger consideration will occur automatically at the effective time of the merger. Wintrust has engaged American Stock Transfer & Trust Company, LLC, which we refer to as the exchange agent, to act as its exchange agent to handle the exchange of CFS common stock for the merger consideration and the payment of cash for the cash portion of the merger agreement and any fractional share interest.

At or prior to the effective time of the merger, Wintrust will authorize the issuance of and deposit with or make available to the exchange agent, for the benefit of the holders of shares of CFS common stock (including shares of CFS common stock issuable upon conversion of CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger pursuant to the preferred stock conversion) for exchange, (i) a sufficient number of shares of Wintrust common stock, to be issued by book-entry transfer, for payment of the per share stock consideration, (ii) sufficient cash for payment of the per share cash consideration and (iii) sufficient cash for payment of cash in lieu of any fractional shares of Wintrust common stock. Within three business days after the closing date, the exchange agent will send to each CFS stockholder a letter of transmittal for use in the exchange with instructions explaining how to surrender CFS stock certificates to the exchange agent. CFS stockholders that surrender their certificates to the exchange agent, together with a properly completed letter of transmittal, will receive the merger consideration. Shares of Wintrust common stock representing the stock component of the merger consideration will be issued by book-entry transfer. Upon surrender of each holder's CFS stock certificate, together with a properly completed letter of transmittal, such holder will also receive a check for the cash component of the merger consideration it is entitled to receive. After surrender of the certificates representing shares of CFS stock, any unpaid

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dividends or distributions with respect to the Wintrust common stock represented by the certificates will be paid without interest.

After the effective time of the merger, there will be no transfers on the stock transfer books of CFS of the shares of CFS common stock or CFS preferred stock that were issued and outstanding immediately prior to the effective time. CFS stockholders that do not exchange their CFS stock certificates will not be entitled to receive the merger consideration, any dividends or other distributions by Wintrust or to vote the shares of Wintrust common stock until their certificates are surrendered.

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In the event any lost, stolen or destroyed CFS stock certificate, the exchange agent will issue in exchange for such lost, stolen or destroyed CFS stock certificate and the merger consideration (including cash in lieu of any fractional shares) if the person claiming that such CFS stock certificate was lost, stolen or destroyed (i) makes an affidavit of that fact and (ii) posts a bond in such amount as the exchange agent may determine is reasonably necessary as indemnity against any claim that may be made against it with respect to such CFS stock certificate.

Conduct of business pending the merger

Under the merger agreement, CFS has agreed to certain restrictions on its activities and the activities of its subsidiaries until the merger is completed or the merger agreement is terminated. In general, CFS and its subsidiaries are required to conduct their business in the ordinary course of business, consistent with prudent banking practice.

The following is a summary of the more significant restrictions imposed upon CFS, subject to the exceptions set forth in the merger agreement. CFS will not, and will cause its subsidiaries to not, without Wintrust's prior written consent:

- make changes to the articles of incorporation or by-laws of CFS (except such changes contemplated by the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion contemplated by the merger agreement), the charter or by-laws of the Bank, the certificate of trust or trust agreement of Community Financial Shares Statutory Trust II;
- except with respect to the termination and cancellation of outstanding CFS options contemplated by the merger agreement or the rights of holders of CFS preferred stock to convert such CFS preferred stock into CFS common stock pursuant to the terms of the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion contemplated by the merger agreement, effect any change in the capitalization of CFS or its subsidiaries or the number of issued and outstanding shares of CFS common stock or CFS preferred stock, or in any of the rights set forth in the articles of incorporation (except such changes contemplated by the amendment to the articles of incorporation contemplated by the merger agreement);
- increase the compensation of the officers or key employees of CFS or the Bank or pay any bonuses other than in the ordinary course of business;
- make, renew or restructure any loan in the amount of \$750,000 or more, except as provided for in the merger agreement;
- pay or declare any dividends or other distributions;

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- fail to use commercially reasonable efforts to maintain present insurance coverage in respect of the properties and businesses of CFS and its subsidiaries;
- make significant changes in the general nature of the business conducted by CFS or its subsidiaries;
- except as otherwise set forth in the merger agreement, enter into employment, consulting, or similar agreements that cannot be terminated with 30 days or fewer notice without penalty or obligation, or terminate the employment of any officer of CFS or its subsidiaries without prior notice to Wintrust;
- except as otherwise set forth in the merger agreement, terminate, partially terminate, curtail or discontinue any of its benefit plans or merge any benefit plan into another plan or trust;
- fail to file any tax returns in a timely manner, apply for or consent to an extension of time for filing or any extension of the period of limitations applicable thereto or change accounting methods for income tax purposes;
- make any expenditure for fixed assets in excess of \$50,000 for any single item, or \$200,000 in the aggregate, or enter into any lease for any fixed assets having an annual rental in excess of \$50,000;

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- incur any liabilities or obligations, make any commitments or disbursements, acquire or dispose of any property or asset, make any contract or agreement, or engage in any transaction except in the ordinary course of business consistent with prudent banking practices and the current policies of CFS and its subsidiaries;
- fail to do anything that will cause a breach or default by CFS or its subsidiaries under any material contract;
- engage in or agree to engage in any covered transaction within the meaning of Sections 23A or 23B of the Federal Reserve Act (without regard to the applicability of any exemptions contained in Section 23A) or any affiliate transaction, unless the Bank has complied with Sections 23A and 23B of the Federal Reserve Act;
- purchase or invest in government obligations that have maturities of more than five years and a rating agency rating below A ;
- accept or renew any brokered deposits or incur additional Federal Home Loan Bank advances or other types of ordinary course wholesale funding (except for Federal funds purchased); or
- change of any material nature any accounting procedures, methods, policies or practices or the manners in which CFS or its subsidiaries maintain their respective records.

Certain covenants of CFS and Wintrust

Regulatory filings of Wintrust

Wintrust has agreed to:

- file the Federal Reserve application and take all other appropriate actions appropriate to obtain specified regulatory approvals for the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement, except as set forth in the merger agreement;
- file with the SEC, as soon as reasonably practicable after the execution of the merger agreement, a Registration Statement on Form S-4 under the Securities Act covering the shares of Wintrust common stock to be issued pursuant to the merger, of which this proxy statement/prospectus forms part;

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- use its reasonable and diligent efforts to cause such Registration Statement on Form S-4 to become effective;
- keep such Registration Statement on Form S-4 effective until the effective time or termination of the merger agreement, to, if necessary, to amend and supplement such Registration Statement on Form S-4; and
- as soon as practicable after the execution of the merger agreement, to make all filings, if any, required to obtain all blue sky permits, authorizations, consents or approvals required for the issuance of Wintrust common stock, except that Wintrust will not have an obligation to qualify to do business in any jurisdiction in which it is not already qualified;

CFS has agreed to:

- use all reasonable and diligent efforts to assist in obtaining regulatory approvals sought by Wintrust;
- provide to Wintrust prompt written notice, within one business day, of the occurrence of any event requiring or possibly requiring an amendment or supplement to the registration statement on Form S-4 or this proxy statement/prospectus;
- cooperate in the preparation, filing and dissemination to stockholders of any such amendment or supplement; and

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- use all reasonable and diligent efforts to cause this proxy statement/prospectus to be mailed to CFS stockholders as promptly as practicable after the registration statement on Form S-4 is declared effective under the Securities Act.

Both parties agreed to:

- use all reasonable and diligent efforts to respond as promptly as practicable to any comments of the SEC with respect to the registration statement on Form S-4 and this proxy statement/prospectus;
- notify one another promptly of the receipt of any comments from the SEC or its staff and of any request by the SEC or its staff for amendments or supplements to this proxy statement/prospectus or the registration statement on Form S-4 or for additional information;
- supply one another with copies of all correspondence between such party or any of its representatives, on the one hand, and the SEC or its staff, on the other hand, with respect to this proxy statement/prospectus, the registration statement on Form S-4 or the merger;
- give one another an opportunity to participate in any discussions or meetings such party has with the SEC in connection with this proxy statement/prospectus, the registration statement on Form S-4 or the merger;
- provide one another a reasonable opportunity to review and comment on such document or response, to include all comments reasonably proposed by the other and to refrain from filing or mailing such document or response prior to receiving the approval of the other (such approval not to be unreasonably withheld, conditioned or delayed);
- promptly advise one another of the time of effectiveness of the registration statement on Form S-4, the issuance of any stop order relating thereto or the suspension of the qualification of the Wintrust common stock included in the merger consideration for offering or sale in any jurisdiction; and
- use all reasonable efforts to have any such stop order or suspension lifted, reversed or otherwise terminated.

Other covenants of CFS and Wintrust

Both parties have agreed to the following:

- to use reasonable and diligent good faith efforts to satisfy the conditions required to close the merger and to consummate the merger as soon as practicable;
- that neither will intentionally act in a manner that would cause or intentionally permit a breach of the merger agreement or that would cause a representation made in the merger agreement to become untrue;
- to provide notice to one another of any facts, circumstances or the occurrence or impending occurrence of any event that would cause any of such party's representations and warranties contained in the merger agreement to be or become untrue and to use reasonable and diligent efforts to change such facts or events to make such representations and warranties true; and
- to coordinate publicity of the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement to the media or to CFS stockholders.

CFS has agreed to deliver to Wintrust certain documents before the closing date, including:

- reasonable notice, agenda or business to be discussed, minutes, consents and other materials of any meetings of the boards and committees of CFS or its subsidiaries, except as set forth in the merger agreement;
- the files maintained by the Bank with respect to, and information regarding the status of, the loans in the Bank's loan portfolio;

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- title commitments, surveys, title policies and/or endorsements with respect to each parcel of real property of CFS and its subsidiaries;
- interim financial statements of CFS and its subsidiaries; and
- prompt notice of any written objections or demands for appraisal for any shares of CFS common stock or CFS preferred stock and any other notice given or instrument served relating to the exercise of dissenters' rights.

CFS has also agreed to the following:

- to provide to Wintrust access to further information and to CFS's and the Bank's premises, on the terms and subject to the conditions set forth in the merger agreement;
- to use reasonable and diligent efforts to preserve the reputation and relationship of CFS and its subsidiaries with suppliers, clients, customers, employees and others having business relations with CFS and its subsidiaries;
- as soon as practicable following the effectiveness of the registration statement, to call, give notice of, convene and hold a meeting of its stockholders for the purpose of voting upon the merger agreement, the merger, the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion contemplated by the merger agreement and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement;
- to cause the Bank, prior to closing, to write off all loans that are required to be written off by the Bank's regulators or that, in conformity with past practices and policies of the Bank and general accepted accounting principles, should be written off as loan losses;
- to write down potential loan losses in conformity with past practices and policies of the Bank and general accepted accounting principles;
- to give Wintrust the right to participate in all negotiations and proceedings relating to the exercise of dissenters' rights and to refrain from making any payments with respect to, or settle or offer to settle, any appraisal demands without Wintrust's prior written consent;

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- to give Wintrust the opportunity to participate in the defense or settlement of any stockholder litigation against CFS and its directors relating to the merger or any other transaction contemplated by the merger agreement and to refrain from agreeing to any settlement of any such litigation without the prior written consent of Wintrust;
- cause any dispositions of CFS common stock or CFS preferred stock resulting from the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement by each individual who is subject to the reporting requirements of Section 16(a) of the Exchange Act with respect to CFS to be exempt under Rule 16(b)(3) under the Exchange Act; and
- take certain actions with respect to the enrollment of certain real property of the Bank in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Site Remediation Program.

Wintrust has agreed to execute and deliver, or cause to be executed and delivered, one or more supplemental indentures and other instruments required for the due assumption by Wintrust or its designated affiliate of CFS's outstanding debt, guarantees, securities, and (to the extent necessary) other agreements relating to CFS's trust preferred securities, to the extent required by the terms of such debt, guarantees, securities or other agreements.

The merger agreement also contains certain covenants relating to employee benefits and other matters pertaining to officers and directors. See Employee benefit matters and The Merger Interests of certain persons in the merger.

No solicitation of or discussions relating to a takeover proposal

The merger agreement contains provisions prohibiting CFS from seeking or discussing an alternative takeover proposal to the merger. CFS has agreed to, and to cause each of its representatives to, cease immediately

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and cause to be immediately terminated all soliciting activities, discussions and negotiations and access to nonpublic information with, to or by any person (other than Wintrust or Merger Co.) regarding any proposal that constitutes, or could reasonably be expected to lead to, any takeover proposal. Except as expressly set forth above, CFS will not, and will cause its representatives not to, at any time after the execution of the merger agreement, continue or resume any such soliciting activities, discussions, negotiations or access to nonpublic information with, by or to any person (other than Wintrust and Merger Co.) with which CFS entered into a confidentiality, standstill or similar agreement before the execution and delivery hereof or had discussions or negotiations before the execution and delivery of the merger agreement regarding any proposal that constituted, or could reasonably have been expected to lead to, any takeover proposal (any such persons and their affiliates and representatives being referred to as prior bidders). CFS will promptly request that each prior bidder in possession of nonpublic information that was furnished by or on behalf of CFS or any of its subsidiaries in connection with its consideration of any potential takeover proposal return or destroy all such nonpublic information previously furnished to such prior bidder and immediately terminate all physical and electronic dataroom access previously granted to any such prior bidder.

CFS has agreed that, except as described further below, neither it nor any of its representatives will, directly or indirectly:

- solicit, initiate or encourage, or knowingly facilitate, any inquiries or the making of any proposal or offer that constitutes, or could reasonably be expected to lead to, any takeover proposal;
- enter into any agreement with respect to any takeover proposal; or
- participate in any discussions or negotiations with, or furnish any information (whether orally or in writing) or access to the business, properties, assets, books or records of CFS or its subsidiaries to, or otherwise cooperate with, knowingly assist, or participate in, facilitate or encourage any effort by, any person (or any representative of a person) that has made, is seeking to make, has informed CFS of any intention to make, or has publicly announced an intention to make, any proposal that constitutes, or could reasonably be expected to lead to, any takeover proposal.

Prior to receipt of approval of the requisite stockholder proposals, CFS and its representatives may, if the board determines, in good faith, after consultation with outside counsel, that a failure to do so would be inconsistent with their directors' duties under Maryland law, and subject to CFS's compliance with the restrictions set forth above, in response to a bona fide, written takeover proposal received after the date of the merger agreement that the board determines, in good faith, after consultation with outside counsel and its financial advisors, constitutes or is reasonably capable of resulting in a superior takeover proposal, and so long as such written takeover proposal was not solicited by CFS and did not otherwise result from a breach or a deemed breach of the restrictions set forth above, (i) furnish information with respect to CFS to the person making such takeover proposal and its representatives pursuant to a confidentiality agreement not less restrictive of the other party than the confidentiality agreement between Wintrust and CFS and (ii) participate in discussions and negotiations (including solicitation of a revised takeover proposal) with such person and its representatives regarding such takeover proposal.

CFS has agreed to provide to Wintrust copies of all nonpublic information (to the extent that such nonpublic information has not been previously provided or made available to Wintrust) that is made available to any such third party before or substantially concurrently with the time it is provided or made available to such third party. CFS will not furnish any information or participate in any discussions or negotiations with any person as permitted above unless CFS notifies Wintrust in writing of its intention to take such action, promptly after the CFS board resolves to take such action, which notice will include the identity of such person, a true and complete copy of the most current version of any applicable takeover proposal (including any proposed agreement or other offer documents) and a true and complete copy of the applicable confidentiality

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agreement. CFS will keep Wintrust promptly advised of all material developments (including all changes to the material terms of any takeover proposal), discussions or negotiations regarding any takeover proposal and the status of such takeover proposal.

CFS has agreed to promptly and in any event within one business day will advise Wintrust orally and in writing of any takeover proposal or any inquiry with respect to, or that could reasonably be expected to lead to, any takeover proposal, and the identity of the person making any such takeover proposal or inquiry and the material terms of any such takeover proposal or inquiry. CFS has agreed to (i) keep Wintrust fully informed on a current basis of the status of any such takeover proposal or inquiry, including any change to the material terms thereof and

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(ii) provide to Wintrust promptly and in any event within one business day after receipt or delivery thereof copies of all correspondence and other written material sent or provided to CFS from any third party in connection with any takeover proposal or sent or provided by CFS to any third party in connection with any takeover proposal.

A takeover proposal means any offer or proposal by any person concerning any:

- merger, consolidation, other business combination or similar transaction involving CFS or any of its subsidiaries, pursuant to which such person (or the stockholders of such person) would own 15% or more of the consolidated assets, revenues or net income of CFS;
- sale, lease, license or other disposition directly or indirectly by merger, consolidation, business combination, share exchange, joint venture or otherwise, of assets of CFS or any of its subsidiaries (including equity interests of any of its subsidiaries) representing 15% or more of the consolidated assets, revenues or net income of CFS;
- issuance or sale or other disposition (including by way of merger, consolidation, business combination, share exchange, joint venture or similar transaction) of equity interests representing 15% or more of the outstanding stock of CFS;
- transaction or series of transactions in which any person (or the stockholders of such person) would acquire beneficial ownership or the right to acquire beneficial ownership of equity interests representing 15% or more of the outstanding stock of CFS; or
- any combination of the foregoing.

A superior proposal means a bona fide written takeover proposal (except that references in the definition of takeover proposal to 15% or more will be replaced by 80% or more), on its most recently amended or modified terms, if amended or modified, received by CFS on or after the date of the merger agreement, for which any necessary financing is committed and that CFS board determines in good faith (after consultation with its outside legal counsel and its independent financial advisor) to be:

- more favorable to the holders of CFS common stock and CFS preferred stock than the merger and the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement (taking into account the likelihood of effecting the transaction, including all financial, legal, regulatory and other aspects thereof, and taking into account all the terms and conditions of such proposal and the merger agreement (including any changes to the terms of the merger agreement proposed by Wintrust in response to such proposal or otherwise)) and relevant legal, financial and regulatory aspects of the proposal, the identity of the third party making such proposal and the conditions for completion of such proposal; and
- reasonably expected to be completed, taking into account all financial, legal, regulatory and other aspects of such proposal.

Board recommendation of CFS board of directors

CFS has agreed to convene and hold a meeting of its stockholders to consider the proposals to approve the merger and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion. Unless the merger agreement has been terminated, this requirement to hold the CFS special meeting applies even if the CFS board has made an adverse recommendation change as described below.

Except as described in the merger agreement, CFS has agreed to cause a proxy statement for the meeting of stockholders to include the recommendation of the CFS board to its stockholders that they approve the merger and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion (the CFS recommendation). Except as set forth in the merger agreement, neither the CFS board nor any committee thereof will (i) withdraw or modify in a manner adverse to Wintrust or Merger Co., or propose publicly to withdraw or modify in a manner adverse to Wintrust or Merger Co., the approval or recommendation by CFS board of the merger agreement or the merger (it being understood that taking a neutral position or no position with respect to any takeover proposal will be considered an amendment or adverse modification), (ii) enter into, approve, adopt or recommend, or propose publicly to enter into, approve, adopt or

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recommend, any takeover proposal or any letter of intent, term sheet, agreement in principle, merger agreement, acquisition agreement, option agreement, joint venture agreement, partnership agreement or other contract or instrument constituting or relating to any takeover proposal (other than a confidentiality agreement as set forth in the merger agreement), (iii) take any action to make the provisions of any fair price, moratorium, control share acquisition, business combination or other similar anti-takeover statute or regulation, or any restrictive provision of any applicable anti-takeover provision in the articles of incorporation or amended and restated by-laws of CFS, inapplicable to any transactions contemplated by a takeover proposal, or take any other action inconsistent with the CFS recommendation, (iv) waive the benefits of, provide any consent under, permit any noncompliance with, fail to enforce, or agree to modify in any manner, any confidentiality, standstill or similar agreement to which CFS or any of its subsidiaries is a party or (v) authorize any of, or resolve, commit or agree to take any of, the foregoing actions (any of the foregoing, a CFS recommendation change). Any violation of the restrictions set forth in the preceding sentence by any representative of CFS will be deemed to be a CFS recommendation change.

If CFS and its subsidiaries have complied with all their obligations described under this section and the section above entitled No solicitation of or discussions relating to a takeover proposal, and the CFS board receives a superior proposal and as a result thereof the CFS board determines in good faith and after consultation with outside counsel and its financial advisors that a failure to so act would be inconsistent with their directors' duties under Maryland law, then before receipt of stockholder approval of the proposals to approve the merger and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion (and in no event after receipt of such approvals) the CFS board may make a CFS recommendation change and/or, subject to compliance with the requirements set forth in this section, the sections entitled No solicitation of or discussions relating to a takeover proposal, Termination and

Termination fees, terminate the merger agreement in order to enter concurrently into a definitive agreement providing for the implementation of such superior proposal. The CFS board will not make a CFS recommendation change pursuant or terminate the merger agreement as permitted by the preceding sentence unless: (1) CFS notifies Wintrust in writing of its intention to take such action, promptly after the CFS board resolves to take such action but in any event not less than five business days before taking such action, which notice will include the identity of the offeror and a true and complete copy of the most current version of such superior proposal (including any proposed agreement or other offer documents), (2) for five business days following delivery of such notice, CFS negotiates in good faith with Wintrust with respect to any revised proposal from Wintrust in respect of the terms of the merger and the other transactions contemplated hereby (to the extent Wintrust desires to negotiate) with the intent of enabling the parties to engage in good faith negotiations so that the merger and other transactions contemplated hereby may be effected and (3) Wintrust does not make, within such five-business day period, an offer that is at least as favorable to the stockholders of CFS, as determined by the CFS board in good faith based on the advice of CFS's independent financial advisor, as such superior proposal (it being understood that any amendment to the financial terms or other material terms of any such superior proposal will require a new written notice from CFS and an additional five-business day period).

Termination

Wintrust and CFS may mutually agree to terminate the merger agreement and abandon the merger at any time. Subject to conditions and circumstances described in the merger agreement, either Wintrust or CFS may terminate the merger agreement as follows:

- if the merger is not completed (other than through the failure of any party seeking to terminate the agreement to comply fully with its material obligations under the merger agreement) by September 30, 2015 or such later date agreed to by the parties; provided, that such termination date will be extended to October 31, 2015 if the sole impediment to closing is due to delay in receiving regulatory approval from the Federal Reserve;
- if the other party has breached or failed to perform in any material respect any of its representations, warranties or covenants contained in the merger agreement, which breach or failure would give rise to the failure of a condition under the merger agreement required to be met by it prior to the closing date, it cannot be, or has not been, cured within 30 days after notice of the breach and the non-breaching party

has not waived such condition;

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- if it becomes impossible for the other party to satisfy a condition under the merger agreement required to be met by it prior to the closing date and its inability to satisfy the condition was not caused by the non-breaching party's failure to comply with any of its obligations under the merger agreement and such non-breaching party has not waived such condition; or
- if CFS stockholder approval of the merger and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion is not obtained at the special meeting.

In addition, CFS may terminate the merger agreement if the reference price is less than \$39.50 and Wintrust may terminate the merger agreement if the reference price is more than \$55.50, in each case if CFS and Wintrust are in good faith unable, after five business days' notice of such termination, to reach agreement as to an amendment to the merger agreement containing terms acceptable to Wintrust and CFS so that the merger and the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement may be consummated.

In addition, prior to receipt of CFS stockholder approval of the merger and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion (and in no event after receipt of such CFS stockholder approval), if (i) CFS and its subsidiaries have complied with all their obligations as set forth above in the sections entitled "No solicitation of or discussions relating to a takeover proposal" and "Board recommendation of CFS board of directors," (ii) the CFS board receives a superior proposal and (iii) as a result of such superior proposal, the CFS board determines in good faith and after consultation with outside counsel and its financial advisors that a failure to so act would be inconsistent with their directors' duties under Maryland law, then the CFS board may resolve to make a recommendation change and/or, subject to compliance with its requirements under the merger agreement, terminate the merger agreement in order to enter concurrently into a definitive agreement providing for the implementation of such superior proposal. However, prior to actually making such a recommendation change and/or terminating the merger agreement, CFS must promptly notify Wintrust in writing of its intention to take such action and, for five business days following such notice, negotiate in good faith with Wintrust with respect to any revised proposal from Wintrust (to the extent Wintrust desires to negotiate). If Wintrust does not make, within such five-business day period, an offer that is at least as favorable to the stockholders of CFS, the CFS board may make a recommendation change and/or, subject to compliance with its requirements under the merger agreement, terminate the merger agreement in order to enter concurrently into a definitive agreement providing for the implementation of such superior proposal.

Wintrust may also terminate the merger agreement (i) in certain circumstances if CFS fails to cure certain title defects or obtain certain title endorsements by the closing date, as described above in "Consideration to be received in the merger" Adjustment to merger consideration, (ii) if the CFS board or any committee thereof withdraws or modifies, in a manner adverse to Wintrust or Merger Co., or proposes publicly to withdraw or modify, in a manner adverse to Wintrust or Merger Co., its approval or recommendation of the merger agreement or the merger, (iii) if the CFS board or any committee thereof fails to recommend to its stockholders that they approve the merger and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion, (iv) if the CFS board or any committee thereof approves or recommends, or proposes publicly to approve or recommend, any takeover proposal or (v) if the CFS board fails to reaffirm its recommendation to CFS stockholders that they approve the merger and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS within five business days of Wintrust's written request to do so, following the five business-day negotiation period described above.

Any termination of the merger agreement will not affect any rights accrued prior to such termination, except as expressly provided in the merger agreement.

Termination fee

Termination fees payable by CFS. CFS has agreed to pay Wintrust a termination fee of \$1,750,000 costs if the merger agreement is terminated under the following circumstances:

- Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because CFS has breached or failed to perform its obligations under its covenant not to solicit a takeover proposal from a third party;

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- Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because the CFS board or any committee thereof withdraws or modifies, in a manner adverse to Wintrust or Merger Co., or proposes publicly to withdraw or modify, in a manner adverse to Wintrust or Merger Co., its approval or recommendation of the merger agreement or the merger;
- Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because the CFS board or any committee of the CFS board fails to recommend to its stockholders that they approve the merger and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion;
- Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because the CFS board or any committee of the CFS board approves or recommends or proposes publicly to approve or recommend, any takeover proposal;
- Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because the CFS board fails to reaffirm its recommendation to CFS stockholders that they approve the merger and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion within five business days of Wintrust's written request to do so following public disclosure of a takeover proposal;
- After a takeover proposal is made to the CFS board or to the public, or any person's bona fide intention to make a takeover proposal is publicly announced, either Wintrust or CFS terminates the merger agreement because the closing has not occurred by September 30, 2015 or such later date agreed to by the parties (or October 31, 2015, if the sole impediment to closing is due to delay in receiving regulatory approval from the Federal Reserve) and, within fifteen months after termination of the merger agreement, CFS or a CFS subsidiary consummates or enters into a definitive agreement relating to a takeover proposal or the CFS board or any committee thereof has approved, adopted or recommended in favor of any takeover proposal; provided, that no such fee shall be payable when the CFS stockholder approval has not been obtained at least two business days before such termination;
- After a takeover proposal is made to the CFS board or to the public, or any person's intention to make such a takeover proposal is publicly announced, Wintrust terminates the merger agreement because CFS has breached or failed to perform in any material respect any of its representations, warranties or covenants under the merger agreement that would give rise to a condition to Wintrust's obligations to close to be satisfied and Wintrust has not waived such condition, and, within fifteen months after termination of the merger agreement, CFS or a CFS subsidiary consummates or enters into a definitive agreement relating to a takeover proposal or the CFS board or any committee thereof has approved, adopted or recommended in favor of any takeover proposal; provided, that no such fee shall be payable when the CFS stockholder approval has not been obtained at least two business days before such termination;
- After a takeover proposal is made to the CFS board or to the public, or any person's intention to make such a takeover proposal is publicly announced, Wintrust terminates because satisfaction of a condition to its obligation to close is or becomes impossible to satisfy (other than through a failure of Wintrust or Merger Co. to comply with its obligations under the merger agreement) and, within fifteen months after termination of the merger agreement, CFS or a CFS subsidiary consummates or enters into a definitive agreement relating to a takeover proposal or the CFS board or any committee thereof has have approved, adopted or recommended in favor of any takeover proposal; provided, that no such fee shall be payable when the CFS stockholder approval has not been obtained at least two business days before such termination;

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- After a takeover proposal is made to the CFS board or to the public, or any person's intention to make a takeover proposal is publicly announced, either Wintrust or CFS terminates the merger agreement if the approvals of CFS stockholders of the merger and the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion are not obtained at the special meeting, and within fifteen months after termination of the merger agreement, CFS or a CFS subsidiary consummates or enters into a definitive agreement relating to a takeover proposal or the CFS board or any committee thereof has approved, adopted or recommended in favor of any takeover proposal; or

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- CFS terminates the merger agreement to enter concurrently into a definitive agreement providing for the implementation of such superior proposal, provided that CFS and its subsidiaries have complied with all their obligations set forth above in the sections entitled "No solicitation of or discussions relating to a takeover proposal" and "Board recommendation of CFS board of directors," because the CFS board received a superior proposal, as a result of which superior proposal the CFS board determined in good faith and after consultation with outside counsel and its financial advisors that a failure to make a recommendation change and/or, subject to compliance with its requirements under the merger agreement, terminate the merger agreement in order to enter concurrently into a definitive agreement providing for the implementation of such superior proposal would be inconsistent with their directors' duties under Maryland law, and, within the five business day negotiation period with Wintrust required by the merger agreement, Wintrust does not make an offer that is at least as favorable to the stockholders of CFS.

In addition, if the merger agreement is terminated by either Wintrust or CFS because CFS stockholder approval is not obtained, CFS shall pay to Wintrust up to \$325,000 in out-of-pocket expenses and costs.

CFS has agreed to pay to Wintrust a termination fee of \$900,000 plus up to \$325,000 in out-of-pocket expenses and costs if the merger agreement is terminated by Wintrust because CFS committed a material breach of its material obligations under the merger agreement, other than as set forth above, unless such breach is the result of Wintrust's failure to comply or perform in all material respects with any of its material obligations under the merger agreement and unless Wintrust is not in material compliance with all of its material obligations under the merger agreement.

Termination fees payable by Wintrust. Wintrust has agreed to pay to CFS a termination fee of \$900,000 plus up to \$325,000 in out-of-pocket expenses and costs if the merger agreement is terminated by CFS because Wintrust committed a material breach of its material obligations under the merger agreement, unless such breach is the result of CFS or the Bank's failure to perform and comply in all material respects with any of its material obligations under the merger agreement and unless CFS is not in material compliance with all of its material obligations under the merger agreement.

Representations and warranties

The merger agreement contains representations and warranties made by CFS, Wintrust and Merger Co. These include, among other things, representations relating to:

- valid corporate organization and existence;
- corporate power and authority to enter into the merger agreement and the merger and other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement (including, for CFS, the preferred stock conversion);
- capitalization;

- certain tax matters;
- absence of material adverse changes;
- absence of undisclosed investigations, injunctions and litigation;
- compliance with laws;
- compliance with SEC filing requirements;
- compliance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act;
- third party consents and approvals;
- filing of necessary reports with regulatory authorities;
- broker or finder fees;

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- absence of false or misleading statements or omissions in the representations and warranties contained in the merger agreement;
- absence of false or misleading statements or omissions in the information supplied for inclusion in this proxy statement/prospectus;
and
- absence of any breach of organizational documents, law or other agreements as a result of the merger.

CFS makes additional representations and warranties to Wintrust in the merger agreement relating to, among other things:

- organizational documents, minutes and stock records;
- financial statements;
- real property, personal property and other material assets;
- insurance matters;
- employee matters and employee benefits;
- certain environmental matters;
- ownership of its subsidiaries, including the Bank, WGE Properties, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Bank, and Community Financial Shares Statutory Trust II;
- compliance with, absence of default under and information regarding material contracts;

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- loans and its allowance for loan losses;
- investment securities;
- compliance with the Community Reinvestment Act;
- conduct of business and maintenance of business relationships;
- technology and intellectual property;
- absence of excess parachute payments resulting from the transactions contemplated in the merger agreement;
- absence of undisclosed liabilities;
- affiliate transactions;
- approval of the merger agreement and transactions contemplated by the merger agreement and the required stockholder approvals to approve the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated in the merger agreement; and
- fairness opinion delivered by CFS's financial advisor.

Conditions to completion of the merger

Closing Conditions for the benefit of Wintrust. Wintrust's obligations are subject to fulfillment of certain conditions, including:

- accuracy of representations and warranties of CFS in the merger agreement as of the closing date, except as otherwise set forth in the merger agreement;

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- performance by CFS in all material respects of its agreements, covenants and undertakings under the merger agreement;
- receipt of all appropriate regulatory approvals;
- approval of the merger agreement, the merger and the other transactions contemplated by the merger agreement at the special meeting by (i) the holders of two-thirds of the voting securities, voting

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together as a single class and (ii) a majority of the holders of each of (A) the Series C Preferred Shares, (B) the Series D Preferred Shares and (C) the Series E Preferred Shares;

- approval of each of the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for the preferred stock conversion by two-thirds of outstanding voting securities, approval of the amendment to the articles of incorporation for the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares by holders of a majority of CFS common stock and a majority of the Series C Preferred Shares issued and outstanding, approval of the amendment to the articles of incorporation for the conversion of Series D Preferred Shares by a majority of the Series D Preferred Shares issued and outstanding and approval of the amendment to the articles of incorporation for the conversion of Series E Preferred Shares by a majority of the Series E Preferred Shares issued and outstanding;

- execution and delivery of the articles of amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion in form suitable for filing with SDAT;

- execution and delivery of the articles of merger in form suitable for filing with the IL SOS and SDAT;

- absence of greater than 5% of the shares of CFS common stock issued and outstanding as of the closing having made a written objection (treating for this purpose, for the avoidance of doubt, all CFS preferred stock as having been converted into CFS common stock and treating each share of CFS preferred stock that has made such written objection as having made a written objection with respect to the number of shares of CFS common stock into which it is convertible);

- no threatened or instituted litigation seeking to enjoin the transactions contemplated by the merger agreement or seeking other relief that Wintrust reasonably believes, subject to certain conditions, would make it inadvisable to consummate the merger, as more fully set forth in the merger agreement;

- absence of any temporary restraining order, preliminary or permanent injunction or other order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction or other legal restraint or prohibition preventing the consummation of the merger;

- receipt of certain opinions from CFS's counsel;

- the filing by CFS with the appropriate tax authorities of amendments, in form and substance reasonably satisfactory to Wintrust and its counsel, to CFS's consolidated federal and state income tax returns for the 2012 and 2013 tax years to reflect certain corrections, as set forth in the merger agreement;

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- absence of any material adverse effect on CFS or its subsidiaries and the continued conduct of business in the ordinary course and all respects consistent with prudent banking practices;
- receipt of balance sheets of CFS and its subsidiaries as of the closing date, adjusted to reflect certain adjustments, specifications and charges, as set forth in the merger agreement, which Wintrust will have the opportunity to review and comment on prior to the closing date;
- adjustment of the merger consideration, as applicable, as set forth in Consideration to be received in the merger Adjustment to merger consideration , to the extent applicable;
- the termination or cessation of certain customer relationships;
- receipt of title commitments and surveys with respect to each of the parcels of real property owned and used by the Bank, in form and substance satisfactory to Wintrust in its reasonable discretion;
- receipt of certain specified consents and all other consents, permissions and approvals where the failure to obtain such consent, permission and approval would have a material adverse effect, as defined in the merger agreement, with respect to CFS s or Wintrust s rights under the merger agreement;
- the registration statement on Form S-4, of which this proxy statement/prospectus forms part, having been declared effective by the SEC and continuing to be effective as of the closing date; and

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- approval for listing on NASDAQ of the shares of Wintrust common stock to be issued in connection with the merger.

Closing Conditions for the benefit of CFS. CFS's obligations are subject to fulfillment of certain conditions, including:

- accuracy of representations and warranties of Wintrust and Merger Co. contained in the merger agreement as of the closing date, except as otherwise set forth in the merger agreement;
- performance by Wintrust in all material respects of its agreements, covenants and undertakings under the merger agreement;
- receipt of all appropriate regulatory approvals;
- execution and delivery of the articles of merger suitable for filing with the Illinois Secretary of State and State Department of Assessments and Taxation of Maryland;
- absence of any temporary restraining order, preliminary or permanent injunction or other order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction or other legal restraint or prohibition preventing the consummation of the merger,
- the absence of any suit or action seeking to enjoin the merger or to obtain substantial damages in respect of such transaction;
- receipt of an opinion from Wintrust's special counsel;
- receipt of a tax opinion from CFS's special counsel that the merger constitutes a reorganization within the meaning of Section 368(a) of the Code;
- absence of any material adverse effect on Wintrust;

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- the registration statement on Form S-4, of which this proxy statement/prospectus forms part, having been declared effective by the SEC and continuing to be effective as of the closing date;
- approval for listing on NASDAQ of the shares of Wintrust common stock issuable pursuant to the merger agreement; and
- the execution and delivery by Wintrust of one or more supplemental indentures and other instruments required for the due assumption of CFS's outstanding debt, guarantees, securities and other agreements to the extent required by the terms of such debt, guarantees, securities or other agreements.

Management of Wintrust and the surviving corporation after the merger

After the merger, the Wintrust board of directors will remain the same and the Merger Co. board of directors will continue to serve as the directors of the surviving corporation.

Employee benefit matters

Pursuant to the merger agreement, former full-time employees of CFS and the Bank will be eligible to participate in employee benefit plans that Wintrust sponsors or maintains at the effective time of the merger on the same terms and conditions as all other similarly-situated U.S. employees of Wintrust and its subsidiaries. To the extent such employees participate in any Wintrust benefit plans, such employees will be given credit for amounts paid under a corresponding CFS or the Bank benefit plan during the plan year in which the closing of the merger occurs for purposes of applying deductibles, co-payments and out-of-pocket maximums as though such amounts had been paid in accordance with the terms and conditions of such Wintrust benefit plan for the plan year in which the closing of the merger occurs. For purposes of determining eligibility to participate in and, where applicable, vesting under Wintrust's applicable retirement savings plan and employee stock purchase plan, Wintrust's short-term disability plans and vacation policy, each former employee of CFS or the Bank will receive past service credit for his or her prior employment with CFS as if each such employee had then been employed by Wintrust. Wintrust reserves the right to amend or terminate these plans and arrangements in accordance with the terms of such plans and arrangements and applicable laws.

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Expenses

All expenses incurred in connection with the merger agreement will be paid by the party incurring the expenses. As more fully described above under Termination fee, Wintrust and CFS have also agreed to reimburse each other for certain expenses incurred not exceeding \$350,000 in the event the merger is terminated prior to the closing date for certain specified reasons.

NASDAQ stock listing

Wintrust common stock currently is listed on NASDAQ under the symbol WTFC. The shares to be issued to CFS stockholders as merger consideration also will be eligible for trading on NASDAQ.

Amendment

The merger agreement may be amended in writing by the parties.

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THE PREFERRED STOCK CONVERSION

This section of the proxy statement/prospectus describes material aspects of the proposed conversion of CFS preferred stock into shares of common stock. While Wintrust and CFS believe that the description covers the material terms of the preferred stock conversion and proposed amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS providing for, among other matters, the preferred stock conversion, this summary may not contain all of the information that is important to you. You should carefully read this entire proxy statement/prospectus, the attached Annexes, and the other documents to which this proxy statement/prospectus refers for a more complete understanding of the preferred stock conversion. The proposed amendments reflected in the amended and restated articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS attached hereto as Annex B, Annex C and Annex D, not this summary, are the legal documents which governs the preferred stock conversion.

General

The CFS board of directors is using this proxy statement/prospectus to solicit proxies from the holders of CFS common stock and the holders of CFS preferred stock for use at the CFS special meeting, at which CFS stockholders will be asked to vote to approve certain amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock. The second, third and fourth proposals to be considered by CFS stockholders are proposals to approve such amendments, which provide for, among other things, the automatic conversion, which we refer to as the preferred stock conversion, of each share of CFS preferred stock into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger, without any action on the part of the holder of such Preferred Share. The purpose of these amendments is to facilitate the proposed merger transaction by (i) providing holders of CFS preferred stock with a simplified mechanism to receive the amount of the merger consideration to which such holders are entitled under the terms of CFS preferred stock and (ii) providing for the extinguishment of the outstanding CFS preferred stock immediately prior to the effective time of the merger.

The amendments

The current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock contain certain provisions that allow holders of such series of CFS preferred stock to, under certain conditions and subject to certain ownership limitations and anti-dilution provisions, elect to convert each of its shares of CFS preferred stock into the number of shares of CFS common stock equal to the then-applicable conversion rate, as defined in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for CFS preferred stock, which applicable conversion rate is currently 100 shares of CFS common stock, at the discretion of such holder of CFS preferred stock. The merger agreement provides that, as a condition to the completion of the merger, the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS of each series of CFS preferred stock will be amended as set forth in *Annex B*, *Annex C* or *Annex D*, as applicable. The proposed amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock provide that, immediately prior to completion of the merger, each share of CFS preferred stock will automatically convert into 100 shares of common stock of CFS.

In addition, the proposed amendments to the articles supplementary for each series of CFS preferred stock provide that the merger would be exempt from and would not trigger the change of control provisions contained in the current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS that would otherwise be triggered by the merger. For a description of the amendments, see Proposal 2 Amendment to the Articles Supplementary to the Articles of Incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares, Proposal 3 Amendment to the Articles Supplementary to the Articles of Incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares and Proposal 4 Amendment to the Articles Supplementary to the Articles of Incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares.

Effect of the amendments

As a result of the amendment to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock (assuming such amendment is approved by the requisite number of stockholders), each share of CFS preferred stock will automatically convert into 100 shares of CFS common stock immediately prior to

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the effective time of the merger, without any action on the part of the holder of such shares of CFS preferred stock. Upon the effective time of the merger, the merger would not trigger the change of control provisions contained in the current articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the CFS preferred stock, and each such share of CFS common stock will be converted into the right to receive the merger consideration and treated in the same manner as all other shares of common stock of CFS. See The Merger Agreement Consideration to be received in the merger for a detailed description of the method for determining the per share merger consideration.

Approval of the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of CFS preferred stock is a closing condition for the merger. **The merger and the preferred stock conversion will not be completed unless CFS stockholders approve these amendments.**

Description of CFS preferred stock

CFS has the following series of preferred stock outstanding: (i) Series C Preferred Shares, (ii) Series D Preferred Shares and (iii) Series E Preferred Shares. Each series of Preferred Shares is governed by the articles supplementary of such series to the articles of incorporation of CFS, which form part of the articles of incorporation of CFS. For further information on the issuance of CFS preferred stock, see Business of CFS Other Recent Developments.

Series C Preferred Shares

The following is a summary of the material terms and provisions of the preferences, limitations, voting powers and relative rights of the Series C Preferred Shares as listed in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares. Although we believe this summary covers the material terms and provisions of the Series C Preferred Shares as contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series C Preferred Shares, it may not contain all the information that is important to you. You should read the full text of the amended and restated articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS of the Series C Preferred Shares reflecting the amendment set forth in *Annex B*.

Voting Rights. Each Series C Preferred Share is entitled to the number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of common stock into which each Series C Preferred Share is convertible (initially 100 (subject to adjustment for any split, subdivision, combination, consolidation or similar event with respect to the common stock)) with respect to any matter presented to the common stockholders. In the event that CFS effects a division of its common stock into a greater number of shares (by stock split, reclassification or otherwise than by payment of distributions in common stock or in any right to acquire the common stock), the 1-to-100 conversion rate before such subdivision shall be proportionately decreased so that the number of shares of common stock issuable on conversion of each Series C Preferred Share shall be increased in proportion to such increase in the aggregate number of shares of common stock outstanding. In the event the outstanding common stock is combined or consolidated, by reclassification, reverse stock split or otherwise, into a lesser number of shares of common stock, 1-to-100 conversion rate shall be proportionately increased so that the number of shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of each Series C Preferred Share shall be decreased in proportion to such decrease in the aggregate number of shares of common stock outstanding.

In addition, for so long as any Series C Preferred Shares are outstanding, CFS may not (including by means of merger, consolidation or otherwise), without obtaining the approval of the holders of a majority of the outstanding Series C Preferred Shares: (i) issue additional amounts

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or classes of senior securities or reclassify any junior or parity securities into senior securities; (ii) modify the terms of the Series C Preferred Shares so as to significantly and adversely affect the rights or preferences of the Series C Preferred Shares; (iii) approve or effect the liquidation, dissolution or winding up of CFS's business and affairs in any form of transaction; (iv) pay dividends when preferred dividends on the Series C Preferred Shares are in arrears; or (v) take any other actions which, under the laws of Maryland or any other applicable law, requires the prior approval of the Series C Preferred Shares voting as a separate class.

Conversion Rights. Each Series C Preferred Share is convertible immediately, at the sole discretion of the holder, initially into 100 shares of CFS common stock, provided, however, that a holder may not convert Series C Preferred Shares to the extent that such conversion would result in the holder or its affiliates beneficially owning

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more than 9.9% or 4.9%, as applicable, of CFS's outstanding common stock. If, pursuant to the Securities Purchase Agreement, the holder acquired either (i) solely Series C Preferred Shares, or a combination of Series C Preferred Shares and shares of common stock, in each case, that, together with CFS voting securities acquired by its affiliates, constituted more than 4.9% of CFS's voting securities, or (ii) both Series C Preferred Shares and Series D Preferred Shares, then the 9.9% conversion blocker will be applicable to such holder and its transferees. If, pursuant to the Securities Purchase Agreement, the holder acquired either (i) solely Series C Preferred Shares, or a combination of Series C Preferred Shares and shares of common stock, in each case, that, together with CFS voting securities acquired by its affiliates, constituted 4.9% or less of CFS's voting securities, or (ii) both Series C Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares, then the 4.9% conversion blocker will be applicable to such holder and its transferees.

Upon the receipt of a conversion notice from a holder of Series C Preferred Shares, CFS must (i) notify its transfer agent of the proposed conversion within one trading day and (ii) instruct the transfer agent to issue the applicable number of shares of common stock to the holder of the Series C Preferred Shares in book entry or certificate form within three trading days from the date on which CFS received the holder's conversion notice. If CFS fails to deliver the shares of common stock within three trading days of its receipt of the conversion notice, it must pay the holder of Series C Preferred Shares an amount equal to 0.5% of the product of (x) the number of shares of common stock not issued to the holder multiplied by (y) the closing price of the common stock on the date the shares of common stock were required to be delivered. If CFS fails to pay these damages within five business days of the date incurred, such payments will bear interest at a rate of 1.5% per month (prorated for partial months) until such payments are made.

Rank. With respect to dividend and liquidation rights, the Series C Preferred Shares will rank: (i) subordinate and junior to CFS's senior indebtedness and any of our future securities that, by their terms, are senior to the Series C Preferred Shares; (ii) on parity with the Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares and any of our future securities that, by their terms, are on parity to the Series C Preferred Shares; and (iii) senior to the common stock and any of our future securities that, by their terms, are not senior to or on parity with the Series C Preferred Shares.

Dividend Rights. Dividends may be paid on the Series C Preferred Shares as and when declared by CFS's board of directors, subject to the prior and superior rights of the holders of any senior securities. In addition, the Series C Preferred Shares will participate in all common stock dividends on an as converted basis, and no dividends shall be payable on any junior securities or parity securities unless an identical dividend is payable at the same time on the Series C Preferred Shares.

Liquidation Rights. In the event of any liquidation, dissolution or winding up of our affairs, whether voluntary or involuntary, holders of the Series C Preferred Shares will be entitled to receive a liquidation preference, subject to the rights of any creditors of CFS, before any distributions of our assets are made to or set aside for the holders of the common stock. The liquidation preference will be equal to the greater of (i) the sum of (x) \$100.00 per share of Series C Preferred Shares (as adjusted for any split, subdivision, combination, consolidation or similar event with respect to the Series C Preferred Shares) and (y) the amount of any declared but unpaid distributions to the date of payment and (ii) the amount such holder would have received if the Series C Preferred Shares had been fully converted into common stock immediately prior to the liquidation, dissolution or winding up.

In addition, the consummation of a change in control of CFS will constitute a liquidation, dissolution or winding up of CFS for purposes of the Series C Preferred Shares liquidation preference. For this purpose, a change in control is defined as any of the following transactions that is approved by at least a majority of the members of CFS's board of directors: (i) an acquisition by any person (other than CFS, the current members of its board of directors and their descendants, or certain benefit plans of CFS or the Bank) of CFS common stock that causes such person to own fifty percent (50%) or more of the combined voting power of our then outstanding voting securities; (ii) a reorganization, merger, consolidation or other corporate transaction involving CFS with respect to which the shareholders of CFS immediately prior to such transaction do not, immediately after the transaction, own more than fifty percent (50%) of the combined voting power of the surviving entity; (iii) the sale,

transfer or assignment of all or substantially all of the assets of CFS to any third party; or (iv) any other transactions or series of related transactions that have substantially the same effect as the transactions specified in (i) through (iii) above as reasonably determined by the CFS board of directors. In such circumstances, in lieu of participating in a change of control, the holders of the Series C Preferred Shares may elect to require CFS to make the liquidation payment for

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any or all of the shares of their Series C Preferred Shares concurrently with the consummation of a change in control or pay interest thereon at a rate equal to the lesser of (i) 25% per annum or (ii) the maximum rate permitted by applicable law.

Anti-Dilution Rights. The Series C Preferred Shares provide for standard anti-dilution adjustments for combinations or divisions of common stock, the reclassification or reorganization of the common stock, and for dividends and other distributions in shares of common stock.

Series D Preferred Shares

The following is a summary of the material terms and provisions of the preferences, limitations, voting powers and relative rights of the Series D Preferred Shares as listed in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares. Although we believe this summary covers the material terms and provisions of the Series D Preferred Shares as contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series D Preferred Shares, it may not contain all the information that is important to you. You should read the full text of the amended and restated articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS of the Series D Preferred Shares reflecting the amendment set forth in *Annex C*.

Except with respect to voting rights, conversion rights and anti-dilution rights, the Series D Preferred Shares generally have the same preferences, limitations, and relative rights as, and is identical in all respects to, the Series C Preferred Shares.

Voting Rights. The Series D Preferred Shares generally do not have any voting rights. However, for so long as any shares of Series D Preferred Shares are outstanding, CFS may not (including by means of merger, consolidation or otherwise), without obtaining the approval of the holders of a majority of the outstanding Series D Preferred Shares: (i) issue additional amounts or classes of senior securities or reclassify any junior or parity securities into senior securities; (ii) modify the terms of the Series D Preferred Shares so as to significantly and adversely affect the rights or preferences of the Series D Preferred Shares; (iii) approve or effect the liquidation, dissolution or winding up of CFS's business and affairs in any form of transaction; (iv) pay dividends when preferred dividends on the Series D Preferred Shares are in arrears; or (v) take any other actions which, under the laws of Maryland or any other applicable law, requires the prior approval of the Series D Preferred Shares voting as a separate class.

Conversion Rights. The Series D Preferred Share are convertible into Series C Preferred Shares on a one-for-one basis provided that no such conversion results in any person, together with its affiliates, holding more than a 9.9% voting ownership interest in CFS, excluding for the purposes of this calculation any reduction in ownership resulting from transfers by such person of voting securities of CFS. In addition, each Series D Preferred Share is convertible into common stock only (i) simultaneously with the closing of a transfer to a transferee of such Series D Preferred Share pursuant to a permitted transfer (such as (a) a widespread public distribution; (b) a transfer in which no transferee would receive two percent or more of any class of voting securities of CFS; or (c) a transfer to a transferee that would control more than 50% of the voting securities of CFS without any transfer from the holder) and (ii) at the sole discretion of the holder of such shares initially into 100 shares of common stock (subject to adjustment for any split, subdivision, combination, consolidation or similar event with respect to the common stock), upon written notice from the transferee. The conversion procedures for the Series D Preferred Shares and related damages provisions are identical to those of the Series C Preferred Shares.

Anti-Dilution Rights. The Series D Preferred Shares provide for standard anti-dilution adjustments for combinations or divisions of the Series C Preferred Shares, the reclassification or reorganization of the Series D Preferred Shares, and for dividends and other distributions in shares of Series C Preferred Shares or common stock.

Series E Preferred Shares

The following is a summary of the material terms and provisions of the preferences, limitations, voting powers and relative rights of the Series E Preferred Shares as listed in the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares. Although we believe this summary covers the material terms and provisions of the Series E Preferred Shares as contained in the articles supplementary to the articles of

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incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares, it may not contain all the information that is important to you. You should read the full text of the amended and restated articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for the Series E Preferred Shares reflecting the amendment set forth in *Annex D*.

The Series E Preferred Shares have the same preferences, limitations, and relative rights as, and are identical in all respects to, the Series D Preferred Shares, except that the Series E Preferred Shares are convertible into Series C Preferred Shares provided that no such conversion results in any person, together with its affiliates, holding more than a 4.9% voting ownership interest in CFS, excluding for the purposes of this calculation any reduction in ownership resulting from transfers by such person of voting securities of CFS.

CFS stockholder appraisal rights

In connection with the amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation of CFS for each series of Preferred Shares, holders of Preferred Shares are not entitled to appraisal rights.

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BUSINESS OF CFS

General

CFS is a registered bank holding company. The operations of CFS and the Bank consist primarily of those financial activities common to the commercial banking industry and are explained more fully below under the heading Lending Activities. Unless the context otherwise requires, the term CFS as used in this section includes CFS and the Bank on a consolidated basis. All of the operating income of CFS is attributable to the Bank.

CFS was incorporated in the State of Delaware in July 2000 as part of an internal reorganization whereby the stockholders of the Bank exchanged all of their Bank stock for all of the issued and outstanding stock of CFS. The reorganization was completed in December 2000. As a result of the reorganization, the former stockholders of the Bank acquired 100% of CFS's stock and CFS acquired (and still holds) 100% of the Bank's stock. The former Bank stockholders received two shares of CFS's common stock for each share of Bank common stock exchanged in the reorganization. On June 25, 2013 CFS changed its state of incorporation from Delaware to Maryland. The reincorporation, which was effected to eliminate CFS's significant annual Delaware franchise tax expense, was approved by the stockholders of CFS at the annual meeting of stockholders held on June 13, 2013. CFS was formed for the purpose of providing financial flexibility as a holding company for the Bank. At the present time, CFS has no specific plans of engaging in any activities other than operating the Bank as a subsidiary.

The Bank was established as a state chartered federally insured commercial bank on March 1, 1994 and opened for business on November 21, 1994 at its main office on Roosevelt Road in Glen Ellyn. The Bank opened a second location in downtown Wheaton on November 21, 1998. A third location was opened in northwest Wheaton on March 24, 2005. A fourth full service branch was opened on November 21, 2007 in north Wheaton. The Bank provides banking services common to the industry, including but not limited to, demand, savings and time deposits, loans, mortgage loan origination for investors, cash management, electronic banking services, internet banking services (including online bill payment), Community Investment Center services, and debit cards. The Bank serves a diverse customer base including individuals, businesses, governmental units and institutional customers located primarily in Wheaton and Glen Ellyn and surrounding communities in DuPage County, Illinois. The Bank has banking offices in Glen Ellyn and Wheaton, Illinois.

Market Area

CFS is located in the village of Glen Ellyn in DuPage County in Illinois. Glen Ellyn is a suburb of Chicago and is located approximately 23 miles directly west of the city. The combined population of Wheaton and Glen Ellyn is approximately 84,000 while the county of DuPage currently has approximately 920,000 residents. The median household income within the Bank's market area is above \$78,000, which is higher than the area average. The economic base of both communities is comprised primarily of professionals and service related industry. There are no dominant employers in the area. However, the DuPage County offices as well as the College of DuPage, both of which are nearby, are likely the largest. The local economy remains stable; however, real estate values have been negatively impacted which is reflected in the local real estate market.

Regulatory Matters

On January 10, 2014, the Bank received notification from the FDIC and the IDFPB that the Consent Order (the Order) issued to the Bank by the FDIC and IDFPB on January 21, 2011 was terminated effective January 10, 2014. In connection with the termination of the Order, the Bank agreed to achieve Tier 1 capital at least equal to 8% of total assets and total capital at least equal to 12% of risk-weighted assets. At December 31, 2014, CFS's Tier 1 and total capital ratios were 7.7% and 13.4%, respectively, compared to 7.7% and 12.9% at September 30, 2014, 7.2% and 12.5% at June 30, 2014, 7.0% and 12.0% at March 31, 2014 and 6.8% and 11.9% at December 31, 2013, respectively.

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Other Recent Developments

Financial Condition

Like many financial institutions across the United States, CFS's operations have been impacted by recent economic conditions. During 2008 and 2009, the economic crisis that was initially confined to residential real estate and subprime lending evolved into a global economic crisis that negatively impacted not only liquidity and credit quality but also economic indicators such as the labor market, the capital markets and real estate values. As a result of this significant downturn, CFS has been adversely affected by declines in the residential and commercial real estate market in CFS's market area.

Declining home prices, slowing economic conditions and increasing levels of delinquencies and foreclosures have negatively affected the credit performance of CFS's residential real estate and commercial real estate loans, resulting in an increase in CFS's level of nonperforming assets and loans past due 90 days or more and still accruing interest and charge-offs of problem loans. At the same time, competition among depository institutions in CFS's markets for deposits and quality loans has increased significantly.

As a result of the deterioration in economic conditions and the local real estate market, CFS experienced net losses of \$4.6 million, \$11.0 million, \$2.5 million, \$2.8 million and net income of \$5.4 million for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 respectively. During this time, the book value of CFS's common stock, on a fully converted basis, decreased from \$14.26 per share at December 31, 2010 to \$0.96 per share at December 31, 2014. CFS also experienced loan loss provisions totaling \$8.3 million, \$6.2 million and \$1.5 million for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively, and experienced a loan loss provision of \$1.4 million for the year ended December 31, 2013. Total nonperforming assets have decreased from \$23.3 million at December 31, 2010 to \$4.6 million at December 31, 2014.

December 2012 Private Placement Offering

As previously disclosed, in an effort to satisfy the increased capital requirements set forth in the Order, CFS entered into a securities purchase agreement (the Securities Purchase Agreement), dated as of November 13, 2012, with certain accredited investors and members of CFS's board of directors and executive management team pursuant to which, on December 21, 2012, CFS issued an aggregate of 4,315,300 shares of CFS common stock at \$1.00 per share, 133,411 Series C Preferred Shares at \$100.00 per share, 56,708 shares of Series D Preferred Shares at \$100.00 per share and 6,728 shares of Series E Preferred Shares at \$100.00 per share in a private placement offering, for gross proceeds of \$24.0 million. The 133,411 Series C Preferred Shares, the 56,708 Series D Preferred Shares and the 6,728 Series E Preferred Shares are convertible into 13,341,100, 5,670,800 and 672,800 shares of CFS common stock, respectively. The effective price per share paid by investors was \$1.00 per common share after taking into account the anti-dilution provisions of the Securities Purchase Agreement.

Closings. The Securities Purchase Agreement provided that CFS would conduct two closings in connection with the private placement offering. The first closing, which occurred on December 21, 2012, resulted in \$24.0 million in gross proceeds, or \$21.5 million in net proceeds after deducting offering expenses of \$2.5 million. CFS used the net proceeds from the first closing to (i) redeem CFS's \$6.9 million of preferred stock previously issued to the U.S. Department of Treasury pursuant to the TARP Capital Purchase Program, (ii) repay CFS's indebtedness to a third party lender, (iii) enhance the capital of the Bank, as required by the terms of the Order previously issued by the FDIC and IDFP and

(iv) support the future operational growth of CFS.

In accordance with the terms of the Securities Purchase Agreement, after the first closing, CFS commenced a rights offering pursuant to which existing holders of CFS's common stock (not the investors participating in the first closing) were able to purchase up to an aggregate of 3,000,000 shares of CFS common stock at a price of \$1.00 per share. For more information on the rights offering, see *Rights Offering* below.

Under the Securities Purchase Agreement, certain investors were permitted to purchase additional shares of Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares, as applicable, in a subsequent second closing to the extent their ownership interests in CFS were diluted by the issuance of shares in the rights offering. On July 17, 2013, CFS consummated the second closing, pursuant to which it issued to certain investors

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an aggregate of 1,192 Series C Preferred Shares at \$100.00 per share and 1,385 Series D Preferred Shares at \$100.00 per share for gross proceeds of \$257,700. The 1,192 Series C Preferred Shares and the 1,385 Series D Preferred Shares that were issued in connection with the second closing are convertible into 119,200 and 138,500 shares of CFS common stock, respectively. The second closing resulted in \$257,700 in gross proceeds, or \$226,850 in net proceeds after deducting offering expenses of \$30,850. CFS used the net proceeds from the second closing to enhance the capital position of CFS.

Rights Offering. As previously disclosed, and in accordance with the provisions of the Securities Purchase Agreement, on March 28, 2013, CFS sold 483,121 shares of common stock at a price of \$1.00 per share in a nontransferable rights offering for gross proceeds of \$483,121, or \$424,800 in net proceeds after deducting offering expenses of \$58,300. CFS used the net proceeds from the rights offering to enhance the capital position of CFS. Including the second closing and rights offering, gross proceeds of the private placement offering totaled \$24.7 million, or \$22.1 million in net proceeds after deducting aggregate offering expenses of \$2.6 million.

Board Representation. The Securities Purchase Agreement provided that the size of the board of directors of CFS may not exceed nine members and that, subject to any required regulatory approvals, CFS would (i) appoint Donald H. Wilson as the chairman of CFS and the Bank's board of directors and (ii) appoint three individuals approved by three different nominating investors as members of CFS and the Bank's board of directors and to certain committees thereof. Each of the nominating investors has the right to be represented on the board of directors of CFS and the Bank by one director of its choice for as long as it maintains at least a 2.5% ownership interest in CFS. Upon the receipt of all required regulatory approvals, Mr. Wilson was appointed as chairman of the board and Daniel Strauss, Christopher Hurst and Philip Timyan were appointed as directors of CFS and the Bank in accordance with the terms of the Securities Purchase Agreement. In anticipation of these appointments, and pursuant to the restriction in the Securities Purchase Agreement that the size of the board of directors of CFS may not exceed nine members, Donald H. Fischer retired as chairman of the board of directors in January 2013 and William F. Behrmann, H. David Clayton, Joseph S. Morrissey and Robert F. Haeger resigned from the board of directors in February 2013.

On December 4, 2013, the Bank and CFS entered into a separation agreement and general release of all claims with Scott W. Hamer, the former President and Chief Executive Officer of CFS and the Bank. Pursuant to the terms of the agreement, Mr. Hamer agreed to resign as a director of CFS and the Bank effective December 4, 2013.

Use of Proceeds. The proceeds of the December 2012 private placement were used to (i) redeem CFS's \$6.9 million of preferred stock previously issued to the U.S. Department of Treasury pursuant to the TARP Capital Purchase Program, (ii) repay CFS's indebtedness to a third party lender, (iii) enhance the capital of the Bank, as required by the terms of the Order previously issued by FDIC and IDFP and (iv) support the future operational growth of CFS. On November 13, 2012, CFS entered into a securities purchase agreement with the U.S. Department of Treasury (the "TARP Securities Purchase Agreement") pursuant to which, subject to the completion of the December 2012 private placement offering and the receipt of Federal Reserve Board approval, CFS agreed to repurchase the shares of preferred stock it previously issued pursuant to the Department of Treasury under the TARP Capital Purchase Program for \$3,293,550 plus an amount equal to 45% of the accrued and unpaid dividends on such preferred shares. CFS consummated the transactions contemplated by the TARP Securities Purchase Agreement on December 21, 2012.

Stockholder Approval. In order to consummate the transactions contemplated by the Securities Purchase Agreement, CFS was required to obtain stockholder approval of (i) a proposal to amend CFS's certificate of incorporation to increase the authorized number of shares of the common stock of CFS to 75,000,000 shares from 5,000,000 shares and (ii) a proposal to amend CFS's certificate of incorporation to specify that each outstanding share of Company common stock is entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of CFS stockholders so that each share of convertible voting preferred stock issued in the private placement could vote together with the shares of Company common stock on an as converted basis. Each of these proposals required the approval of the holders of a majority of the outstanding shares of CFS common stock.

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In order to reduce the expense associated with holding a special meeting of CFS stockholders, the board of director selected to obtain stockholder approval of the amendments described above by written consent pursuant to Section 228 of the Delaware General Corporation Law, rather than by calling a meeting of stockholders. Accordingly, on November 12, 2012, the board of directors voted to eliminate Article II, Section 13 of CFS s by-laws, which provided that any action taken by stockholders of

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CFS without a meeting required the written consent of all of the stockholders entitled to vote with respect to the subject matter. The amendment to the by-laws was effected without stockholder approval, which was not required under Delaware law. On December 12, 2012, CFS received the requisite number of stockholder consents needed to approve both amendments to CFS's Certificate of Incorporation.

Registration Rights Agreement. In connection with the execution of the Securities Purchase Agreement, CFS and each of the investors in the private placement offering also entered into a registration rights agreement. The registration rights agreement required CFS to file a registration statement with the SEC to register the resale of the shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of the Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares by investors participating in the private placement offering and also provides investors with demand and piggyback registration rights under certain circumstances.

Preferred Stock Conversion Blockers. Each Series C Preferred Share is convertible immediately, at the sole discretion of the holder, initially into 100 shares of Company common stock, provided, however, that a holder may not convert the Series C Preferred Shares to the extent that such conversion would result in the holder or its affiliates beneficially owning more than 9.9% or 4.9%, as applicable, of the outstanding CFS common stock. If, pursuant to the Securities Purchase Agreement, the holder acquired either (i) solely Series C Preferred Shares, or a combination of Series C Preferred Shares and CFS common stock, in each case, that, together with Company voting securities acquired by its affiliates, constituted more than 4.9% of CFS's voting securities, or (ii) shares of both Series C Preferred Shares and Series D Preferred Shares, then the 9.9% conversion blocker will be applicable to such investor and its transferees. If, pursuant to the Securities Purchase Agreement, the holder acquired either (i) solely Series C Preferred Shares, or a combination of Series C Preferred Shares and CFS common stock, in each case, that, together with Company voting securities acquired by its affiliates, constituted 4.9% or less of CFS's voting securities or (ii) both Series C Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares, then the 4.9% conversion blocker will be applicable to such investor and its transferees. Accordingly, the number of shares of CFS common stock and percentage CFS common stock reflected in the following table includes those shares of CFS common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares. Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares are convertible into Series C Preferred Shares on a one-for-one basis, provided, however, that no such conversion results in any person, together with its affiliates, holding more than a 9.9% or 4.9% voting ownership interest, respectively, in CFS.

September 2013 Private Placement Offering

On September 30, 2013, CFS consummated its previously announced second private placement offering, pursuant to which CFS issued 2,836,900 shares of CFS common stock to accredited investors at a purchase price of \$1.00 per share. In connection with the closing of the September 2013 private placement offering, CFS also issued an additional 350,200 shares of common stock at a purchase price of \$1.00 per share and 7,334 Series D Preferred Shares at a purchase price of \$100.00 per share to existing stockholders of CFS. The additional shares of common stock and preferred stock were issued to satisfy the exercise of non-dilution rights afforded to stockholders under the Securities Purchase Agreement. Including these anti-dilution shares, CFS raised aggregate proceeds of \$3.9 million in connection with the completion of the private placement offering, which resulted in \$3.4 million in net proceeds after deducting offering expenses of \$472,000. CFS used the net proceeds from the September 2013 private placement offering to invest \$500,000 in the Bank and to further enhance the capital position of CFS. The issuance of shares in the September 2013 private placement offering was approved by at least two-thirds of CFS's board of directors as required under the Securities Purchase Agreement.

Corporate Governance Matters

Change in State of Incorporation. On June 25, 2013 CFS changed its state of incorporation from Delaware to Maryland. The reincorporation, which was effected to eliminate CFS's significant annual Delaware franchise tax expense, was approved by the stockholders of CFS at the annual meeting of stockholders held on June 13, 2013. The reincorporation was completed by means of a merger of Community Financial Shares, Inc., a Delaware corporation (CFS-Delaware), with and into CFS, a wholly owned subsidiary of CFS-Delaware incorporated for the purpose of effecting the reincorporation, with CFS being the surviving corporation. As a result of the merger, holders of CFS-Delaware's capital securities are now holders of CFS's capital securities, and their rights as holders thereof are governed by the MGCL and the articles of incorporation and by-laws of CFS. The reincorporation did not result in any change in the business or principal facilities of CFS-Delaware.

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Appointment of New President and Chief Executive Officer. On August 15, 2013, the board of directors of CFS and the Bank appointed Donald H. Wilson as the President and Chief Executive Officer of CFS and the Bank effective as of August 15, 2013. As a result of the management restructuring, effective as of August 15, 2013, Scott W. Hamer, the former President and Chief Executive Officer of CFS and the Bank, was terminated as President and Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Wilson has served as the chairman of CFS's and the Bank's board of directors since April 2013 and continues to serve in this capacity following his appointment as the President and Chief Executive Officer of CFS and the Bank.

Competition

Active competition exists in all principal areas where the Bank operates, not only with other commercial banks, finance companies and mortgage bankers, but also with savings and loan associations, credit unions and other financial service companies serving CFS's market area. The principal methods of competition between CFS and its competitors are price and service. Price competition, primarily in the form of interest rate competition, is a standard practice within CFS's market place as well as the financial services industry. Service, expansive banking hours and product quality are also significant factors in competing and allow for differentiation from competitors.

Deposits in the Bank are well balanced, with a large customer base and no dominant segment of accounts. The Bank's loan portfolio is also characterized by a large customer base, including loans to commercial, not-for-profit and consumer customers, with no dominant relationships. There is no readily available source of information that delineates the market for financial services offered by non-bank competitors in CFS's market.

The Bank's exclusive focus on the local community has allowed the bank to position itself as a leading bank in its market area. The cities of Wheaton and Glen Ellyn have estimated combined populations of 84,000 and are located 23 miles west of Chicago in DuPage County. DuPage County with a population of 920,000 is home to four Fortune 500 companies.

Lending Activities

General. The Bank's loan portfolio is comprised primarily of real-estate mortgage loans, which include loans secured by residential, multi-family and nonresidential properties. The Bank originates loans on real estate generally located in the Bank's primary lending area in central DuPage County, Illinois. In addition to portfolio mortgages, the Bank routinely originates and sells residential mortgage loans and servicing rights for other investors in the secondary market. The Bank services all of its portfolio loans and the Bank has not purchased mortgage servicing rights.

Loans represent the principal source of revenue for CFS. Risk is controlled through loan portfolio diversification and the avoidance of credit concentrations. Loans are made primarily within CFS's geographic market area. The loan portfolio is distributed among general business loans, commercial real estate, residential real estate and consumer installment loans. CFS has no foreign loans, no highly leveraged transactions and no syndicated purchase participations.

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CFS's loan portfolio by major category as of December 31 for each of the past five years is shown below.

| | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | (In thousands) | | | | |
| Real estate | | | | | |
| Commercial | \$ 92,669 | \$ 97,813 | \$ 96,588 | \$ 94,513 | \$ 94,356 |
| Construction | 1,853 | 1,856 | 3,615 | 4,361 | 15,435 |
| Residential | 26,676 | 26,240 | 20,875 | 21,054 | 25,964 |
| Home Equity | 46,339 | 47,050 | 50,444 | 59,176 | 66,243 |
| Total real estate | 167,537 | 172,959 | 171,522 | 179,104 | 201,998 |
| Commercial | 16,048 | 21,379 | 24,388 | 26,203 | 25,572 |
| Consumer | 1,163 | 1,384 | 1,313 | 1,392 | 1,399 |
| Total loans | 184,748 | 195,722 | 197,223 | 206,699 | 228,969 |
| Deferred loan costs, net | 267 | 229 | 200 | 265 | 317 |
| Allowance for loan losses | (2,442) | (2,500) | (3,032) | (8,854) | (7,679) |
| Loans, net | \$ 182,573 | \$ 193,451 | \$ 194,391 | \$ 198,110 | \$ 221,607 |

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The following table shows the amount of total loans outstanding as of December 31, 2014 which, based on remaining scheduled repayments of principal, are due in the periods indicated.

| | Maturing | | | Total |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| | Within One Year | After One But Within Five Years | After Five Years | |
| (Dollars in thousands) | | | | |
| Commercial | \$ 7,968 | \$ 5,951 | \$ 2,129 | \$ 16,048 |
| Real Estate | 17,528 | 97,343 | 52,666 | 167,537 |
| Consumer | 167 | 996 | | 1,163 |
| Totals | \$ 25,663 | \$ 104,290 | \$ 54,795 | \$ 184,748 |

Below is a schedule of loan amounts maturing or re-pricing, classified according to sensitivity to changes in interest rates, as of December 31, 2014.

| | Interest Sensitivity | | Total |
|--|----------------------|---------------|------------|
| | Fixed Rate | Variable Rate | |
| (Dollars in thousands) | | | |
| Due within three months | \$ 3,606 | \$ 1,871 | \$ 5,477 |
| Due after three months but within one year | 9,065 | 11,121 | 20,186 |
| Due after one but within five years | 76,263 | 28,026 | 104,289 |
| Due after five years | 25,023 | 29,773 | 54,796 |
| Total | \$ 113,957 | \$ 70,791 | \$ 184,748 |

Residential One-to-Four Family. In 1999, the Bank established a dedicated secondary mortgage department to assist local residents in obtaining mortgages with reasonable terms, conditions and rates. The Bank offers various fixed and adjustable rate one-to-four family residential loan products the majority of which are sold, along with servicing rights, to a variety of investors in the secondary market. Interest rates are essentially dictated by the Bank's investors and origination fees on secondary mortgage loans are priced to provide a reasonable profit margin and are dictated to a degree by regional competition.

The Bank, for secondary market residential loans, generally makes one-to-four family residential mortgage loans in amounts not to exceed 80% of the appraised value or sale price, whichever is less, of the property securing the loan, or up to 95% if the amount in excess of 80% of the appraised value is secured by private mortgage insurance. Loans for amounts between 80% and 85% of appraised value or sale price may also be granted with an increased interest rate. The Bank usually receives a service release fee of approximately 2.0% on one-to-four family residential mortgage loans.

In addition to loans originated for the secondary market, the Bank has portfolio loans secured by one-to-four family residential real estate that totaled approximately \$26.7 million, or 14.4% of the Bank's total loan portfolio, as of December 31, 2014.

Commercial Real Estate Lending. Loans secured by commercial real estate totaled approximately \$92.7 million, or 50.2% of the Bank's total loan portfolio, at December 31, 2014. Commercial real estate loans are generally originated in amounts up to 80% of the appraised value of the property. Such appraised value is generally determined by independent appraisers previously approved by the board of directors of the Bank.

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The Bank's commercial real estate loans are permanent portfolio loans secured by improved property such as office buildings, retail stores, warehouses, churches and other non-residential buildings. Of the commercial real estate loans outstanding at December 31, 2014, most are secured by properties located within 10 miles of the Bank's offices in Wheaton and Glen Ellyn and were made to local customers of the Bank. In addition, borrowers generally must personally guarantee loans secured by commercial real estate. Commercial real estate loans generally have a 10 to 25 year amortization period and are made at rates based upon competitive local market rates, specific loan risk, and structure usage and type. Such loans generally have a five-year maturity.

Commercial real estate loans are both adjustable and fixed, with fixed rates generally limited to no more than five years. Loans secured by commercial real estate properties are generally larger and involve a greater degree of risk than residential mortgage loans. Because payments on loans secured by commercial real estate properties are often dependent on successful operation or management of the properties, repayment of such loans may be subject to a greater extent to adverse conditions in the real estate market or the economy. The Bank seeks to minimize these risks by lending to established customers and generally restricting such loans to its primary market area.

Construction Lending. The Bank is actively engaged in construction lending. Such activity is generally limited to individual new residential home construction, residential home additions and new commercial buildings. Currently, the majority of the Bank's new construction activity is in new commercial construction.

At December 31, 2014, the Bank had \$1.9 million in construction loans outstanding, which represented 1.0% of the Bank's loan portfolio at such date. The Bank presently charges both fixed and variable interest rates on construction and end loans. Loans, with proper credit, may be made for up to 80% of the anticipated value of the property upon completion. Funds are usually disbursed based upon percentage of completion generally verified by an on-site inspection by Bank personnel and generally through a local title company construction escrow account.

Consumer Lending. As a community-oriented lender, the Bank offers consumer loans for any worthwhile purpose. Although the Bank offers signature unsecured loans, consumer loans are generally secured by automobiles, boats, mobile homes, stocks, bonds and other personal property. Consumer loans totaled \$1.2 million, or 0.6% of the Bank's total loan portfolio, at December 31, 2014. Consumer loans generally have higher yields than residential mortgage loans since they involve a higher credit risk and smaller volumes with which to cover basic costs.

Home Equity Lending. Home equity loans are generally made not to exceed 80% of the first and second combined mortgage loan to value. These loans generally made for ten-year terms and are generally revolving credit lines with minimum payment structures of interest only. The interest rate on these lines of credit adjusts at a rate based on the prime rate of interest. Additionally, the Bank offers amortizing fixed rate home equity loans for those who desire to limit interest rate risk. At December 31, 2014, the outstanding home equity loan balance was \$46.3 million, or 25.1% of the Bank's total loan portfolio.

Commercial Lending. The Bank actively engages in general commercial lending within its market area. These loans are primarily revolving working capital lines, inventory loans and equipment loans. The commercial loans are generally based on serving the needs of small businesses in the Bank's market area while limiting the Bank's business risks to reasonable lending standards. Commercial loans are made with both fixed and adjustable rates and are generally secured by equipment, accounts receivable, inventory and other assets of the business. Personal guarantees generally support these credit facilities. The Bank also provides commercial and standby letters of credit to assist small businesses in their financing of special purchasing or bonding needs. Standby letters of credit outstanding at December 31, 2014 totaled \$73,500. Commercial loans totaled approximately \$16.0 million, or 8.7% of the Bank's total loan portfolio, at December 31, 2014.

Loan Concentration

At December 31, 2014, CFS did not have any concentration of loans exceeding 10% of total loans which are otherwise not disclosed. Loan concentrations are considered to exist when there are amounts loaned to a multiple number of borrowers engaged in similar activities which would cause them to be similarly impacted by economic or other conditions.

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Provision for Loan Losses

The provision for loan losses is determined by management through a quarterly evaluation of the adequacy of the allowance for loan losses. This evaluation takes various factors into consideration. The provision is based on management's judgment of the amount necessary to maintain the allowance for loan losses at an adequate level for probable incurred credit losses. In determining the provision for loan losses, management considers CFS's consistent loan growth and the amount of net charge-offs each year. Other factors, such as changes in the loan portfolio mix, delinquency trends, current economic conditions and trends, reviews of larger loans and known problem credits and the results of independent loan review and regulatory examinations are also considered by management in assessing the adequacy of the allowance for loan losses.

The allowance for loan losses is particularly subject to change as it is a valuation allowance for probable incurred credit losses, increased by the provision for loan losses and decreased by charge-offs less recoveries. Management estimates the allowance balance required using past loan loss experience, the nature and volume of the portfolio, information about specific borrower situations and estimated collateral values, economic conditions and other environmental factors. Allocations of the allowance may be made for specific loans, but the entire allowance is available for any loan that, in management's judgment, should be charged-off. Loan losses are charged against the allowance when management believes the uncollectibility of a loan balance is confirmed.

A loan is impaired when full payment under the loan terms is not expected. Commercial and commercial real estate loans are individually evaluated for impairment. If a loan is impaired, a portion of the allowance is allocated so that the loan is reported, net, at the present value of estimated future cash flows using the loan's existing rate or at the fair value of collateral if repayment is expected solely from the collateral. Large groups of smaller balance homogeneous loans, such as consumer and residential real estate loans, may be collectively evaluated for impairment.

Assets acquired through or instead of loan foreclosure such as other real estate are initially recorded at fair value less costs to sell when acquired, establishing a new cost basis. If fair value declines, a valuation allowance is recorded through expense. Costs after acquisition are expensed.

The allowance for loan losses was \$2.4 million, representing 1.3% of total loans, as of December 31, 2014, compared to an allowance of \$2.5 million, or 1.3% of total loans, at December 31, 2013 and \$3.0 million, or 1.5% of total loans, at December 31, 2012. The change in the allowance was the result of management's quarterly analysis of the allowance for loan losses. The general portion of the allowance for loan losses totaled \$2.4 million, or 1.31% of total loans evaluated, as of December 31, 2014 compared to \$2.4 million, or 1.25% of total loans evaluated for the prior year. Total nonperforming assets increased \$1.2 million to \$4.6 million at December 31, 2014 from \$3.4 million at December 31, 2013 and total nonperforming loans as a percentage of total loans totaled 1.32% at December 31, 2014 compared to 0.60% at December 31, 2013. CFS management believes that, based on information available at December 31, 2014, the Bank's allowance for loan losses was adequate to cover probable incurred losses inherent in its loan portfolio at that time. However, no assurances can be given that the Bank's level of allowance for loan losses will be sufficient to cover loan losses incurred by the Bank or that future adjustments to the allowance for loan losses will not be necessary if economic or other conditions differ substantially from the economic and other conditions used by management to determine the current level of the allowance. In addition, the FDIC and IDFP, as an integral part of their examination processes, periodically review the Bank's allowance for loan losses and may require the Bank to make additional provisions for estimated loan losses based upon judgments different from those of management. Any material increase in the allowance for loan losses may adversely affect CFS's financial condition and results of operations.

The following table details the component changes in CFS's allowance for loan losses for each of the past five years:

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| | Amount as of December 31, (Dollars in thousands) | | | | |
|---|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 |
| Net Total Loans at Year-end | \$ 184,748 | \$ 193,451 | \$ 194,391 | \$ 198,110 | \$ 221,607 |
| Average daily balances for loans for the year | 193,005 | 195,750 | 200,713 | 218,259 | 232,467 |
| Allowance for loan losses at beginning of period | \$ 2,500 | \$ 3,032 | \$ 8,854 | \$ 7,679 | \$ 4,812 |
| Loan charge-offs during the period | | | | | |
| Commercial | | (267) | (295) | (109) | (1,281) |
| Commercial real estate | (28) | (357) | (3,611) | (396) | (3,647) |
| Construction | | | (1,740) | (2,812) | |
| Residential | | (836) | (1,067) | (872) | (141) |
| Real Estate | | | | | |
| Home equity line of credit | (64) | (600) | (638) | (813) | (428) |
| Consumer | (3) | (14) | (12) | (8) | (15) |
| Total Charge-offs | (95) | (2,074) | (7,363) | (5,010) | (5,512) |
| Loan recoveries during the period | | | | | |
| Commercial | 75 | | 18 | 2 | 22 |
| Commercial real estate | 5 | 86 | 16 | | |
| Residential | 30 | 23 | 33 | | |
| Home equity line of credit | 2 | 5 | 7 | 3 | |
| Consumer | | 1 | | 9 | 17 |
| Total recoveries | 112 | 115 | 74 | 14 | 39 |
| Net charge-offs | 17 | (1,959) | (7,289) | (4,996) | (5,473) |
| Provision charged to expense | (75) | 1,427 | 1,467 | 6,171 | 8,340 |
| Allowance for loan losses at end of period | \$ 2,442 | \$ 2,500 | \$ 3,032 | \$ 8,854 | \$ 7,679 |
| Ratio of net charge-offs during the period to average loans outstanding | 0.01% | (1.00)% | (3.63)% | (2.29)% | (2.35)% |
| Allowance for loan losses to loans outstanding at year-end | 1.32% | 1.28% | 1.54% | 4.28% | 3.35% |

Allocation of the Allowance for Loan Losses

Presented below is an analysis of the composition of the allowance for loan losses and percent of loans in each category to total loans as of the dates indicated:

| | At December 31, (Dollars in thousands) | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| | 2014 | | 2013 | | 2012 | |
| | Amount | Percent | Amount | Percent | Amount | Percent |
| Balance at December 31: | | | | | | |
| Commercial (1) | \$ 353 | 8.7% | \$ 483 | 10.9% | \$ 674 | 12.4% |
| Real estate mortgage (2) | 1,206 | 51.2 | 1,380 | 50.9 | 1,386 | 50.8 |
| Home equity line of credit | 522 | 24.9 | 330 | 24.1 | 646 | 25.6 |
| Residential | 346 | 14.6 | 266 | 13.4 | 305 | 10.6 |
| Consumer | 15 | 0.6 | 41 | 0.7 | 21 | 0.6 |
| Unallocated | | | | | | |

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| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|----|-------|--------|----|-------|--------|----|-------|--------|
| Totals | \$ | 2,442 | 100.0% | \$ | 2,500 | 100.0% | \$ | 3,032 | 100.0% |
|--------|----|-------|--------|----|-------|--------|----|-------|--------|

(1) Category also includes lease financing, loans to financial institutions, tax-exempt loans, agricultural production financing and other loans to farmers and construction real estate loans.

(2) Category includes commercial and farmland.

One measurement used by CFS management in assessing the risk inherent in the loan portfolio is the level of nonperforming loans. Nonperforming loans are comprised of non-accrual loans and other loans 90 days or more past due. Nonperforming loans and other assets were as follows at the dates indicated.

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| | At December 31, (Dollars in thousands) | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|
| | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 | |
| Non-accrual loans | \$ 1,975 | \$ 166 | \$ 2,758 | \$ 7,220 | \$ 11,595 | |
| Non-accrual restructured loans | 340 | 776 | 4,667 | 6,579 | 8,699 | |
| Other loans 90 days past due | 133 | 230 | 342 | | | |
| Total nonperforming loans | 2,448 | 1,172 | 7,767 | 13,799 | 20,294 | |
| Foreclosed assets | 2,199 | 2,269 | 9,012 | 9,265 | 3,008 | |
| Total nonperforming assets | \$ 4,647 | \$ 3,441 | \$ 16,779 | \$ 23,064 | \$ 23,302 | |
| Accruing restructured loans | \$ 392 | \$ 398 | \$ 1,294 | \$ 2,295 | \$ 6,090 | |
| Nonperforming loans to total loans | 1.32% | 0.60% | 3.94% | 6.68% | 8.86% | |
| Allowance for loan losses | | | | | | |
| To nonperforming loans | 99.8% | 213.3% | 38.9% | 64.16% | 37.84% | |
| Total nonperforming assets | | | | | | |
| To total stockholders' equity | 16.26% | 15.91% | 75.07% | 318.12% | 131.24% | |
| Total nonperforming assets | | | | | | |
| To total assets | 1.35% | 1.01% | 4.72% | 7.01% | 6.71% | |

At December 31, 2014, nonperforming assets consisted of \$2.4 million of nonperforming loans and other real estate owned (OREO) of \$2.2 million. The largest component of nonperforming loans was home equity loans, which represented \$964,000, or 41.6%, of total nonperforming loans at December 31, 2014. At December 31, 2014, commercial real estate loans totaled \$823,000, or 35.6%, of total nonperforming loans. The ratio of the allowance for loan losses to nonperforming loans was 99.8% as of December 31, 2014 as compared to 213.3% as of December 31, 2013.

The Bank would have recorded interest income of \$84,000 for the year ended December 31, 2014 had non-accrual loans and troubled debt restructurings been current in accordance with their original terms.

OREO decreased \$70,000 to \$2.2 million at December 31, 2014 from \$2.3 million at December 31, 2013. At December 31, 2014, OREO consisted of 12 properties that were acquired through foreclosure or deed in lieu of foreclosure. Included in the total are nine single-family residential properties, two parcels of land and one commercial real estate property.

The provision for loan losses for the year ended December 31, 2014 totaled (\$75,000), which represents a \$1.5 million decrease from the provision for loan losses for the year ended December 31, 2013. This decrease in the provision is the result of management's quarterly analysis of the allowance for loan losses and a smaller loan portfolio. Levels of nonperforming loans are considered manageable at year end 2014. Total nonperforming loans as a percentage of total loans totaled 1.32% at December 31, 2014 compared to 0.60% at December 31, 2013. Based on its analysis of the loan portfolio risks discussed above, including historical loss experience and levels of nonperforming loans, management believes that the allowance for loan losses is adequate at December 31, 2014 to cover any probable incurred losses.

Net charge-offs (recoveries) for the years ended December 31, 2014 and 2013 totaled (\$17,000) and \$2.0 million, respectively. The charge-offs during 2013 were primarily the result of recent recessionary economic conditions and the weakened economic environment's impact upon smaller businesses within CFS's primary market area. In 2005, CFS management formed a credit quality committee that was charged with monitoring problem credits and directing their resolution. The committee has been successful in identifying existing problem credits and meets on a monthly basis to monitor troubled credits. CFS's management believes that as of December 31, 2014 any past problems which resulted from weaknesses in processes have been identified and addressed.

Investment Securities

The CFS board of directors sets the investment policy and procedures of the Bank. This policy generally provides that investment decisions will be made based on the safety of the investment, liquidity requirements of the Bank and, to a lesser extent, potential return on the investments. In pursuing these objectives, the Bank considers the ability of an investment to provide earnings consistent with factors of quality, maturity, marketability and risk diversification. The Bank does not participate in hedging programs or other activities involving the use of derivative financial instruments.

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CFS's securities portfolio can be divided into five categories, as shown below. The securities portfolio is managed to provide liquidity and earnings in various interest rate cycles. The carrying value of these securities at December 31, 2014, 2013 and 2012 is detailed below.

| | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------|
| U.S. Government Agency Debt Securities | \$ 7,738 | \$ 11,059 | \$ 21,430 |
| U.S. Government Agency Mortgage-backed Securities | 66,139 | 60,065 | 22,975 |
| States and Political Subdivisions | 19,913 | 16,367 | 2,909 |
| Agency Preferred Stock | 15 | 35 | 37 |
| SBA Securities | 12,180 | 8,303 | 237 |
| Total Investment Securities | \$ 105,985 | \$ 95,829 | \$ 47,588 |

The following table shows the weighted average yield for each security group by term to final maturity as of December 31, 2014.

| Security Type | Less than 1 year | Yield | 1 to 5 years | Yield | 5 to 10 years | Yield | Over 10 years | Yield |
|---|------------------|-------|--------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| U.S. Government Agency Debt Securities | \$ | % | | | 1,939 | 2.48% | \$ 5,799 | 2.88% |
| U.S. Government Agency Mortgage-backed Securities | | % | 884 | 1.16% | 16,991 | 1.36% | 48,264 | 1.64% |
| States and Political Subdivisions(1) | 482 | 1.91% | 3,222 | 2.75% | 15,020 | 2.75% | 1,189 | 3.68% |
| Agency Preferred Stock | | | | | | | 15 | 0.00% |
| SBA Securities | | % | 3,233 | 0.80% | 4,327 | 1.39% | 4,620 | 1.06% |
| Total Investment Securities | \$ 482 | 1.91% | \$ 7,339 | 1.74% | \$ 38,277 | 1.96% | \$ 59,887 | 1.76% |

(1) Fully taxable equivalent

At December 31, 2014, CFS did not own any security of any one issuer where the aggregate carrying value of such securities exceeded 10% of CFS stockholders' equity, except for certain debt securities of the U.S. Government agencies and corporations.

Deposits

The Bank offers a variety of deposit accounts with a range of interest rates and terms. The Bank's deposit accounts consist of regular savings accounts, retail checking/NOW accounts, commercial checking accounts, money market accounts and certificate of deposit accounts. The Bank offers certificate of deposit accounts with balances in excess of \$100,000 at preferential rates (jumbo certificates) and also offers Individual Retirement Accounts and other qualified plan accounts.

At December 31, 2014, the Bank's deposits totaled \$305.4 million, or 97.1% of interest-bearing liabilities. This represents a decrease from December 31, 2013 when the Bank's deposits totaled \$315.7 million and represented 96.4% of interest-bearing liabilities. For the year ended December 31, 2014, the average balance of core

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deposits (savings, NOW, money market and non-interest bearing accounts) totaled \$228.3 million, or 74.0% of total average deposits, compared to \$228.2 million, or 71.0% of total average deposits, for the year ended December 31, 2013. Although the Bank has a significant portion of its deposits in core deposits, management monitors activity on the Bank's core deposits and, based on historical experience and the Bank's current pricing strategy, believes that the Bank will continue to retain a large portion of such accounts.

The flow of deposits is influenced significantly by general economic conditions, changes in money market rates, prevailing interest rates and local competition. The Bank's deposits are obtained predominantly from the areas in which its facilities are located. The Bank relies primarily on customer service and long-standing relationships with customers to attract and retain these deposits; however, market interest rates and rates offered by competing financial institutions affect the Bank's ability to attract and retain deposits. The Bank uses traditional means of advertising its deposit products and generally does not solicit deposits from outside its market area. While certificates of deposit in excess of \$100,000 are accepted by the Bank, and may be subject to preferential rates, the Bank does not actively solicit such deposits as such deposits are more difficult to retain than core deposits.

The following table sets forth the distribution of the Bank's deposit accounts for the periods indicated and the weighted average rates on each category presented.

| | At December 31, 2014 (Dollars in thousands) | | At December 31, 2013 | |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Balance | Weighted Average Rate | Balance | Weighted Average Rate |
| Noninterest-bearing accounts | \$ 44,754 | %\$ | 39,613 | % |
| NOW accounts | 71,492 | 0.18% | 72,545 | 0.20% |
| Regular savings accounts | 71,199 | 0.26% | 74,389 | 0.28% |
| Money market accounts | 43,666 | 0.29% | 42,443 | 0.35% |
| Certificates of deposit | 74,310 | 0.93% | 86,719 | 1.02% |
| Total deposits | \$ 305,421 | 0.39% | \$ 315,709 | 0.51% |

The following table shows the maturity schedule for CFS's time deposits of \$100,000 or more as of December 31, 2014 and December 31, 2013.

| | 2014 | | 2013 | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----|--------|--|
| | (In thousands) | | | |
| Three months or less | \$ 4,761 | \$ | 4,071 | |
| Three months through six months | 3,770 | | 4,438 | |
| Six months through twelve months | 5,449 | | 8,240 | |
| Over twelve months | 11,661 | | 15,872 | |
| | \$ 25,641 | \$ | 32,621 | |

Personnel

As of December 31, 2014, CFS and its subsidiaries had a total of 71 full-time employees and 12 part-time employees. This compares to 77 full-time and 15 part-time employees as of December 31, 2013. None of these employees are subject to a collective bargaining agreement. CFS believes that its relationship with its employees is good.

REGULATION AND SUPERVISION

CFS and the Bank are subject to an extensive system of banking laws and regulations that are intended primarily for the protection of the customers and depositors of the Bank rather than holders of CFS' s securities. These laws and regulations govern such areas as permissible activities, reserves, loans and investments and rates of interest that can be charged on loans.

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The Dodd-Frank Act, which was enacted on July 21, 2010, restructured the regulation of depository institutions. The Dodd-Frank Act contains several provisions that will continue to have a direct impact on the operations of CFS and the Bank. The legislation contains changes to the laws governing, among other things, FDIC assessments, mortgage originations, holding company capital requirements and risk retention requirements for securitized loans. The Dodd-Frank Act also provided for the creation of a new agency, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, as an independent bureau of the Federal Reserve Board, to take over the implementation of federal consumer financial protection and fair lending laws from the depository institution regulators. However, institutions of \$10 billion or fewer in assets, such as the Bank, continue to be examined for compliance with such laws and regulations by, and subject to the primary enforcement authority of, their prudential regulator rather than the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Much of the legislation requires implementation through regulations and, accordingly, a complete assessment of its impact on CFS and the Bank are not yet possible since such regulations have not yet been issued. However, the enactment of the legislation is likely to increase regulatory burdens and costs for CFS and have a material impact on CFS's operations.

Certain of the regulatory requirements that are or will be applicable to CFS and the Bank are described below. This description of statutes and regulations is not intended to be a complete explanation of such statutes and regulations and their effects on CFS and the Bank and is qualified in its entirety by reference to the actual statutes and regulations.

Regulation of CFS

CFS is regulated as a bank holding company under the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956, as amended by the 1999 financial modernization legislation known as the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (the BHC Act). As such, it is subject to the supervision and enforcement authority of the Federal Reserve Board. In general, the BHC Act limits the business of bank holding companies to banking, managing or controlling banks, performing certain servicing activities for subsidiaries, and activities that the Federal Reserve Board has determined, by order of regulation in effect prior to the enactment of the BHC Act, to be so closely related to banking or managing or controlling banks as to be a proper incident thereto. As a result of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act amendments to the BHC Act, a bank holding company that meets certain requirements and opts to become a financial holding company may engage in any activity, or acquire and retain the shares of any company engaged in any activity, that is either (1) financial in nature or incidental to such financial activity (as determined by the Federal Reserve Board in consultation with the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury) or (2) complementary to a financial activity and does not pose a substantial risk to the safety and soundness of depository institutions or the financial system generally (as solely determined by the Federal Reserve Board). Activities that are financial in nature include securities underwriting and dealing, insurance underwriting and making merchant banking investments in commercial and financial companies.

Further, under the BHC Act, CFS is required to file annual reports and such additional information as the Federal Reserve Board may require and is subject to examination by the Federal Reserve Board. The Federal Reserve Board has jurisdiction to regulate virtually all aspects of CFS's business. See Regulation of the Bank below for discussion of regulatory framework applicable to the Bank.

The BHC Act requires every bank holding company to obtain the prior approval of the Federal Reserve Board before merging with or consolidating into another bank holding company, acquiring substantially all the assets of any bank or acquiring directly or indirectly any ownership or control of more than 5% of the voting shares of any bank.

The BHC Act also prohibits a bank holding company, with certain exceptions, from acquiring direct or indirect ownership or control of more than 5% of the voting shares of any company which is not a bank and from engaging in any business other than that of banking, managing and controlling banks or furnishing services to banks and their subsidiaries. As discussed above, CFS, however, may engage in certain businesses determined by the Federal Reserve Board to be so closely related to banking or managing and controlling banks as to be a proper incident

thereto.

Banking regulations restrict the amount of dividends that a bank may pay to its stockholders. Thus, CFS's ability to pay dividends to its shareholders will be limited by statutory and regulatory restrictions. Illinois banking

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law restricts the payment of cash dividends by a state bank by providing, subject to certain exceptions, that dividends may be paid only out of net profits then on hand after deducting its losses and bad debts. Federal law generally prohibits a bank from making any capital distribution (including payment of a dividend) or paying any management fee to its parent company if the depository institution would thereafter be undercapitalized. The Federal Reserve Board has issued a policy statement regarding the payment of dividends by bank holding companies which provides that dividends should only be paid out of current earnings and only if the prospective rate of earnings retention by the bank holding company appears consistent with the organization's capital needs, asset quality and overall financial condition. The Federal Reserve Board's policies also provide that a bank holding company should serve as a source of financial strength to its subsidiary banks by standing ready to use available resources to provide adequate capital funds to those banks during periods of financial stress or adversity and by maintaining the financial flexibility and capital-raising capacity to obtain additional resources for assisting its subsidiary banks where necessary. These policies could also impact CFS's ability to pay dividends.

The FDIC may prevent an insured bank from paying dividends if the Bank is in default of payment of any assessment due to the FDIC. In addition, the FDIC may prohibit the payment of dividends by a bank, if such payment is determined, by reason of the financial conditions of the bank, to be an unsafe and unsound banking practice.

Regulation of the Bank

The Bank is regulated by the FDIC, as its primary federal regulator. The Bank is subject to the provisions of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act and examination by the FDIC. As an Illinois state chartered bank, the Bank is also subject to examination by IDFPR. The examinations by the various regulatory authorities are designed for the protection of bank depositors and the solvency of the FDIC Deposit Insurance Fund.

The federal and state laws and regulations generally applicable to the Bank regulate, among other things, the scope of business, its investments, reserves against deposits, the nature and amount of and collateral for loans, and the location of banking offices and types of activities which may be performed at such offices. Both the IDFPR and the FDIC have enforcement authority over the Bank, including the authority to appoint a conservator or receiver under certain circumstances.

Subsidiaries of a bank holding company are subject to certain restrictions under the Federal Reserve Act and the Federal Deposit Insurance Act on loans and extensions of credit to the bank holding company or to its other subsidiaries, investments in the stock or other securities of the bank holding company or its other subsidiaries, or advances to any borrower collateralized by such stock or other securities.

The Bank's deposits are insured up to applicable limits by the Deposit Insurance Fund of the FDIC. Due to the recent difficult economic conditions, deposit insurance per account owner has been raised to \$250,000. That coverage was made permanent by the Dodd-Frank Act.

Under the FDIC's previous risk-based assessment system, insured institutions were assigned to one of four risk categories based on supervisory evaluations, regulatory capital levels and certain other factors. An institution's assessment rate depended upon the category to which it is assigned, with less risky institutions paying lower assessments. On February 7, 2011, the FDIC approved a final rule that implemented changes to the deposit insurance assessment system mandated by the Dodd-Frank Act. The final rule, which became effective on April 1, 2011, revised the base on which deposit insurance assessments are charged from one that is based on domestic deposits to one that is based on average consolidated total assets minus average tangible equity. Under the final rule, insured depository institutions are required to report their average

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consolidated total assets on a daily basis, using the regulatory accounting methodology established for reporting total assets. For purposes of the final rule, tangible equity is defined as Tier 1 capital.

The FDIC imposed on all insured institutions a special emergency assessment of five basis points of total assets minus Tier 1 capital (as of June 30, 2009), capped at ten basis points of an institution's deposit assessment base, in order to cover losses to the Deposit Insurance Fund. That special assessment was collected on September 30, 2009. In lieu of further special assessments, the FDIC required insured institutions to prepay estimated quarterly risk-based assessments for the fourth quarter of 2009 through the fourth quarter of 2012. The estimated

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assessments, which included an assumed annual assessment base increase of 5%, were recorded as a prepaid expense asset as of December 30, 2009. As of December 31, 2009, and each quarter thereafter, a charge to earnings is recorded for each regular assessment with an offsetting credit to the prepaid asset.

In addition to the assessment for deposit insurance, institutions are required to make payments on bonds issued in the late 1980s by the financing corporation to recapitalize a predecessor deposit insurance fund. That payment is established quarterly and during the calendar year ending December 31, 2013 averaged 1.05 basis points of assessable deposits.

The Dodd-Frank Act increased the minimum target Deposit Insurance Fund ratio from 1.15% of estimated insured deposits to 1.35% of estimated insured deposits. The FDIC must seek to achieve the 1.35% ratio by September 30, 2020. Insured institutions with assets of \$10 billion or more are supposed to fund the increase. The Dodd-Frank Act eliminated the 1.5% maximum fund ratio, instead leaving it to the discretion of the FDIC and the FDIC has recently exercised that discretion by establishing a long range fund ratio of 2%.

The FDIC has authority to increase insurance assessments. A significant increase in insurance premiums would likely have an adverse effect on the operating expenses and results of operations of the Bank. Management cannot predict what insurance assessment rates will be in the future.

Insurance of deposits may be terminated by the FDIC upon a finding that the institution has engaged in unsafe or unsound practices, is in an unsafe or unsound condition to continue operations or has violated any applicable law, regulation, rule, order or regulatory condition imposed in writing. The management of the Bank does not know of any practice, condition or violation that might lead to termination of deposit insurance.

Capital Requirements

The Federal Reserve Board and the FDIC have established guidelines for risk-based capital of bank holding companies and banks. These guidelines establish a risk adjusted ratio relating total capital to risk-weighted assets and off-balance-sheet exposures. These capital guidelines primarily define the components of capital, categorize assets into different risk classes and include certain off-balance-sheet items in the calculation of capital requirements. Generally, Tier 1 capital consists of shareholders' equity less intangible assets and unrealized gain or loss on securities available for sale, and Tier 2 capital consists of Tier 1 capital plus qualifying loan loss reserves. The agencies also apply leverage requirements which establish a required ratio of Tier 1 capital to total adjusted assets. As previously disclosed, on January 10, 2014, the Bank received notification from the FDIC and IDFP that the Order issued to the Bank by the FDIC and IDFP on January 21, 2011 was terminated effective January 10, 2014. In connection with the termination of the Order, the Bank agreed to achieve Tier 1 capital at least equal to 8% of total assets and total capital at least equal to 12% of risk-weighted assets. At December 31, 2014 CFS's Tier 1 and total capital ratios were 7.7% and 13.4%, respectively, compared to 7.7% and 12.9% at September 30, 2014, 7.2% and 12.5% at June 30, 2014, 7.0% and 12.0% at March 31, 2014 and 6.8% and 11.9% at December 31, 2013, respectively.

The FDIC Improvement Act of 1991 established a system of prompt corrective action to resolve the problems of undercapitalized depository institutions. Under this system, federal banking regulators have established five capital categories, well capitalized, adequately capitalized, undercapitalized, significantly undercapitalized and critically undercapitalized. The federal banking agencies have also specified by regulation the relevant capital levels for each of the categories. Each depository institution is placed within one of these categories and is subject to differential regulation corresponding to the capital category within which it falls.

Federal banking regulators are required to take specified mandatory supervisory actions and are authorized to take other discretionary actions with respect to institutions in the three undercapitalized categories. The severity of the action depends upon the capital category in which the institution is placed. Generally, subject to a narrow exception, the banking regulator must appoint a receiver or conservator for an institution that is critically undercapitalized. An institution in any of the undercapitalized categories is required to submit an acceptable capital restoration plan to its appropriate federal banking agency and such capital plan must be guaranteed by any parent holding company in an amount of the lesser of 5% of the institution's assets or the amount of the capital deficiency. An undercapitalized institution is also generally prohibited from paying any dividends, increasing its average total

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assets, making acquisitions, establishing any branches or engaging in any new line of business, except under an accepted capital restoration plan or with FDIC approval.

Failure to meet capital guidelines could subject a bank or a bank holding company to a variety of enforcement remedies, including issuance of a capital directive, the termination of deposit insurance by the FDIC, a prohibition on accepting brokered deposits and other restrictions on its business. In addition, such a bank would generally not receive regulatory approval of any application that requires the consideration of capital adequacy, such as a branch or merger application, unless the bank could demonstrate a reasonable plan to meet the capital requirement within a reasonable period of time.

The Dodd-Frank Act required the Federal Reserve Board to promulgate consolidated capital requirements for depository institution holding companies that are no less stringent, both quantitatively and in terms of components of capital, than those applicable to institutions themselves. In early July 2013, the Federal Reserve Board approved revisions to its capital adequacy guidelines and prompt corrective action rules that implement the revised standards of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, commonly called Basel III, and address relevant provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act. Basel III refers to two consultative documents released by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision in December 2009, the rules text released in December 2010, and loss absorbency rules issued in January 2011, which include significant changes to bank capital, leverage and liquidity requirements.

The rules include new risk-based capital and leverage ratios, which became effective January 1, 2015, and revise the definition of what constitutes capital for purposes of calculating those ratios. The new minimum capital level requirements applicable to CFS will be: (i) a new common equity Tier 1 capital ratio of 4.5%; (ii) a Tier 1 capital ratio of 6% (increased from 4%); (iii) a total capital ratio of 8% (unchanged from current rules); and (iv) a Tier 1 leverage ratio of 4% for all institutions. The rules eliminate the inclusion of certain instruments, such as trust preferred securities, from Tier 1 capital. Instruments issued prior to May 19, 2010 will be grandfathered for companies with consolidated assets of \$15 billion or less. The rules also establish a capital conservation buffer of 2.5% above the new regulatory minimum capital requirements, which must consist entirely of common equity Tier 1 capital and would result in the following minimum ratios: (i) a common equity Tier 1 capital ratio of 7.0%, (ii) a Tier 1 capital ratio of 8.5%, and (iii) a total capital ratio of 10.5%. The new capital conservation buffer requirement will be phased in beginning in January 2016 at 0.625% of risk-weighted assets and would increase by that amount each year until fully implemented in January 2019. An institution would be subject to limitations on paying dividends, engaging in share repurchases, and paying discretionary bonuses if its capital level falls below the buffer amount. These limitations would establish a maximum percentage of eligible retained income that could be utilized for such actions.

Monetary Policy and Economic Conditions

The earnings of commercial banks and bank holding companies are affected not only by general economic conditions, but also by the policies of various governmental regulatory authorities. In particular, the Federal Reserve Board influences conditions in the money and capital markets, which affect interest rates and growth in bank credit and deposits. Federal Reserve Board monetary policies have had a significant effect on the operating results of commercial banks in the past and this is expected to continue in the future. The general effect, if any, of such policies on future business and earnings of CFS and its Bank cannot be predicted.

Consumer Protection Laws

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CFS's business includes making a variety of types of loans to individuals. In making these loans, CFS is subject to State usury and regulatory laws and to various federal statutes, including the privacy of consumer information provisions of the Graham-Leach-Bliley Act and regulations promulgated thereunder, the Equal Opportunity Act, the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Truth in Lending Act, the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act, and the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, and the regulations promulgated thereunder, which prohibit discrimination, specify disclosures to be made to borrowers regarding credit and settlement costs, and regulate the mortgage servicing activities of CFS, including the maintenance and operation of escrow accounts and the transfer of mortgage loan servicing. In receiving deposits, CFS is subject to extensive regulation under state and federal law and regulations, including the Truth in Savings Act, the Expedited Funds Availability Act, the Bank Secrecy Act, the Electronic Funds Transfer Act, the USA Patriot Act of 2001, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Act. Violation

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of these laws could result in the imposition of significant damages and fines upon CFS and its directors and officers.

Federal Taxation

CFS files a consolidated federal income tax return. To the extent a member of the consolidated group incurs a net loss that is utilized to reduce the consolidated federal tax liability, that member will be reimbursed for the tax benefit utilized from the member incurring federal tax liabilities.

Amounts provided for income tax expense are based upon income reported for financial statement purposes and do not necessarily represent amounts currently payable to federal and state tax authorities. Deferred income taxes, which principally arise from the temporary difference related to the recognition of certain income and expense items for financial reporting purposes and the period in which they affect federal and state tax income, are included in the amounts provided for income taxes.

State Taxation

The Bank is required to file Illinois income tax returns. For these purposes, Illinois taxable income generally means federal taxable income subject to certain modifications the primary one of which is the exclusion of interest income on United States obligations.

As a Maryland holding company not earning income in Maryland, CFS is exempt from Maryland corporate income tax but is required to file an annual report with and pay an annual franchise tax to the State of Maryland.

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MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL CONDITION AND RESULTS OF OPERATIONS OF CFS

(All table dollar amounts in this Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operation are in thousands, except share data)

The following presents management's discussion and analysis of the results of operations and financial condition of CFS as of the dates and for the periods indicated. This discussion should be read in conjunction with CFS's Consolidated Financial Statements and the Notes thereto and other financial data appearing in this proxy statement/prospectus.

Critical Accounting Policies

Generally accepted accounting principles require management to apply significant judgment to certain accounting, reporting and disclosure matters. Management must use assumptions and estimates to apply those principles where actual measurement is not possible or practical. Below is a discussion of CFS's critical accounting policies. These policies are critical because they are highly dependent upon subjective or complex judgments, assumptions and estimates. Changes in such estimates may have a significant impact on CFS's financial statements. Management has reviewed the application of these policies with CFS's Audit Committee.

Allowance for Loan Losses. The allowance for loan losses represents management's estimate of probable losses inherent in CFS's loan portfolio. In determining the appropriate amount of the allowance for loan losses, management makes numerous assumptions, estimates and assessments.

CFS's strategy for credit risk management includes conservative credit policies and underwriting criteria for all loans, as well as an overall credit limit for each customer significantly below legal lending limits. The strategy also emphasizes diversification on a geographic, industry and customer level, regular credit quality reviews and management reviews of large credit exposures and loans experiencing deterioration of credit quality.

Larger commercial loans that exhibit probable or observed credit weaknesses are subject to individual review. Where appropriate, reserves are allocated to individual loans based on management's estimate of the borrower's ability to repay the loan given the availability of collateral, other sources of cash flow and legal options available to CFS. Included in the review of individual loans are those that are impaired as provided in ASC 310-40, Accounting by Creditors for Impairment of a Loan. Any allowances for impaired loans are measured based on the present value of expected future cash flows discounted at the loan's effective interest rate or fair value of the underlying collateral. CFS evaluates the collectability of both principal and interest when assessing the need for a loss accrual. Historical loss rates are applied to other commercial loans not subject to specific reserve allocations.

Homogenous loans, such as consumer installment and residential mortgage loans are not individually risk graded. Rather, credit scoring systems are used to assess credit risks. Reserves are established for each pool of loans using loss rates based on a five year average net charge-off history by loan category.

Historical loss rates for commercial and consumer loans may be adjusted for significant factors that, in management's judgment, reflect the impact of any current conditions on loss recognition. Factors which management considers in the analysis include the effects of the national and local economies, trends in the nature and volume of loans (delinquencies, charge-offs and nonaccrual loans), changes in mix, asset quality trends, risk management and loan administration, changes in the internal lending policies and credit standards, collection practices and examination results from bank regulatory agencies and CFS's internal loan review. An unallocated reserve, primarily based on the factors noted above, is maintained to recognize the imprecision in estimating and measuring loss when evaluating reserves for individual loans or pools of loans. Allowances on individual loans and historical loss rates are reviewed quarterly and adjusted as necessary based on changing borrower and/or collateral conditions and actual collection and charge-off experience.

CFS's primary market area for lending is the county of DuPage in northeastern Illinois. When evaluating the adequacy of the allowance, consideration is given to this regional geographic concentration and the closely associated effect changing economic conditions have on CFS's customers.

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CFS has not substantively changed any aspect of its overall approach in the determination of the allowance for loan losses. There have been no material changes in assumptions or estimation techniques as compared to prior periods that impacted the determination of the current period allowance.

Any material increase in the allowance for loan losses may adversely affect CFS's financial condition and results of operations.

Deferred Taxes. Realization of deferred tax assets is dependent on generating sufficient taxable income to cover net operating losses generated by the reversal of temporary differences. A partial or total valuation allowance is provided by way of a charge to income tax expense if it is determined that it is more likely than not that some of or all of the deferred tax asset will not be realized. Under generally accepted accounting principles, income tax benefits and the related tax assets are only allowed to be recognized if they will more likely than not be fully utilized. In each future accounting period, CFS's management will consider both positive and negative evidence when considering the ability of CFS to utilize its net deferred tax asset. Any subsequent reduction in the valuation allowance would lower the amount of income tax expense recognized in CFS's consolidated statements of operations in future periods.

Valuation of Securities. CFS's available-for-sale security portfolio is reported at fair value. The fair value of a security is determined based on quoted market prices. If quoted market prices are not available, fair value is determined based on quoted prices of similar instruments. Available-for-sale securities are reviewed quarterly for possible other-than-temporary impairment. The review includes an analysis of the facts and circumstances of each individual investment such as the length of time the fair value has been below cost, the expectation for that security's performance, the credit worthiness of the issuer and CFS's ability to hold the security to maturity. A decline in value that is considered to be other-than-temporary is recorded as a loss within other operating income in the consolidated statement of income.

Accounting Matters

Accounting Standards Update No. 2014-08- Reporting Discontinued Operations and Disclosures of Disposals of Components of an Entity In April 2014, the Financial Accounting Standards Board, or FASB, issued Accounting Standards Update, or ASU, 2014-08. This update seeks to better define the groups of assets which qualify for discontinued operations, in order to ease the burden and cost for preparers and stakeholders. This issue changed the criteria for reporting discontinued operations and related reporting requirements, including the provision for disclosures about the disposal of and individually significant component of an entity that does not qualify for discontinued operations presentation.

The amendments in this update are effective for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2014. Early adoption is permitted only for disposals or classifications as held for sale. CFS adopted the methodologies prescribed by this ASU by the date required, and this ASU did not have a material effect on its financial position or results of operations.

Accounting Standards Update No. 2014-09- Revenue from Contracts with Customers In May 2014, FASB, in joint cooperation with the International Accounting Standards Board, or IASB, issued ASU 2014-09. The topic of Revenue Recognition had become broad, with several other regulatory agencies issuing standards which lacked cohesion. The new guidance establishes a common framework and reduces the number of requirements to which an entity must consider in recognizing revenue and yet provides improved disclosures to assist stakeholders reviewing financial statements.

The amendments in this update are effective for annual reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2016. Early adoption is not permitted. CFS will adopt the methodologies prescribed by this ASU by the date required, and does not anticipate that the ASU will have a material effect on its financial position or results of operations.

Accounting Standards Update No. 2014-11- Transfers and Servicing In June 2014, FASB, issued ASU 2014-11. This update addresses the concerns of stakeholders by changing the accounting practices surrounding

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repurchase agreements. The new guidance changes the accounting for repurchase-to-maturity transactions and linked repurchase financings to secured borrowing accounting, which is consistent with the accounting for other repurchase agreements.

The amendments in this update are effective for annual reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2015. Early adoption is prohibited. CFS adopted the methodologies prescribed by this ASU by the date required, and this ASU did not have a material effect on its financial position or results of operations.

Accounting Standards Update No. 2014-12- Compensation Stock Compensation In June 2014, FASB, issued ASU 2014-12. This update defines the accounting treatment for share-based payments and resolves the diverse accounting treatment of those awards in practice. The new requirement mandates that a performance target that affects vesting and that could be achieved after the requisite service period be treated as a performance condition. Compensation cost will now be recognized in the period in which it becomes likely that the performance target will be met.

The amendments in this update are effective for annual reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2015. Early adoption is permitted.

Analysis of Net Interest Income

Net interest income represents the difference between income on interest-earning assets and expense on interest-bearing liabilities. Net interest income depends on the relative amounts of interest-earning assets and interest-bearing liabilities and the interest rate earned or paid on them.

Average Balance Sheet. The following table sets forth certain information relating to CFS's average balance sheets and reflects the yield on average earning assets and cost of average interest-bearing liabilities for the years indicated. Such yields and costs are derived by dividing interest income or expense by the average balance of assets or liabilities. The average balance sheet amounts for loans include balances for non-accrual loans. The yields and costs include fees that are considered adjustments to yields.

| (Dollars in thousands) | 2014 | | | 2013 | | | 2012 | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Average Balance | Interest | Rate | Average Balance | Interest | Rate | Average Balance | Interest | Rate |
| Interest-earning assets: | | | | | | | | | |
| Taxable securities | \$ 83,798 | \$ 1,387 | 1.66% | \$ 71,244 | \$ 1,151 | 1.62% | \$ 40,222 | \$ 935 | 2.32% |
| Tax-exempt securities (1) | 16,675 | 567 | 3.40% | 10,054 | 427 | 4.25% | 7,863 | 535 | 6.80% |
| Loans (2) | 193,005 | 9,933 | 5.15% | 198,640 | 10,629 | 5.35% | 200,713 | 10,958 | 5.46% |
| Interest-bearing deposits, FHLB stock and other | 17,167 | 47 | 0.28% | 39,807 | 110 | 0.29% | 50,416 | 151 | 0.30% |
| Total interest-earning assets | 310,645 | 11,934 | 3.84% | 319,745 | 12,317 | 3.85% | 299,214 | 12,579 | 4.20% |
| Total non-interest-earning assets | 23,291 | | | 24,469 | | | 32,760 | | |
| Total assets | \$ 333,936 | | | \$ 344,214 | | | \$ 331,974 | | |

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| Interest-bearing liabilities: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Deposits | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NOW | \$ | 70,285 | 127 | 0.18% | \$ | 73,678 | 150 | 0.20% | \$ | 74,543 | 243 | 0.33% |
| Savings | | 73,113 | 191 | 0.26% | | 70,395 | 198 | 0.28% | | 60,233 | 215 | 0.36% |
| Money market | | 44,343 | 130 | 0.29% | | 44,401 | 156 | 0.35% | | 43,744 | 248 | 0.57% |
| Time | | 80,656 | 747 | 0.93% | | 93,208 | 947 | 1.02% | | 93,992 | 1,048 | 1.12% |
| FHLB advances and other | | 3,965 | 83 | 2.09% | | 5,772 | 118 | 2.05% | | 13,553 | 306 | 2.26% |
| Subordinated debentures | | 3,609 | 70 | 1.93% | | 3,609 | 69 | 1.92% | | 3,609 | 77 | 2.11% |
| Total interest-bearing Liabilities | | 275,971 | 1,348 | 0.49% | | 291,063 | 1,638 | 0.56% | | 289,674 | 2,137 | 0.74% |
| Non-interest-bearing liabilities: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | 33,722 | | | | 32,485 | | | | 33,377 | | |
| Stockholders equity | | 24,243 | | | | 20,666 | | | | 8,923 | | |
| Total liabilities and stockholders equity | \$ | 333,936 | | | \$ | 344,214 | | | \$ | 331,974 | | |
| Net interest income/Interest rate spread | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (3) | \$ | 10,586 | 3.35% | | \$ | 10,679 | 3.29% | | \$ | 10,442 | 3.46% | |
| Less: Taxable equivalent adjustment | | 192 | | | | 145 | | | | 184 | | |
| Net interest income reported | \$ | 10,394 | | | \$ | 10,534 | | | \$ | 10,258 | | |
| Net interest margin (4) | | | 3.35% | | | | 3.29% | | | | 3.43% | |
| Tax equivalent effect | | | 0.06% | | | | 0.05% | | | | 0.06% | |
| Net interest margin (FTE) | | | 3.41% | | | | 3.34% | | | | 3.49% | |

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- (1) Tax-exempt investment income is presented on a fully taxable equivalent basis assuming a 35% tax rate.
 (2) Includes fees that are considered adjustments to yield.
 (3) Interest rate spread represents the difference between the average yield on interest earning assets and average cost of interest bearing liabilities and is presented on a fully tax equivalent basis.
 (4) Net interest margin presents net interest income as a percentage of average interest earning assets.

Rate/Volume Analysis. The following table allocates changes in interest income and interest expense in 2014 compared to 2013 and in 2013 compared to 2012 between amounts attributable to changes in rate and changes in volume for the various categories of interest-earning assets and interest-bearing liabilities. The changes in interest income and interest expense due to both volume and rate have been allocated proportionally.

| (Dollars in thousands) | 2014 Compared to 2013 | | | 2013 Compared to 2012 | | |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| | Change Due to Rate | Change Due to Volume | Total Change | Change Due to Rate | Change Due to Volume | Total Change |
| Interest Earning Assets: | | | | | | |
| Taxable securities | \$ 48 | \$ 204 | \$ 252 | \$ (362) | \$ 559 | \$ 197 |
| Tax exempt securities | (64) | 156 | 92 | (151) | 82 | (69) |
| Loans receivable | (399) | (297) | (696) | (217) | (112) | (329) |
| FHLB stock and other | (16) | (62) | (78) | 12 | (34) | (22) |
| Total interest-earning assets | (431) | 1 | (430) | (718) | 495 | (223) |
| Interest-bearing liabilities | | | | | | |
| Deposits | (188) | (68) | (256) | (361) | 57 | (304) |
| FHLB advances and other borrowed funds | 2 | (37) | (35) | (27) | (161) | (188) |
| Subordinated debentures | | 1 | 1 | (7) | | (7) |
| Total int.-bearing liabilities | (186) | (104) | (290) | (395) | (104) | (499) |
| Change in net interest income | \$ (245) | \$ 105 | \$ (140) | \$ (323) | \$ 599 | \$ 276 |

Comparison of Financial Condition for the Years Ended December 31, 2014 and December 31, 2013

Total assets as of December 31, 2014 were \$343.0 million, which represented a decrease of \$6.0 million, or 1.7%, compared to \$349.0 million at December 31, 2013. Cash and cash equivalents decreased by \$5.9 million, or 20.1%, to \$23.6 million at December 31, 2014 as compared to \$29.6 million at December 31, 2013. This decrease is the result of the deployment of cash to investment securities during 2014. As a result, investment securities increased \$10.2 million to \$106.0 million at December 31, 2014 from \$95.8 million at December 31, 2013. This increase is due to the net effect of a \$6.1 million increase in U.S. agency mortgage backed securities, a \$3.5 million increase in municipal securities and a \$3.3 million decrease in U.S. agency debt securities. Partially offsetting these increases were decreases in loans receivable, interest-bearing time deposits and foreclosed assets. Loans receivable decreased \$10.9 million to \$182.6 million at December 31, 2014 from \$193.5 million at December 31, 2013. This decrease was primarily due to a \$711,000 decrease in home equity lines of credit, a \$5.3 million decrease in commercial loans and a \$5.1 million decrease in commercial real estate loans, partially offset by a \$736,000 increase in residential real estate. Interest bearing time deposits decreased \$945,000 to zero at December 31, 2014. Foreclosed assets decreased \$70,000 to \$2.2 million at December 31, 2014 from \$2.3 million at December 31, 2013. The balance of foreclosed assets at December 31, 2014 consisted of 12 properties that were acquired through

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foreclosure or deed in lieu of foreclosure. Included in the total are nine residential properties, two parcels of land and one commercial real estate property.

Deposits decreased \$10.3 million, or 3.3%, to \$305.4 million at December 31, 2014 as compared to \$315.7 million at December 31, 2013. This decrease primarily consisted of decreases in certificates of deposit and regular savings accounts. Certificates of deposit decreased \$12.4 million, or 14.3% to \$74.3 million at December 31, 2014 from \$86.7 million at December 31, 2013. Regular savings accounts decreased \$3.2 million, or 4.3% to \$71.2 million at December 31, 2014 from \$74.5 million at December 31, 2013. Partially offsetting these decreases was an increase in noninterest-bearing demand deposit accounts. Noninterest-bearing demand deposit accounts increased \$5.2 million, or 13.0% to \$44.8 million at December 31, 2014 from \$39.6 million at December 31, 2013. Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) advances decreased \$2.5 million, or 55.6%, to \$2.0 million at December 31, 2014 from \$4.5 million at December 31, 2013.

Stockholders' equity increased \$6.9 million, or 32.1%, to \$28.6 million at December 31, 2014 from \$21.6 million at December 31, 2013. The increase in stockholders' equity was primarily due to the net income for the year ended December 31, 2014 and an increase of \$1.6 million in CFS's accumulated other comprehensive income relating to the change in fair value of its available-for-sale investment portfolio.

Deferred Tax Assets. CFS's \$5.4 million net income for the year ended December 31, 2014 was primarily due to the reversal of the valuation allowance on a portion of CFS's net deferred tax assets. CFS experienced loan loss provisions totaling \$8.3 million, \$6.2 million, \$1.5 million and \$1.4 million for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013, respectively. A significant portion of these losses were related to participation loans in construction and development projects in which CFS is no longer involved. CFS recorded income tax expense totaling \$4.7 million in 2011 as it established a valuation allowance on substantially all of its net deferred tax assets. In 2012 and 2013, management determined that the realization of the deferred tax asset was not likely and maintained a valuation allowance on substantially all of its net deferred tax assets. In an effort to increase its capital levels, CFS entered into a series of capital raising transactions in 2012 and 2013. These capital transactions raised net proceeds of \$25.8 million and allowed CFS to make significant progress in resolving problem credits and reducing expenses associated with credit-related issues.

The determination of being able to realize the deferred tax assets is highly subjective and dependent upon judgment concerning management's evaluation of both positive and negative evidence, including forecasts of future taxable income, available tax planning strategies and assessments of the current and future economic and business conditions. Management considered both positive and negative evidence regarding CFS's ability to ultimately realize the deferred tax assets, which is largely dependent upon the ability to derive benefits based upon future taxable income. Tax planning strategies available to CFS include investing in taxable instruments rather than tax-exempt securities. In 2014, management reevaluated the income forecasts and other tax strategies and determined that there was support for a change in the valuation allowance against its deferred tax assets. Management concluded in the third quarter of 2014 that, after a comprehensive review of both positive and negative considerations, it was now more likely than not that a portion of the deferred tax assets could be realized. The current five year projection utilized in this analysis includes no net loan growth for 2014 with positive net growth for the forward looking years. In addition, CFS has continued to surpass budgetary projections on a monthly basis for the year ended December 31, 2014. As a result of this review a portion of the valuation allowance against deferred tax assets was reversed.

The positive evidence considered included the following: (1) the quarter ended December 31, 2014 reflects CFS's fifth consecutive quarter of pre-tax earnings; (2) nonperforming assets have decreased from \$23.1 million at December 31, 2011 to \$4.6 million as of December 31, 2014; and (3) the termination of the Order on January 10, 2014. The current trend of pre-tax earnings has not been driven by one-time extraordinary items but by core banking activities. The reduction in nonperforming assets has had a positive effect due to the reduction in legal fees, loan provision expense and other credit related expenses. The improvement in the Bank's risk profile led to the termination of the Order, which resulted in a corresponding \$23,000 monthly reduction in the premiums on FDIC insurance and the lifting of growth restrictions imposed on the Bank, each of which is an important consideration in the projections used in the analysis. The Bank gained efficiencies and monthly cost

savings of approximately \$30,000 per month as CFS converted CFS's core processor in the fourth quarter of 2013. The efficiencies afforded by the new system, along with a general focus on efficiency and accountability, has allowed CFS to reduce

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headcount through attrition. Negative evidence included the decrease in CFS's loan portfolio which was driven by the Order which has now been lifted and reduced noninterest income, primarily from decreased mortgage banking revenue. In future accounting periods, CFS's management will reevaluate whether the current conditions in addition to the positive and negative evidence support a change in the valuation allowance against CFS's deferred tax assets. Any such reduction in the estimated valuation allowance would lower the amount of income tax expense recognized by CFS in future periods.

Comparison of Operating Results for the Years Ended December 31, 2014 and December 31, 2013

General. CFS recorded net income of \$5.4 million for the year ended December 31, 2014 compared to a net loss of \$2.8 million for the year ended December 31, 2013. For the year ended December 31, 2014, basic and diluted earnings per share totaled \$0.18 compared to basic and diluted loss per share of \$0.38 for the year ended December 31, 2013. The increase in net income for the year ended December 31, 2014 is primarily the net effect of a \$4.1 million decrease in income tax expense, a \$1.5 million decrease in provision for loan losses, a \$464,000 decrease in noninterest income; and a \$3.2 million decrease in noninterest expense.

Net interest income. The following table summarizes interest and dividend income and interest expense for the year ended December 31, 2014 and 2013.

| | 2014 | 2013 | \$ Change | % Change |
|--|---|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | Year Ended December 31, (Dollars in thousands) | | | |
| Interest and dividend income: | | | | |
| Interest and fees on loans | \$ 9,933 | \$ 10,629 | \$ (696) | (6.55)% |
| Securities: | | | | |
| Taxable | 1,384 | 1,132 | 252 | 22.26 |
| Exempt from federal tax | 374 | 282 | 92 | 32.62 |
| Federal Home Loan Bank dividends and other | 51 | 129 | (78) | (60.47) |
| Total interest and dividend income | 11,742 | 12,172 | (430) | (3.53) |
| Interest expense: | | | | |
| Deposits | 1,195 | 1,451 | (256) | (17.64) |
| Federal Home Loan Bank advances and other borrowings | 83 | 118 | (35) | (29.66) |
| Subordinated debentures | 70 | 69 | 1 | 1.45 |
| Total interest expense | 1,348 | 1,638 | (290) | (17.71) |
| Net interest income | \$ 10,394 | \$ 10,534 | \$ (140) | (1.33) |

Interest Income. Interest and dividend income decreased \$430,000, or 3.5%, to \$11.7 million for the year ended December 31, 2014, compared to \$12.2 million for the year ended December 31, 2013. This decrease resulted primarily from a decrease in average balance and average yield of loans. The largest component was a decrease of \$696,000 in interest income on loans for the year ended December 31, 2014 compared to the year ended December 31, 2013.

Loan interest and fee income decreased \$696,000 or 6.6%, to \$9.9 million for the year ended December 31, 2014 compared to \$10.6 million for the prior year. This decrease resulted from a decrease in the average balance of loans of \$5.6 million, or 2.8%, to \$193.0 million for the year

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ended December 31, 2014 from \$198.6 million for the year ended December 31, 2013. In addition, the average yield on loans decreased 20 basis points to 5.15% for the year ended December 31, 2014 from 5.35% for the year ended December 31, 2013. This decrease was partially offset by increases in interest on taxable and tax-exempt securities. Interest on taxable securities increased \$252,000 for the year ended December 31, 2014 compared to the year ended December 31, 2013. This increase is primarily due to an increase in the average balance of taxable securities of \$12.6 million to \$83.8 million for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$71.2 million for the prior year period and a four basis point increase in the average yield to 1.66% for the year ended December 31, 2014 from 1.62% for the year ended December 31, 2013. In addition, interest on tax-exempt securities increased \$92,000 for the year ended December 31, 2014 compared to the year ended December 31, 2013. This increase is primarily due to an increase in the average balance of tax-exempt

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securities of \$6.6 million to \$16.7 million for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$10.1 million for the prior year period.

Interest Expense. Interest expense decreased by \$290,000, or 17.7%, to \$1.3 million for the year ended December 31, 2014, from \$1.6 million for the year ended December 31, 2013. This decrease resulted from a decrease in the average rate paid on interest bearing liabilities of seven basis points to 0.49% for the year ended December 31, 2014 from 0.56% for the comparable prior year period. In addition, the average balance of interest bearing liabilities decreased \$15.1 million, or 5.2% to \$276.0 million for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$291.1 million for the year ended December 31, 2013. Interest expense resulting from FHLB advances and other borrowings decreased \$35,000 during the year ended December 31, 2014. The average balance on these borrowings decreased \$1.8 million to \$4.0 million for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$5.8 million for the year ended December 31, 2013.

Net Interest Income before Provision for Loan Losses. Net interest income before provision for loan losses decreased \$140,000, or 1.3%, to \$10.4 million for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$10.5 million for the year ended December 31, 2013. CFS's net interest margin expressed as a percentage of average earning assets increased six basis points to 3.35% for the year ended December 31, 2014 from 3.29% for the year ended December 31, 2013. The tax equivalent yield on average earning assets decreased one basis point to 3.84% for the year ended December 31, 2014 from 3.85% for the year ended December 31, 2013. This decrease was due to a decrease in yield on tax-exempt securities and loans. The yield on tax-exempt securities decreased 85 basis points to 3.40% for the year ended December 31, 2014 from 4.25% for the prior year period and the yield on average loans decreased to 5.15% for the year ended December 31, 2014 from 5.35% for the year ended December 31, 2013. In addition, there was a seven basis point decrease in the cost of interest-bearing liabilities to 0.49% for the year ended December 31, 2014 as compared to 0.56% a year earlier. Increasing net interest margin is dependent on the Bank's ability to generate higher yielding assets and lower-cost deposits. Management continues to closely monitor the net interest margin.

Provision for Loan Losses. The Bank's provision for loan losses decreased to (\$75,000) for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$1.4 million for the year ended December 31, 2013. The decrease in the provision for loan losses was the result of management's quarterly analysis of the allowance for loan loss. On December 31, 2014, and December 31, 2013, non-performing loans totaled \$2.4 million and \$1.2 million, respectively. On December 31, 2014, the ratio of the allowance for loan losses to non-performing loans was 99.8% compared to 213.3% at December 31, 2013. Management believes the allowance coverage is sufficient due to the estimated loss potential. The ratio of the allowance to total loans was 1.32% and 1.28% at December 31, 2014 and December 31, 2013, respectively. Charge-offs, net of recoveries, totaled (\$17,000) for the year ended December 31, 2014 compared to \$2.0 million for the year ended December 31, 2013. Management performs an allowance sufficiency analysis, at least quarterly, based on the portfolio composition, asset classifications, loan-to-value ratios, impairments in the current portfolio and other factors. This analysis is designed to reflect credit losses for specifically identified loans, as well as credit losses in the remainder of the portfolio. The reserve methodology employed by management reflects the difference in degree of risk between the various categories of loans in the Bank's portfolio. The reserve methodology also critically assesses those loans adversely classified in the portfolio by management. While management estimates loan losses using the best available information, no assurance can be given that future additions to the allowance will not be necessary based on changes in economic and real estate market conditions, further information obtained regarding problem loans, identification of additional problem loans and other factors, both within and outside of management's control. The Bank conducts quarterly evaluations on nonperforming assets and obtains independent appraisals when there is a material development such as a transfer to other real estate owned. In addition, the FDIC and IDFP, as an integral part of their examination process, periodically review the Bank's allowance for loan losses. As a result of their review, the FDIC and IDFP may require the Bank to make additional provisions for estimated losses based upon judgments different from those of management.

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| | 2014 | Year Ended December 31, | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------|-----------|----------|
| | | 2013 | \$ Change | % Change |
| | | (Dollars in thousands) | | |
| Non-interest income: | | | | |
| Service charges on deposit accounts | \$ 370 | \$ 350 | \$ 20 | 5.71% |
| Gain on sale of loans | 484 | 1,144 | (660) | (57.69) |
| Gain (loss) on sale of securities | (15) | 55 | (70) | (127.27) |
| Loss on sale of assets | (74) | (175) | 101 | 57.71 |
| Loss on sale of foreclosed assets | (21) | (328) | 307 | 93.60 |
| Bank owned life insurance | 213 | 223 | (10) | (4.48) |
| Other non-interest income | 828 | 980 | (152) | (15.51) |
| Total non-interest income | \$ 1,785 | \$ 2,249 | \$ (464) | (20.63) |

Noninterest income consists primarily of service charges on customer deposit accounts, loss on sale of foreclosed assets, gain on sale of loans, and other service charges and fees. Noninterest income decreased \$464,000, or 20.6%, to \$1.8 million for the year ended December 31, 2014 as compared to \$2.2 million for the year ended December 31, 2013, primarily due to decreases in gains on sale of loans which were partially offset by decreases in loss on sale of foreclosed assets. Gain on sale of loans decreased \$660,000 to \$484,000 for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$1.1 million for the year ended December 31, 2013 as prior year refinancing activity slowed in 2014. Loss on sale of foreclosed assets decreased \$307,000 to \$21,000 for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$328,000 for the year ended December 31, 2013. Service charges on deposit accounts increased \$20,000 to \$370,000 for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$350,000 for the year ended December 31, 2013. This increase was primarily due to a higher volume of debit card interchange fees. Other non-interest income decreased \$152,000 to \$828,000 for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$980,000 for the year ended December 31, 2013. This decrease was partially due to lower rents received on foreclosed properties.

Noninterest Expense.

| | 2014 | Year Ended December 31, | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|------------|----------|
| | | 2013 | \$ Change | % Change |
| | | (Dollars in thousands) | | |
| Non-interest expenses: | | | | |
| Salaries and employee benefits | \$ 5,730 | \$ 5,943 | \$ (213) | (3.58)% |
| Net occupancy | 801 | 821 | (20) | (2.44) |
| Equipment expense | 405 | 447 | (42) | (9.40) |
| Data processing expense | 1,004 | 1,287 | (283) | (22.00) |
| Advertising and promotions | 168 | 179 | (11) | (6.15) |
| Professional fees | 940 | 1,412 | (472) | (33.43) |
| Write-down on foreclosed assets | 349 | 1,323 | (974) | (73.62) |
| FDIC premiums | 470 | 747 | (277) | (37.08) |
| Other real estate owned expenses | 172 | 587 | (415) | (70.70) |
| Other operating expenses | 788 | 1,251 | (463) | (37.01) |
| Total non-interest expenses | \$ 10,827 | \$ 13,997 | \$ (3,170) | (22.65) |

Noninterest expense decreased by \$3.2 million to \$10.8 million for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$14.0 million for the year ended December 31, 2013. This decrease is primarily due to decreases in write-downs on foreclosed assets, other real estate owned expenses, data processing expense and FDIC premiums. Write-downs on foreclosed assets decreased by \$974,000 to \$349,000 for the year ended

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December 31, 2014 from the year ended December 31, 2013. This decrease is due to lower expenses related to OREO valuation adjustments. Other real estate owned expenses decreased \$415,000 to \$172,000 for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$587,000 for the year ended December 31, 2013. Data processing expense decreased \$283,000 to \$1.0 million for the year ended December 31, 2014 as compared to the year ended December 31, 2013. This decrease is primarily due to the savings from the core processing conversion the Bank completed in the fourth quarter of 2013. FDIC premiums decreased \$277,000 to \$470,000 for the year ended December 31, 2014 as compared to the year ended December 31, 2013. Professional fees decreased \$597,000, or 42.3%, to \$815,000 for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$1.4 million for the year ended December 31, 2013. This decrease is primarily due to lower attorney's fees related to resolving problem credits. Other operating expenses decreased \$463,000 to \$788,000 for the year ended December 31, 2014 from \$1.3 million for 2013 primarily due to decreased directors and officer's insurance premiums, mortgage division related expenses and lower corporate franchise taxes. Salaries and employee benefits expenses decreased by \$213,000, or 0.4%, to \$5.7 million for the year ended December 31, 2014. This decrease is primarily due to a lower level of full-time equivalents as the Bank gained efficiencies as the result of a core

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processing conversion and lower commissions paid on mortgage loans sales. Management continues to emphasize the importance of expense management and control in order to continue to provide expanded banking services to a growing market base.

Income Tax Expense. CFS recorded a tax benefit of \$4.0 million on \$1.4 million pre-tax income for the year ended December 31, 2014. This tax benefit was due to the reversal of the valuation allowance on a portion of CFS's net deferred tax assets, made possible by CFS's return to profitability. The determination of being able to realize the deferred tax assets is highly subjective and dependent upon judgment concerning management's evaluation of both positive and negative evidence, including forecasts of future taxable income, available tax planning strategies and assessments of the current and future economic and business conditions. Management considered both positive and negative evidence regarding CFS's ability to ultimately realize the deferred tax assets, which is largely dependent upon the ability to derive benefits based upon future taxable income. Tax planning strategies available to CFS include investing in taxable instruments rather than tax-exempt securities. In 2014, management reevaluated the income forecasts and other tax strategies and determined that there was support for a change in the valuation allowance against its deferred tax assets. Management concluded in the third quarter of 2014 that, after a comprehensive review of both positive and negative considerations, it was now more likely than not that a portion of the deferred tax assets could be realized. As a result of this review a portion of the valuation allowance against deferred tax assets was reversed. As of December 31, 2014, management determined that the realization of a portion of the deferred tax asset was more likely than not as required by accounting principles and reversed that amount which was fully supported by the analysis. Income tax expense totaled \$146,000 for the year ended December 31, 2013.

Asset/Liability Management

The primary objectives of CFS's asset/liability management policies are to:

- a) Manage and minimize interest rate risk;
- b) Manage the investment portfolio to maximize yield;
- c) Assess and monitor general risks of operations; and
- d) Maintain adequate liquidity to meet the withdrawal requirements of depositors and the financing needs of borrowers.

Liquidity

CFS's primary source of funds is dividends it receives from the Bank. Without prior approval, current regulations allow the Bank to pay dividends to CFS not exceeding net profits for the current year plus those of the previous two years. The Bank normally restricts dividends to a lesser amount because of the need to maintain an adequate capital structure. Total stockholder's equity of the Bank totaled \$29.0 million on December 31, 2014. The Bank's primary sources of funds are deposits, proceeds from principal and interest payments on loans, maturities of securities, federal funds purchased and, to a lesser extent, advances from the Federal Home Loan Bank. While maturities and scheduled amortization of loans and securities are generally predictable sources of funds, deposit flows and mortgage prepayments are greatly influenced by general interest rates, economic conditions and competition.

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CFS's liquidity, represented by cash and cash equivalents, is generally a product of its operating, investing, and financing activities. Liquidity is monitored frequently by management and quarterly by the asset/liability management/investment committee and board of directors. This monitoring includes a review of net non-core funding dependency, loans to deposits and short-term investments to total assets ratios, including trends in these ratios. Cash flows from general banking activities are reviewed for their ability to handle unusual liquidity needs. Management also reviews a liquidity/dependency report covering measurements of liquidity ratio, net potential liabilities and dependency ratios.

Management expects ongoing operating activities to continue to be a primary source of cash flows for CFS. In addition, the Bank maintains secured borrowing facilities at the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago and Federal

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Reserve Bank of Chicago. Management is confident that the Bank has adequate liquidity for normal banking activities.

Deposits decreased by \$10.3 million in 2014 and decreased by \$1.5 million and increased by \$16.1 million in 2013 and 2012, respectively. Despite intense competition for deposits from the many financial institutions in CFS's market area, CFS has been successful in attracting sufficient deposits to provide for the majority of its funding needs. However, funding through retail deposits continues to grow more challenging.

Off-Balance Sheet Arrangements

In the normal course of operations, CFS may engage in a variety of financial transactions that, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, are not recorded in CFS's consolidated financial statements. These transactions involve, to varying degrees, elements of credit, interest rate, and liquidity risk. Such transactions are used primarily to manage customers' requests for funding and take the form of loan commitments and lines of credit. For additional information see Note 14 of the notes to the consolidated financial statements included in this proxy statement/prospectus.

Quantitative and Qualitative Disclosures About Market Risk

Interest Rate Risk. CFS monitors and manages risks associated with changes in interest rates and mismatched asset and deposit maturities. Significant changes in rates can adversely affect net interest income, market value of securities, and the economic value of equity. Based on CFS's current simulation model, the following schedule indicates the estimated effects of an immediate upward rate shift of 100, 200 and 300 basis points as of December 31, 2014. As of December 31, 2013, these effects totaled 4.6%, 4.9% and 7.4% for net interest income and 5.5%, 1.6% and 0.2% for economic value of equity.

| | 100 Basis Point Rate Shift Up | 200 Basis Point Rate Shift Up | 300 Basis Point Rate Shift Up |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Net interest income (next 12 months) | 5.1% | 6.5% | 7.9% |
| Economic value of equity | 5.0% | 3.0% | 0.9% |

Based on CFS's current simulation model, the following schedule indicates the estimated effects of an immediate downward rate shift of 100, 200, 300 basis points as of December 31, 2014. As of December 31, 2013, these effects totaled -4.0% for net interest income and -11.5% for economic value of equity. Due to the current interest rate environment being at historic lows, a 200 and 300 a basis point decrease is considered unlikely and therefore not presented. All other measures of interest rate risk are within policy guidelines.

| | 100 Basis Point Rate Shift Down | 200 Basis Point Rate Shift Down | 300 Basis Point Rate Shift Down |
|--|--|--|--|
|--|--|--|--|

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| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|-----|-----|
| Net interest income (next 12 months) | -6.4% | N/A | N/A |
| Economic value of equity | -13.0% | N/A | N/A |

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FINANCIAL FORECASTS OF CFS

CFS Summary Unaudited Prospective Financial Information

CFS does not as a matter of course make public projections as to future revenues, earnings or other results due to, among other reasons, the inherent uncertainty of such projections resulting from their reliance upon underlying assumptions and estimates on which the forecasts are based. However, in connection with the review of the proposed transactions with Wintrust, CFS management prepared certain unaudited prospective financial information for the Bank on a stand-alone basis. CFS is providing the summary unaudited prospective financial information summarized below (the "CFS Projections") solely to provide the stockholders of CFS access to certain non-public unaudited prospective financial information that was made available to the CFS board of directors and the Wintrust board of directors, as applicable, for purposes of considering and evaluating the transaction.

The CFS Projections were not prepared with a view toward public disclosure, nor were they prepared with a view toward compliance with published guidelines of the SEC, GAAP or the guidelines established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants for preparation and presentation of financial forecasts. The CFS Projections included in this proxy statement/prospectus have been prepared by, and are the responsibility of, CFS's management. BKD, LLP, CFS's independent auditor, has neither examined, compiled nor performed any procedures with respect to the CFS Projections and, accordingly, BKD, LLP does not express an opinion or any other form of assurance with respect thereto. The BKD, LLP report included in this proxy statement/prospectus relates to CFS's historical financial information. It does not extend to the CFS Projections and should not be read to do so. The CFS Projections included below are not being included to influence your decision whether to vote to approve the merger agreement or the other proposals to be voted upon at the special meeting of stockholders of CFS, but instead because these preliminary internal financial forecasts provide useful information to investors and were provided by CFS to Wintrust.

While presented with numeric specificity, the CFS Projections were based on numerous variables and assumptions (including those related to industry performance and competition and general business, economic, market and financial conditions and additional matters specific to CFS's business) that are inherently subjective and uncertain and are beyond the control of CFS's management. Important factors that may affect actual results and cause the CFS Projections to not be achieved include risks and uncertainties relating to CFS's business (including its ability to achieve strategic goals, objectives and targets over applicable periods), industry performance, general business and economic conditions and other factors described in the sections entitled "Special Notes Concerning Forward-Looking Statements" and "Risk Factors." The CFS Projections also reflect numerous variables, expectations and assumptions applicable at the time they were prepared as to certain business decisions as well as general business, economic, market and financial conditions that are subject to change. In addition, the CFS Projections do not reflect the reassessment of the value of the net operating loss carryover available to CFS and the amount of bad debt deductions claimed by CFS in prior tax years that occurred in mid-February 2015 and was subsequently communicated to Wintrust by CFS. As a result, actual results may differ materially from those contained in the CFS Projections. Accordingly, the forecasted results summarized below may not be realized.

The inclusion of a summary of the CFS Projections in this proxy statement/prospectus should not be regarded as an indication that CFS or its board of directors, advisors or representatives considered these preliminary internal financial forecasts to be predictive of actual future events, and the CFS Projections should not be relied upon as such nor should the information contained in the CFS Projections be considered appropriate for other purposes. Neither CFS nor its board of directors, advisors or representatives can give you any assurance that actual results will not differ materially from the CFS Projections, and none of them undertakes any obligation to update or otherwise revise or reconcile these preliminary internal financial forecasts to reflect circumstances existing after the date the CFS Projections were generated or to reflect the occurrence of future events, even in the event that any or all of the assumptions underlying these forecasts are shown to be in error.

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2014 Budget Summary

**Community Bank-Wheaton/Glen Ellyn
Budget Summary(1)**
(in thousands)

| | Fiscal 2015 | Fiscal 2016 | Fiscal 2017 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Net loans | \$ 222,412 | \$ 252,203 | \$ 282,021 |
| Total assets | 385,525 | 406,656 | 425,049 |
| Non-maturity deposits | 265,854 | 279,382 | 290,705 |
| Certificates of deposit | 102,884 | 108,149 | 112,554 |
| Borrowings | 1,214 | 1,214 | 1,214 |
| Interest income (including loan fees) | 12,584 | 14,184 | 15,627 |
| Interest expense | 1,529 | 1,546 | 1,576 |
| Net interest income | 11,055 | 12,638 | 14,051 |
| Provision for loan losses | 900 | 900 | 900 |
| Noninterest revenue | 2,545 | 2,730 | 2,964 |
| Noninterest expense | 11,357 | 11,925 | 12,521 |
| Pre-tax income | 1,343 | 2,543 | 3,594 |
| Taxes | | 204 | 930 |
| Net income | 1,343 | 2,338 | 2,663 |
| Return on average assets | 0.36% | 0.59% | 0.64% |
| Net interest margin | 3.07 | 3.32 | 3.53 |
| Tier 1 Capital/EOM assets | 6.77 | 6.99 | 7.31 |
| Earnings per share (fully converted) (2) | \$ 0.04 | \$ 0.08 | \$ 0.09 |

(1) Assumes that the Bank did not experience loan growth in fiscal 2014 but that normal projected loan growth will resume in fiscal 2015.

(2) Earnings per share is a CFS performance metric. Assumes the conversion of all outstanding Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares into shares of CFS common stock.

Table of Contents**SELECTED HISTORICAL FINANCIAL DATA OF CFS**

The selected consolidated financial data of CFS presented below is being provided to assist you in your analysis of the financial aspects of the merger. The annual CFS historical information as of and for each of the years in the five-year period ended December 31, 2014 are derived from CFS's audited historical financial statements. This information is only a summary and should be read in conjunction with Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations of CFS and the consolidated financial statements and the notes thereto included in this proxy statement/prospectus. The historical results below or contained elsewhere in this proxy statement/prospectus are not necessarily indicative of the future performance of CFS or the combined company.

| | Years Ended December 31, | | | | |
|--|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 |
| | (Dollar in thousands, except per share data) | | | | |
| Selected Financial Condition Data | | | | | |
| (at end of period) | | | | | |
| Community Financial Shares, Inc. | | | | | |
| Total loans, excluding loans held for sale | \$ 185,015 | \$ 195,951 | \$ 197,423 | \$ 206,964 | \$ 229,286 |
| Total deposits | \$ 305,421 | \$ 315,709 | \$ 317,204 | \$ 301,101 | \$ 309,080 |
| Total stockholders' equity | \$ 28,576 | \$ 21,627 | \$ 22,352 | \$ 7,250 | \$ 17,755 |
| Selected Statements of Income Data | | | | | |
| Community Financial Shares, Inc. | | | | | |
| Net interest income | \$ 10,394 | \$ 10,534 | \$ 10,258 | \$ 10,767 | \$ 10,395 |
| Net revenue | \$ 12,179 | \$ 12,783 | \$ 12,162 | \$ 12,384 | \$ 12,209 |
| Net income per share | \$ 0.18 | \$ (0.38) | \$ 0.11 | \$ (9.20) | \$ (4.03) |
| Community Financial Shares, Inc. Common Share Data(1) | | | | | |
| Book value per common share(1) | \$ 0.96 | \$ 0.72 | \$ 0.89 | \$ 5.82 | \$ 14.26 |
| Common shares outstanding(1) | 29,906,588 | 29,906,588 | 25,245,267 | 1,245,267 | 1,245,267 |
| Selected Financial Ratios of Community Financial Shares, Inc. | | | | | |
| Net interest margin | 3.41% | 3.34% | 3.49% | 3.71% | 3.42% |
| Non-interest income to average assets | 0.53% | 0.65% | 0.57% | 0.49% | 0.54% |
| Non-interest expense to average assets | 3.24% | 4.07% | 4.43% | 3.82% | 3.50% |
| Return on average assets | 1.61% | (0.81)% | (0.74)% | (3.35)% | (1.35)% |
| Return on average common equity | 105.18% | (227.51)% | 42.47% | (113.72)% | (33.69)% |
| Average total assets | \$ 333,936 | \$ 344,214 | \$ 331,974 | \$ 328,583 | \$ 337,739 |
| Average equity | \$ 24,243 | \$ 20,666 | \$ 8,923 | \$ 17,041 | \$ 21,683 |
| Selected Other Data of Community Bank | | | | | |
| Leverage ratio | 7.70% | 6.80% | 7.70% | 3.30% | 5.40% |
| Tier 1 capital to risk-weighted assets | 12.20% | 10.80% | 11.40% | 4.80% | 7.30% |
| Total capital to risk-weighted assets | 13.40% | 11.90% | 12.60% | 6.10% | 8.60% |
| Allowance for loan losses | \$ 2,442 | \$ 2,500 | \$ 3,032 | \$ 8,854 | \$ 7,679 |
| Non performing loans | \$ 2,448 | \$ 1,172 | \$ 7,767 | \$ 13,799 | \$ 20,294 |

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| | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Allowance for loan losses to total loans | 1.32% | 1.28% | 1.54% | 4.28% | 3.35% |
| Non-performing loan to total loans | 1.32% | 0.60% | 3.94% | 6.68% | 8.86% |

(1) Assumes full conversion of CFS preferred stock.

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SECURITY OWNERSHIP OF CERTAIN BENEFICIAL OWNERS AND MANAGEMENT OF CFS

The information presented in the table is based on information furnished by the specified persons and was determined in accordance with Rule 13d-3 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, which we refer to as the Securities Exchange Act, as required for purposes of this proxy statement/prospectus. Briefly stated, under that rule, shares are deemed to be beneficially owned by any person or group having the power to vote or direct the vote of, or the power to dispose or direct the disposition of, such shares, or who has the right to acquire beneficial ownership thereof within 60 days. Beneficial ownership for the purposes of this proxy statement/prospectus is not necessarily to be construed as an admission of beneficial ownership for other purposes.

Security Ownership of Certain Beneficial Owners

The following table indicates, as of April 28, 2015, the number of shares of voting securities beneficially owned by each greater than five percent holder of CFS's outstanding voting securities.

Each Series C Preferred Share is convertible immediately, at the sole discretion of the holder, initially into 100 shares of CFS common stock; provided, however, that a holder may not convert Series C Preferred Shares to the extent that such conversion would result in the holder or its affiliates beneficially owning more than 9.9% or 4.9%, as applicable, of CFS's outstanding common stock. If, pursuant to the Securities Purchase Agreement, the holder acquired either (i) solely Series C Preferred Shares, or a combination of Series C Preferred Shares and common stock, in each case, that, together with CFS voting securities acquired by its affiliates, constituted more than 4.9% of the CFS's voting securities, or (ii) both Series C Preferred Shares and Series D Preferred Shares, then the 9.9% conversion blocker will be applicable to such investor and its transferees. If, pursuant to the Securities Purchase Agreement, the holder acquired either (i) solely Series C Preferred Shares, or a combination of Series C Preferred Shares and common stock, in each case, that, together with the CFS voting securities acquired by its affiliates, constituted 4.9% or less of CFS's voting securities, or (ii) both Series C Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares, then the 4.9% conversion blocker will be applicable to such investor and its transferees. Accordingly, the number of shares of common stock and percentage common stock reflected in the following table includes those shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares. Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares are convertible into Series C Preferred Shares on a one-for-one basis; provided, however, that no such conversion results in any person, together with its affiliates, holding more than a 9.9% or 4.9% voting ownership interest, respectively, in CFS.

For more information on the conversion rights of the Series C Preferred Shares, Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares, see the footnotes applicable to each beneficial owner.

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| Name and Address of Beneficial Owner | Number of Shares of Common Stock Beneficially Owned Giving Effect to Preferred Stock Conversion Blockers | Percent of Common Stock Beneficially Owned Giving Effect to Preferred Stock Conversion Blockers(1) | Additional Shares of Common Stock Excluded from Beneficial Ownership Due to Preferred Stock Conversion Blockers | Total Shares of Common Stock Owned Absent Preferred Stock Conversion Blockers |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| SBAV LP | 1,150,035(2) | 9.9% | 6,296,665 | 7,446,700 |
| SBAV GP LLC | | | | |
| Clinton Special Opportunities Fund, Ltd. | | | | |
| George Hall | | | | |
| Clinton Group, Inc. | | | | |
| 601 Lexington Avenue, 51st Floor | | | | |
| New York, New York 10022 | | | | |
| Wellington Management Company, LLP | 1,150,035(3) | 9.9% | 1,810,765 | 2,960,800 |
| Wellington Management Group | | | | |
| Ithan Creek Master Investors (Cayman) L.P. | | | | |
| 280 Congress Street | | | | |
| Boston, Massachusetts 02210 | | | | |
| Fullerton Capital Partners LP | 1,184,702(4) | 9.9% | 1,314,598 | 2,499,300 |
| 3047 Fillmore Street | | | | |
| San Francisco, California 94123 | | | | |
| Philip J. Timyan | 1,184,702(5) | 9.9% | 315,298 | 1,500,000 |
| 4324 Central Avenue | | | | |
| Western Springs, Illinois 60558 | | | | |
| Context BH Capital Management, LP | 1,045,500(6) | 9.7% | | 1,045,000 |
| 401 City Avenue, Suite 815 | | | | |
| Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania 19004 | | | | |
| Beth and Ken Karmin Family Trust | 558,708(7) | 5.2% | | 558,708 |

1555 Capri Drive

Pacific Palisades, California 90272

(1) Based on 10,781,988 shares of common stock outstanding as of April 28, 2015, plus all shares of common stock issuable to the shareholder upon the conversion of shares of Series C Preferred Shares currently held by the shareholder, to the extent that such conversion is not prohibited by the blocker provisions applicable to the Series C Preferred Shares. For purposes of this calculation, it is assumed that no other shareholders have converted any Series C Preferred Shares.

(2) Includes 315,500 shares of common stock and 834,535 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares. Excludes (i) 1,096,365 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares held by SBAV LP, a Delaware limited partnership (SBAV) and Clinton Special Opportunities Fund, Ltd. (CSO), and (ii) 5,200,300 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series D Preferred Shares held by SBAV because of the Series C Preferred Shares and Series D Preferred Shares conversion blockers. Without the Series C Preferred Shares and Series D Preferred Shares conversion blockers, the shareholders would be deemed to beneficially own 7,446,700 shares of common stock. SBAV GP LLC, a Delaware limited liability company (SBAV GP), as the general partner of SBAV and Clinton Group, Inc., a Delaware corporation (CGI), by virtue of being the investment manager of SBAV and CSO, have the power to vote or direct the voting and to dispose or direct the disposition of, all of the Shares

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beneficially owned by SBAV and CSO. George Hall, as the sole managing member of SBAV GP and President of CGI, is deemed to have shared voting power and shared dispositive power with respect to all Shares as to which SBAV, SBAV GP and CGI have voting power or dispositive power. Accordingly, SBAV, SBAV GP, CSO, CGI and Mr. Hall are deemed to have shared voting and shared dispositive power with respect to all of the Company's securities beneficially owned by SBAV. SBAV GP, CSO, CGI and Mr. Hall disclaim beneficial ownership of any and all such securities in excess of their actual pecuniary interest therein.

(3) Wellington Management Company LLP is the investment adviser to Ithan Creek Master Investors (Cayman) L.P. (Ithan). Wellington Management Company LLP is an investment adviser registered under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, as amended, and is an indirect subsidiary of Wellington Management Group LLP. Wellington Management Company LLP and Wellington Management Group LLP may each be deemed to share beneficial ownership (within the meaning of Rule 13d-3 promulgated under the Exchange Act) of the shares indicated in the table, all of which are held of record by Ithan. The business address of Ithan is c/o Wellington Management Company LLP, 280 Congress Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. The business address of Wellington Management Company LLP and Wellington Management Group LLP is 280 Congress Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210. Includes 315,500 shares of common stock and 834,535 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares. Excludes (i) 1,096,365 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares and (ii) 714,400 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series D Preferred Shares because of the Series C Preferred Shares and Series D Preferred Shares conversion blockers. Without the Series C Preferred Shares and Series D Preferred Shares conversion blockers, the shareholders would be deemed to beneficially own 2,960,800 shares of common stock.

(4) Includes 1,184,702 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares. Excludes (i) 686,598 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares and (ii) 628,000 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series D Preferred Shares because of the Series C Preferred Shares and Series D Preferred Shares conversion blockers. Without the Series C Preferred Shares and Series D Preferred Shares conversion blockers, the shareholder would be deemed to beneficially own 2,499,300 shares of common stock.

(5) Includes 1,184,702 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares. Excludes 315,298 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares because of the Series C Preferred Shares conversion blocker. Without the Series C Preferred Shares conversion blocker, the shareholder would be deemed to beneficially own 1,500,000 shares of common stock.

(6) Based on a Schedule 13G filed with the SEC on March 20, 2015. Includes 1,045,000 shares of common stock.

(7) Includes 558,708 shares of common stock.

Table of Contents**Security Ownership of Management**

The following table indicates, as of April 28, 2015, the number of shares of common stock beneficially owned by each director of CFS, the named executive officers of CFS and all directors and executive officers of CFS as a group.

| Name of Beneficial Owner | Number of Shares (1) | Percent of Common Stock Outstanding (2) |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| Penny A. Belke, DDS | 168,412 | 1.56% |
| Raymond A. Dieter, Jr., MD | 102,312(3) | 0.95 |
| Douglas D. Howe | 200,000 | 1.86 |
| Christopher M. Hurst | 20,000 | 0.19 |
| Mary Beth Moran | 61,202(4) | 0.57 |
| John M. Mulherin | 21,501(5) | 0.20 |
| Daniel Strauss | | |
| Donald H. Wilson | 500,000(6) | 4.64 |
| Philip J. Timyan | 1,184,702(7) | 10.99 |
| Christopher P. Barton | 169,242 | 1.57 |
| Jeffrey A. Vock | 51,200(8) | 0.48 |
| Eric J. Wedeen | 251,550(9) | 2.33 |
| <i>All Directors and Executive Officers as a Group (12 Persons)</i> | 2,730,121 | 25.32 |

-
- (1) Includes shares issuable pursuant to stock options currently exercisable within 60 days of April 28, 2015, as follows: Mr. Vock 1,200 shares and Mr. Wedeen 1,550 shares.
- (2) Based on 10,781,988 shares of common stock outstanding as of April 28, 2015 for all directors and executive officers except for Messrs. Wilson, Timyan, Vock, Wedeen. For each of Messrs. Wilson, Timyan, Vock and Wedeen, based on 10,781,988 shares of common stock outstanding as of April 28, 2015, plus all shares of common stock issuable to the individual upon the conversion of Series C Preferred Shares currently held by the individual, to the extent that such conversion is not prohibited by the blocker provisions applicable to the Series C Preferred Shares. For purposes of this calculation, it is assumed that no other shareholders have converted any shares of Series C Preferred Shares.
- (3) Includes 2,776 shares held in a trust of which Dr. Dieter's spouse is trustee.
- (4) Includes 902 shares held in joint tenancy of which Ms. Moran has shared investment and voting power.
- (5) Includes 6,264 shares held in joint tenancy of which Mr. Mulherin has shared investment and voting power and 1,208 shares held by Mr. Mulherin's spouse in an IRA.
- (6) Includes 100,000 shares of common stock and 400,000 shares of common stock issuable upon conversion of shares of Series C Preferred Shares, all of which are held in joint tenancy of which Mr. Wilson has shared investment and voting power.
- (7) Includes 1,184,702 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of shares of Series C Preferred Shares. Excludes 315,298 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of shares of Series C Preferred Shares because of the Series C Preferred Shares conversion blocker. Without the Series C Preferred Shares conversion blocker, the shareholder would be deemed to beneficially own 1,500,000 shares of common stock.
- (8) Includes 50,000 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of shares of Series C Preferred Shares.
- (9) Includes 250,000 shares of common stock issuable upon the conversion of shares of Series C Preferred Shares.

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COMPARISON OF RIGHTS OF WINTRUST SHAREHOLDERS AND CFS STOCKHOLDERS

General

As a stockholder of CFS, your rights are governed by CFS's articles of incorporation and its by-laws, each as amended. Upon completion of the merger, the rights of CFS stockholders who receive shares of Wintrust common stock in exchange for their shares of CFS common stock and become shareholders of Wintrust will be governed by Wintrust's amended and restated articles of incorporation and amended and restated by-laws. Wintrust is incorporated in Illinois and is subject to the Illinois Business Corporation Act, as amended, which we refer to as the IBCA. CFS is incorporated in Maryland and is subject to the MGCL.

The following discussion summarizes material similarities and differences between the rights of CFS stockholders and Wintrust shareholders and is not a complete description of all of the differences. This discussion is qualified in its entirety by reference to the IBCA and MGCL and Wintrust's and CFS's respective articles of incorporation and by-laws. Although separated by columns, the rights of the CFS common stockholders and preferred stockholders are intertwined and, therefore, holders of either common stock or preferred stock of CFS should review the information contained in both columns. Where information about a particular right of CFS preferred stockholders is blank, please refer to the description of the rights of CFS common stockholders.

| | Rights of Holders of Wintrust Common Stock | Rights of Holders of CFS Common Stock | Rights of Holders of CFS Preferred Shares |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <i>Authorized Capital Stock:</i> | Wintrust is authorized to issue 100 million shares of common stock, no par value per share, and 20 million shares of preferred stock, no par value per share, which we refer to as Wintrust preferred stock. Of the 20 million shares of Wintrust preferred stock, (i) 50,000 have been designated 8.00% Non-Cumulative Perpetual Convertible Preferred Stock, Series A, which we refer to as Wintrust series A preferred, and (ii) 126,500 have been designated 5.00% Non-Cumulative Perpetual Convertible Preferred Stock, Series C, which we refer to as Wintrust series C preferred. | CFS is authorized to issue 75 million shares of common stock, par value \$0.01 per share. On March 2, 2015, CFS had 10,781,988 shares of common stock issued and outstanding. CFS's board of directors has the power to reclassify shares of one series of preferred stock into shares of another series of preferred stock. | CFS is authorized to issue one million shares of preferred stock, par value \$1.00 per share, including (i) 350,000 Series C Preferred Shares, (ii) 85,000 Series D Preferred Shares, and (iii) 15,000 Series E Preferred Shares. On March 2, 2015, CFS had (i) 119,829 Series C Preferred Shares issued and outstanding, (ii) 65,427 Series D Preferred Shares issued and outstanding and (iii) 5,990 Series E Preferred Shares issued and outstanding. |
| | On April 30, 2015, Wintrust had 47,420,182 shares of common stock outstanding, no shares of Wintrust series A preferred outstanding and | | |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | <p>126,467 shares of Wintrust series C preferred outstanding. Further issuance of shares of Wintrust's preferred stock could affect the relative rights of the holders of its common stock, depending upon the exact terms, qualifications, limitations and relative rights and preferences, if any, of the shares of the preferred stock as determined by Wintrust's board of directors.</p> | | |
| <p><i>Dividends:</i></p> | <p>Subject to any rights of holders of Wintrust preferred stock, Wintrust may pay dividends if, as and when declared by its board of directors from any funds legally available therefor.</p> | <p>CFS may pay dividends on its outstanding shares of common stock if, as and when authorized by its board of directors and declared by CFS from any funds legally available therefor.</p> | <p>CFS may pay dividends on shares of outstanding CFS preferred stock as and when authorized by its board of directors and declared by CFS. Holders of shares of outstanding CFS preferred stock are also entitled to receive, on a fully converted basis, as, when, and if authorized by its board of directors and declared by CFS, distributions in the same per share amount as paid on the CFS common stock.</p> |
| <p><i>Rank; Liquidation Preference:</i></p> | <p>With certain limited exceptions, if Wintrust does not pay full cash dividends on the series C preferred for the most recently completed dividend period, Wintrust may not pay dividends on, or repurchase, redeem or make a liquidation payment with respect to, Wintrust common stock or other stock ranking equally with or junior to the Wintrust series C preferred.</p> | <p>Shares of CFS common stock rank junior to outstanding CFS preferred stock with respect to dividend rights and rights on liquidation, winding-up and dissolution.</p> <p>Holders of CFS common stock are not entitled to the payment of a liquidation preference in the event of any liquidation, dissolution or winding up of CFS.</p> | <p>Each series of outstanding CFS preferred stock ranks, with respect to dividend rights and rights on liquidation, winding-up and dissolution, (i) on a parity with the other series of outstanding CFS preferred stock and (ii) senior to the CFS common stock.</p> <p>In the event of any liquidation, dissolution or winding up of CFS, holders of outstanding CFS preferred stock are entitled to</p> |

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|---|--|---|---|
| | | | receive, out of the assets of the CFS or proceeds thereof, an amount equal to the greater of (i) the sum of (A) \$100.00 per share of outstanding CFS preferred stock and (B) the amount of any declared, but unpaid, distributions to the date of payment and (ii) the amount such holder would have received if such share of outstanding CFS preferred stock had been fully converted into shares of CFS common stock. |
| <i>Number of Directors, Classification:</i> | The Wintrust board of directors currently consists of 13 members. Wintrust's by-laws provide, however, that the number may be increased or decreased (provided the number is never less than nine) by an amendment of the by-laws by the shareholders, or by a resolution adopted by the majority of the board of directors. | The CFS board of directors currently consists of eight members. CFS's by-laws provide that the number of directors must be eight. | |
| | Wintrust's board of directors consists of a single class of directors, elected annually. | CFS's board of directors consists of a single class of directors, elected annually. | |
| <i>Election of Directors; Vacancies:</i> | Each Wintrust shareholder is entitled to vote the number of shares owned by such shareholder for as many persons as there are directors to be elected. The IBCA requires that directors be elected by the affirmative vote of a majority of the shares represented at the meeting and entitled to vote thereon. | Each outstanding share of CFS common stock is entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote at a meeting of stockholders. | On any matter presented to the holders of CFS common stock for a vote by them at any meeting of holders of CFS common stock, each holder of Series C Preferred Shares is entitled to cast a number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of common stock into which such holder's |
| | | CFS's articles of incorporation provide that voting on all matters is non-cumulative. | |
| | | CFS's by-laws provide that any | |

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| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | <p>The Wintrust by-laws provide that no cumulative voting is permitted.</p> <p>Wintrust s by-laws provide that any vacancy on the board of directors may be filled at an annual meeting or special meeting of the shareholders called for such purpose, or if such vacancy arises between meetings of shareholders, by a majority vote of the board of directors then in office.</p> | <p>vacancy on the board of directors may be filled by appointment by the board of directors until the next annual meeting and until his successor is elected and qualified.</p> <p>Under the MGCL, the stockholders generally may elect a successor to fill a vacancy on the board of directors that results from the removal of a director.</p> | <p>Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date for determining holders of the CFS common stock entitled to vote on such matter.</p> <p>Holders of Series D Preferred Shares and Series E Preferred Shares are not entitled to vote on the election of directors.</p> |
| <i>Removal of Directors:</i> | <p>A Wintrust director may be removed at a shareholders meeting, with or without cause, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the outstanding shares entitled to vote.</p> | <p>A CFS director may be removed at a stockholders meeting, with or without cause, by the affirmative vote of a majority of all the votes entitled to be cast generally for the election of directors.</p> | |
| <i>Call of Special Meeting of Directors:</i> | <p>Wintrust s by-laws provide that a special meeting of the board of directors may be called by or at the request of the chairman of the board, president or a majority of then-acting directors.</p> | <p>CFS s by-laws provide that a special meeting of the board of directors may be called at the request of the chairman of the board, president or any three directors.</p> | |
| <i>Limitation on Director Liability:</i> | <p>Wintrust s articles of incorporation provide that no director will be personally liable to the corporation or any of its shareholders for monetary damages for any breach of fiduciary duty except for liability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for any breach of the director s duty of loyalty to the corporation or its shareholders; • for acts and omissions not in good faith or that involve | <p>CFS s articles of incorporation provide that no director will be personally liable to the corporation or its stockholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director except for liability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for acts or omissions committed in bad faith or which are the result of active and deliberate dishonesty; • for any transaction from which | |

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| | |
|---|--|
| <p>intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under Section 8.65 of the IBCA (which creates liability for unlawful payment of dividends and unlawful stock purchases or redemptions), as it exists or hereafter may be amended; or • for any transaction from which the director derived an improper benefit. | <p>the director derived any improper personal benefit; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the case of a criminal proceeding, if the director had reasonable cause to believe that the act or omission was unlawful. |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Indemnification:</i> Wintrust's articles of incorporation and by-laws provide that the corporation has the power to indemnify its directors, officers, employees and agents to the fullest extent authorized by the IBCA.</p> <p>The by-laws provide that, to the extent a present or former director, officer or employee of the corporation (or of any subsidiary, as the case may be) has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any proceeding, or in connection with any claim, issue or matter therein, the corporation shall indemnify the director or officer against expenses actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with such proceeding to the extent he was a party as a result of being a</p> | <p>CFS's by-laws provide for indemnification of and advancement of expenses to its directors, officers, employees and agents of the corporation to the fullest extent permitted by the MGCL, unless it is established that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the act or omission was material to the matter giving rise to the liability and was omitted in bad faith or was the result of active and deliberate dishonesty; • the person actually received an improper personal benefit in money, property or services; or • in the case of a criminal proceeding, the person had reasonable cause to believe the act or omission was unlawful. <p>The MGCL permits a Maryland corporation to advance reasonable expenses to a director or officer upon receipt of (a) a written affirmation by</p> |
|---|---|

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director, officer or actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with such proceeding to the extent he was a party as a result of being a director, officer or employee, provided that such person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the corporation. The board may indemnify agents of the corporation in this context.

the director or officer of his or her good faith belief that he or she has met the standard of conduct necessary for indemnification and (b) a written undertaking by him or her or on his or her behalf to repay the amount paid or reimbursed if it is ultimately determined that the standard of conduct was not met.

Wintrust has entered into individual indemnification agreements with each of its non-employee directors and certain of its executive officers, which we refer to as the indemnification agreements, which implement with more specificity the indemnification provisions provided by Wintrust's by-laws and provide, among other things, that to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, Wintrust will indemnify such director or officer against any and all losses, expenses and liabilities arising out of such director's or officer's service as a director or officer of Wintrust, as the case may be. The indemnification agreements also contain detailed provisions concerning expense advancement and reimbursement. The indemnification agreements are in addition to any other rights each non-employee director or officer may be entitled to under Wintrust's articles of incorporation, by-laws and applicable law.

Call of Special Meetings of

Wintrust's by-laws provide that a special meeting of the shareholders

CFS's by-laws provide that a special meeting of the stockholders may be

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Shareholders:</i> | <p>may be called by the board of directors, the president or the holders of not less than one-fifth of all the outstanding shares entitled to vote on the matter for which the meeting is called, for the purpose or purposes stated in the call of the meeting.</p> | <p>called by the president, the chairman of the board, by the board of directors or by the holders of not less than one-fourth of all the votes entitled to be cast at the meeting.</p> |
| | <p>Written notice stating the place, date, hour and purpose(s) of the special meeting must be delivered, either personally or by mail, not less than 10 nor more than 60 days before the date of the meeting.</p> | <p>Written or printed notice stating the place, day and hour of the meeting and the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called must be delivered, either personally or by mail, not less than 10 nor more than 90 days before the date of the meeting.</p> |
| <i>Quorum of Shareholders:</i> | <p>Wintrust's by-laws provide that a majority of the shares entitled to vote on a matter, present in person or represented by proxy, constitutes a quorum at any meeting of shareholders.</p> | <p>CFS's by-laws provide that a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the corporation, represented in person or by proxy, constitutes a quorum at any meeting of stockholders.</p> |
| <p><i>Advance Notice Regarding Shareholders Proposals (other than Nomination of Candidates for Election to the Board of Directors):</i></p> | <p>Wintrust's by-laws provide that for a shareholder to properly bring business before an annual or special meeting of shareholders, written notice of such shareholder's intent to make such proposal(s) must be given by personal delivery or U.S. mail postage prepaid and received by the secretary of the corporation no later than the following dates: (i) with respect to an annual meeting of shareholders, not less than 90 days nor more than 120 days prior to the anniversary date of the immediately preceding annual meeting of shareholders (provided, however, that in the</p> | <p>CFS's by-laws do not contain advance notice procedures.</p> |

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event that the annual meeting is called for a date that is not within 30 days before or after such anniversary date, notice by the shareholder to be timely must be so delivered or received not later than the close of business on the 10th day following the earlier of the date on which such notice or public disclosure of the date of the meeting was given or made); and (ii) with respect to any special meeting of shareholders, the close of business on the 10th day following the date of public disclosure of the date of such meeting.

A shareholder's notice to the secretary shall set forth as to each item of business the shareholder proposes to bring before such meeting: (a) a brief description of the business desired to be brought before the meeting; (b) the name and record address of the shareholder who proposes such business; (c) the number and class of shares of stock of the corporation beneficially owned by such shareholder; (d) whether and the extent to which any derivative instrument, hedging or other transaction or series of transactions has been entered into by or on behalf of, or any other agreement, arrangement or understanding (including any short position or any borrowing or lending of shares) has been made the effect or intent of any of which is to increase or decrease economic interest in the

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corporation's stock or manage the risk or benefit of share price changes for, or to increase or decrease the voting power of, such shareholder with respect to the corporation's stock (which information shall be updated by such shareholder as of the record date for the meeting, such update to be provided not later than 10 days after the record date for the meeting); (e) a representation that the shareholder intends to appear in person or by proxy at the meeting to introduce the item of business proposed to be brought before the meeting; (f) a description of all arrangements or understandings between the shareholder and any other person(s) pursuant to which the proposal or proposals are to be made by the shareholder and any material interest of the shareholder in the business being proposed; and (g) all other information which would be required to be included in a proxy statement filed with the SEC if, with respect to any such item of business or nomination, such shareholder were a participant in a solicitation subject to Section 14 of the Securities Exchange Act.

*Advance Notice
Regarding
Shareholders
Nomination of
Candidates for
Election to the
Board of
Directors:*

Wintrust's by-laws provide that nominations of persons for election to the board of directors may be made at an annual or special meeting of shareholders by a shareholder of Wintrust.

CFS's by-laws do not contain advance notice procedures.

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For nominations for election to the board of directors of Wintrust to be properly brought before an annual or special meeting, written notice of such shareholder's intent to make such proposal(s) must be given by personal delivery or U.S. mail postage prepaid and received by the secretary of the corporation no later than the following dates: (i) with respect to an election to be held at an annual meeting of shareholders, not less than 90 days nor more than 120 days prior to the anniversary date of the immediately preceding annual meeting of shareholders (provided, however, that in the event that the annual meeting is called for a date that is not within 30 days before or after such anniversary date, notice by the shareholder to be timely must be so delivered or received not later than the close of business on the 10th day following the earlier of the date on which such notice or public disclosure of the date of the meeting was given or made); and (ii) with respect to an election to be held at any special meeting of shareholders called for the purpose of electing directors, the close of business on the 10th day following the date of public disclosure of the date of such meeting.

A shareholder's notice to the secretary shall set forth each item described above under *Advance Notice Regarding Shareholders Proposals (other than Nomination*

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of Candidates for Election to the Board of Directors) as well as (a) the nominee's name, age, principal occupation and employment, business and residence addresses and qualifications, (b) a description of all arrangements or understandings between the shareholder and each nominee of the shareholder and any other person or persons (naming such person or persons) pursuant to which the nominations are to be made by the shareholder and (c) the consent of each nominee to be named in any proxy statement and to serve as a director of Wintrust if so elected.

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| <i>Shareholder Action by Written Consent:</i> | Wintrust's articles of incorporation and by-laws provide that its shareholders are not permitted to act by written consent. Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the shareholders must be effected at a duly called annual or special meeting. | CFS's articles of incorporation provide the holders of CFS common stock entitled to vote generally in the election of directors may take action or consent to any action by delivering a consent in writing (or by electronic transmission) of the holders entitled to cast not less than the minimum number of votes that would be necessary to authorize or take the action at a stockholders meeting provided that CFS gives notice of the action not later than 10 days after the effective date of the action to each holder of common stock and to each stockholder who, if the action had been taken at a meeting, would have been entitled to notice of the meeting. | On any matter presented to the holders of CFS common stock for a vote by them at any meeting of such holders or by written consent thereof in lieu of meeting, each holder of Series C Preferred Shares is entitled to cast a number of votes equal to the maximum number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible as of the record date for determining holders of CFS common stock entitled to vote on such matter. Under the MGCL, holders of any class of stock, other than holders of CFS common stock entitled to vote generally in the election of directors, may take action or |
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| | | | consent to any action by delivering a consent in writing or by electronic transmission of the stockholders entitled to cast not less than the minimum number of votes that would be necessary to authorize the action at a stockholders meeting provided that CFS gives notice of the action not later than 10 days after the effective date of the action to each holder of the class of stock. |
| <i>Appointment and Removal of Officers:</i> | Wintrust's by-laws provide that the officers shall be elected annually by the board of directors at the first meeting of the board of directors held after each annual meeting of the shareholders. Each officer will hold office until his successor is duly elected or until his prior death, resignation or removal. | CFS's by-laws provide that the officers shall be elected annually by the board of directors at the meeting of the board of directors held after each annual meeting of the stockholders. Each officer shall hold office until his successor is duly elected and is qualified or until his death, resignation or removal. | |
| | Any officer may be removed by the board of directors whenever in its judgment the best interests of the corporation will be served thereby. | Any officer or agent elected or appointed by the board of directors may be removed by the board of directors whenever in its judgment the best interests of the corporation would be served thereby, but such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed. | |
| <i>Required Vote for Certain Transactions:</i> | The Wintrust articles of incorporation do not specifically discuss transactions involving merger, consolidation, dissolution, or sale, lease or exchange of all or substantially all of the property or assets of the corporation. But the | Under the MGCL, a Maryland corporation generally cannot dissolve, merge, convert, consolidate, sell all or substantially all of its assets or engage in a statutory share exchange unless declared advisable by its board of | On any matter presented to the holders of CFS common stock for a vote by them at any meeting of holders of common stock, each holder of Series C Preferred Shares is entitled to cast a number of votes equal to the maximum |

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| | <p>applicable IBCA provisions state that such a transaction must be approved by two-thirds of the outstanding shares of stock entitled to vote on the matter. The corporation may, however, without approval by a vote of shareholders, merge into itself any corporation of which at least 90% of the outstanding shares of each class is owned by the corporation.</p> | <p>directors and approved by the affirmative vote of stockholders entitled to cast at least two-thirds of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter unless a lesser percentage (but not less than a majority of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter) is set forth in the corporation's articles of incorporation. Stockholder approval is not required for a merger of a 90% or more owned subsidiary corporation with or into its parent corporation, provided certain conditions are met.</p> | <p>number of shares of CFS common stock into which such holder's Series C Preferred Shares are convertible.</p> <p>Further, CFS may not, without obtaining the approval of the holders of a majority of the issued and outstanding shares of each series of CFS outstanding preferred stock, (a) issue additional amounts or classes of senior securities, (b) modify the terms of CFS outstanding preferred stock so as to significantly and adversely affect the rights or preferences of the stock, (c) liquidate, dissolve or wind-up the business and affairs of CFS in any form of transaction, (d) pay dividends when preferred dividends on CFS outstanding preferred stock are in arrears or (e) take any other action which, under the laws of Maryland or any other applicable law, requires the prior approval of CFS outstanding preferred stock voting as a separate class.</p> |
| <p><i>Amendment to Charter and By-laws:</i></p> | <p>An amendment to the articles of incorporation that relates to certain provisions, including, the prohibition of cumulative voting, shareholder purchase rights, the prohibition of shareholder action by written consent, the number and classification of the board of directors, director liability, indemnification and insurance,</p> | <p>Under the MGCL, an amendment to the articles of incorporation requires the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the votes entitled to be cast on the matter (other than amendments to the articles supplementary to the articles of incorporation that do not require stockholder approval under the MGCL, including, but not limited to, a change in CFS's name or a change</p> | <p>See above Community Financial Stockholder Rights Required Vote for Certain Transactions.</p> |

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number, tenure and qualification of directors or the amendment process, must be approved by the affirmative vote of the holders of 85% or more of the voting power of the then-outstanding shares of stock entitled to vote generally in the election of directors, voting together as a single class.

Otherwise, as provided by the IBCA, the articles of incorporation may be amended by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the shares entitled to vote on the proposal after the board of directors has passed a resolution by majority vote setting forth the proposed amendment and directing that it be submitted to a vote at a shareholders meeting.

The power to make, alter, amend or repeal the by-laws of the corporation is vested in the shareholders or the board of directors by a resolution adopted by a majority of the board of directors.

in the aggregate par value of the stock of CFS).

CFS's by-laws provide that the by-laws may be altered, amended or repealed and new by-laws may be adopted at any meeting of the board of directors of the corporation by a majority vote of the whole number of directors. The MGCL provides that the power to adopt, alter and repeal the by-laws is vested in the stockholders except to the extent that the articles of incorporation or by-laws vest it in the board of directors. Therefore, the stockholders have concurrent power to adopt, alter and repeal the by-laws of CFS.

The terms of Series C Preferred Shares provide that the holders of common stock are third party beneficiaries of certain limitations on beneficial ownership and prohibit CFS from amending or waiving such limitations without the consent of holders of a majority of the CFS common stock.

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Certain anti-takeover effects of Wintrust's articles and by-laws and Illinois law and federal law

Certain provisions of Wintrust's articles of incorporation, by-laws, Illinois law and certain applicable banking regulations may have the effect of impeding the acquisition of control of Wintrust by means of a tender offer, a proxy fight, open-market purchases or otherwise in a transaction not approved by Wintrust's board of directors.

These provisions may have the effect of discouraging a future takeover attempt which is not approved by Wintrust's board of directors but which individual Wintrust shareholders may deem to be in their best interests or in which Wintrust shareholders may receive a substantial premium for their shares over then-current market prices. As a result, shareholders who might desire to participate in such a transaction may not have an opportunity to do so. Such provisions will also render the removal of Wintrust's current board of directors or management more difficult.

These provisions of Wintrust's articles of incorporation and by-laws include the following:

- Wintrust's board of directors may issue additional authorized shares of Wintrust's capital stock to deter future attempts to gain control of Wintrust, including the authority to determine the terms of any one or more series of preferred stock, such as voting rights, conversion rates and liquidation preferences. As a result of the ability to fix voting rights for a series of preferred stock, Wintrust's board has the power, to the extent consistent with its fiduciary duty, to issue a series of preferred stock to persons friendly to management in order to attempt to block a merger or other transaction by which a third party seeks control, and thereby assist the incumbent board of directors and management to retain their respective positions;
- Wintrust's articles of incorporation do not provide for cumulative voting for any purpose, and Wintrust's articles of incorporation and by-laws also provide that any action required or permitted to be taken by shareholders may be taken only at an annual or special meeting and prohibit shareholder action by written consent in lieu of a meeting;
- Wintrust's articles of incorporation expressly elect to be governed by the provisions of Section 7.85 of the IBCA. Section 7.85 prohibits a publicly held Illinois corporation from engaging in a business combination unless, in addition to any affirmative vote required by law or the articles of incorporation of the company, the proposed business combination:
 - receives the affirmative vote of the holders of at least 80% of the combined voting power of the then outstanding shares of all classes and series of the corporation entitled to vote generally in the election of directors voting together as a single class (the voting shares), and the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting shares held by disinterested shareholders;
 - is approved by at least two-thirds of the disinterested directors; or

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- provides for consideration offered to shareholders that meets certain fair price standards and satisfies certain procedural requirements.

Such fair price standards require that the fair market value per share of the consideration offered be equal to or greater than the higher of:

- the highest per share price paid by the interested shareholder during the two-year period immediately prior to the first public announcement of the proposed business combination or in the transaction by which the interested shareholder became an interested shareholder; and
- the fair market value per share of common stock on the first trading date after the first public announcement of the proposed business combination or on the first trading date after the date of the first public announcement that the interested shareholder has become an interested shareholder.

For purposes of Section 7.85, disinterested director means any member of the board of directors of the corporation who:

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- is neither the interested shareholder nor an affiliate or associate of the interested shareholder;
- was a member of the board of directors prior to the time that the interested shareholder became an interested shareholder or was a director of the corporation before January 1, 1997, or was recommended to succeed a disinterested director by a majority of the disinterested directors then in office; and
- was not nominated for election as a director by the interested shareholder or any affiliate or associate of the interested shareholder.
- the amendment of Wintrust's articles of incorporation must be approved by a majority vote of the board of directors and also by a two-thirds vote of the outstanding shares of Wintrust's common stock, provided, however, that an affirmative vote of at least 85% of the outstanding voting stock entitled to vote is required to amend or repeal certain provisions of the articles of incorporation, including provisions (a) prohibiting cumulative voting rights, (b) relating to certain business combinations, (c) limiting the shareholders' ability to act by written consent, (d) regarding the minimum number of directors, (e) regarding indemnification of directors and officers by Wintrust and limitation of liability for directors and (f) regarding amendment of the foregoing supermajority provisions of Wintrust's articles of incorporation. Wintrust's by-laws may be amended only by its board of directors.

The provisions described above are intended to reduce Wintrust's vulnerability to takeover attempts and certain other transactions which have not been negotiated with and approved by members of Wintrust's board of directors.

The ability of a third party to acquire Wintrust is also limited under applicable banking regulations. The Bank Holding Company Act of 1956, which we refer to as the Bank Holding Company Act, requires any bank holding company (as defined in that Act) to obtain the approval of the Federal Reserve prior to acquiring more than 5% of Wintrust's outstanding common stock. Any person other than a bank holding company is required to obtain prior approval of the Federal Reserve to acquire 10% or more of Wintrust's outstanding common stock under the Change in Bank Control Act of 1978. Any holder of 25% or more of Wintrust's outstanding common stock, other than an individual, is subject to regulation as a bank holding company under the Bank Holding Company Act. For purposes of calculating ownership thresholds under these banking regulations, bank regulators would likely at least take the position that the minimum number of shares, and could take the position that the maximum number of shares, of Wintrust common stock that a holder is entitled to receive pursuant to securities convertible into or settled in Wintrust common stock, including pursuant to Wintrust's warrants to purchase Wintrust common stock held by such holder, must be taken into account in calculating a shareholder's aggregate holdings of Wintrust common stock.

Certain anti-takeover effects of CFS's articles and by-laws and Maryland law and federal law

Certain provisions of the MGCL and CFS's articles of incorporation and by-laws may have the effect of impeding the acquisition of control of CFS by means of a tender offer, a proxy fight, open-market purchases or otherwise in a transaction not approved by our board of directors.

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These provisions may have the effect of discouraging a future takeover attempt which is not approved by CFS's board of directors but which individual CFS stockholders may deem to be in their best interests or in which CFS stockholders may receive a substantial premium for their shares over then-current market prices. As a result, stockholders who might desire to participate in such a transaction may not have an opportunity to do so. Such provisions will also render the removal of CFS's current board of directors or management more difficult.

These provisions of the MGCL and CFS's articles of incorporation and by-laws include the following:

- CFS's board of directors may issue additional authorized shares of CFS's capital stock to deter future attempts to gain control of CFS;
- CFS's board of directors has the power to reclassify shares of one series of preferred stock into shares of another series of preferred stock;
- CFS's articles of incorporation do not provide for cumulative voting;

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- CFS is subject to the business combination provisions of the MGCL;

- Under the MGCL, certain business combinations (including a merger, consolidation, share exchange or, in certain circumstances specified under the statute, an asset transfer or issuance or reclassification of equity securities) between a Maryland corporation and any interested stockholder, or an affiliate of such an interested stockholder, are prohibited for five years after the most recent date on which the interested stockholder becomes an interested stockholder. The MGCL law defines an interested stockholder as:
 - any person who beneficially owns, directly or indirectly, 10% or more of the voting power of the corporation's outstanding voting stock; or

 - an affiliate or associate of the corporation who, at any time within the two-year period prior to the date in question, was the beneficial owner, directly or indirectly, of 10% or more of the voting power of the then outstanding voting stock of the corporation.

- A person is not an interested stockholder under the statute if the board of directors approved in advance the transaction by which the person otherwise would have become an interested stockholder. In approving a transaction, however, a board of directors may provide that its approval is subject to compliance, at or after the time of the approval, with any terms and conditions determined by it.

- After such five-year period, any such business combination must be recommended by the board of directors of the corporation and approved by the affirmative vote of at least:
 - 80% of the votes entitled to be cast by holders of outstanding shares of voting stock of the corporation; and

 - two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast by holders of voting stock of the corporation other than shares held by the interested stockholder with whom (or with whose affiliate) the business combination is to be effected or held by an affiliate or associate of the interested stockholder.

- These supermajority approval requirements do not apply if, among other conditions, the corporation's common stockholders receive a minimum price (as defined in the MGCL) for their shares and the consideration is received in cash or in the same form as previously paid by the interested stockholder for its shares.

- CFS is subject to the control share provisions of the MGCL;

- The MGCL provides that holders of control shares of a Maryland corporation acquired in a control share acquisition have no voting rights with respect to any control shares except to the extent approved by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast in the election of directors, generally, excluding shares of stock in a corporation in respect of which any of the following persons is entitled to exercise or direct the exercise of the voting power of such shares in the election of directors: (1) the person who made or proposes to make a control share acquisition, (2) an officer of the corporation or (3) an employee of the corporation who is also a director of the corporation.

Control shares are voting shares of stock that, if aggregated with all other such shares of stock previously acquired by the acquirer or in respect of which the acquirer is able to exercise or direct the exercise of voting power (except solely by virtue of a revocable proxy), would entitle the acquirer to exercise voting power in electing directors within one of the following ranges of voting power:

- one-tenth or more but less than one-third;
- one-third or more but less than a majority; or
- a majority or more of all voting power.

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- Control shares do not include shares that the acquiring person is then entitled to vote as a result of having previously obtained stockholder approval or shares acquired directly from the corporation. A control share acquisition means the acquisition, directly or indirectly, of ownership of, or the power to direct the exercise of voting power with respect to, issued and outstanding control shares, subject to certain exceptions.
- A person who has made or proposes to make a control share acquisition, upon satisfaction of certain conditions (including an undertaking to pay expenses and making an acquiring person statement as described in the MGCL), may compel the corporation to call a special meeting of stockholders to be held within 50 days of demand to consider the voting rights of the control shares. If no request for a special meeting is made, the corporation may itself present the question at any stockholders meeting.
- If voting rights of control shares are not approved at the meeting or if the acquiring person does not deliver an acquiring person statement as required by the statute, then, subject to certain conditions and limitations, the corporation may redeem any or all of the control shares (except those for which voting rights have previously been approved) for fair value determined, without regard to the absence of voting rights for the control shares, as of the date of any meeting of stockholders at which the voting rights of such shares are considered and not approved or, if no such meeting is held, as of the date of the last control share acquisition by the acquirer. If voting rights for control shares are approved at a stockholders meeting and the acquirer becomes entitled to vote a majority of the shares entitled to vote, all other stockholders may exercise appraisal rights. The fair value of the shares as determined for purposes of such appraisal rights may not be less than the highest price per share paid by the acquirer in the control share acquisition.
- The control share acquisition statute does not apply to: (1) shares acquired in a merger, consolidation or share exchange if the corporation is a party to the transaction or (2) acquisitions approved or exempted by the charter or by-laws of the corporation.
- Title 3, Subtitle 8 of the MGCL permits CFS's board of directors, without stockholder approval and regardless of what currently is provided in its articles of incorporation or by-laws, to implement certain takeover defenses, including (i) a classified board, (ii) a two-thirds vote requirement for removing a director, (iii) a requirement that the number of directors be fixed only by vote of the directors, (iv) a requirement that a vacancy on the board be filled only by the remaining directors and for the remainder of the full term of the class of directors in which the vacancy occurred and (v) a majority requirement for the calling of a stockholder-requested special meeting of stockholders.

The provisions described above are intended to reduce CFS's vulnerability to takeover attempts and certain other transactions which have not been negotiated with and approved by members of CFS's board of directors.

As with Wintrust, the ability of a third party to acquire CFS is also limited under the same banking regulations described in the last paragraph of The Merger Agreement. No solicitation of or discussions relating to a takeover proposal above.

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DESCRIPTION OF WINTRUST CAPITAL STOCK

The following description of the capital stock of Wintrust does not purport to be complete and is qualified, in all respects, to applicable Illinois law and provisions of Wintrust's amended and restated articles of incorporation, as amended, and Wintrust's amended and restated by-laws. Wintrust's amended and restated articles of incorporation and Wintrust's amended and restated by-laws are incorporated by reference and will be sent to shareholders of Wintrust and stockholders of CFS upon request. See "Where You Can Find More Information" on page 173.

Authorized capital stock

Under its amended and restated articles of incorporation, Wintrust has the authority to issue 100 million shares of common stock, without par value, and 20 million shares of preferred stock, without par value. As of April 30, 2015, there were issued and outstanding 47,420,182 shares of Wintrust common stock, no shares of series A preferred and 126,347 shares of series C preferred.

Wintrust common stock

Wintrust Common Stock Outstanding. The outstanding shares of Wintrust common stock are, and the shares of Wintrust common stock issuable pursuant to the merger or upon the conversion of the series C preferred will be, duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and non-assessable. The shares of Wintrust common stock issuable upon the conversion of any series A preferred that we may issue will be duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and non-assessable. The rights, preferences and privileges of holders of Wintrust common stock are subject to, and may be adversely affected by, the rights of the holders of shares of any series of Wintrust preferred stock, including the series A preferred, series C preferred and any series of preferred stock that Wintrust may designate and issue in the future. Shares of Wintrust common stock may be certificated or uncertificated, as provided by the IBCA.

Voting Rights. Each holder of Wintrust common stock is entitled to one vote for each share held on all matters submitted to a vote of shareholders of Wintrust and does not have cumulative voting rights. Accordingly, holders of a majority of the shares of Wintrust common stock entitled to vote in any election of directors of Wintrust may elect all of the directors standing for election.

Dividend Rights. The holders of Wintrust common stock are entitled to receive dividends, if and when declared payable by Wintrust's board of directors from any funds legally available for the payment of dividends, subject to any preferential dividend rights of Wintrust's outstanding preferred stock, including the series A preferred and series C preferred. Upon the liquidation, dissolution or winding up of Wintrust, the holders of Wintrust common stock are entitled to share pro rata in Wintrust's net assets available after the payment of all debts and other liabilities and subject to the prior rights of any outstanding preferred stock of Wintrust, including the series A preferred and series C preferred.

Preemptive Rights. Under its amended and restated articles of incorporation, the holders of Wintrust common stock have no preemptive, subscription, redemption or conversion rights.

Wintrust series A preferred stock

Series A Preferred Stock Outstanding. As of December 31, 2014, no shares of Series A preferred were outstanding. If any shares of Series A preferred are issued in the future, the following terms would apply to such shares:

Dividends. Non-cumulative dividends on any outstanding shares of series A preferred are payable quarterly in arrears if, when and as declared by Wintrust's board of directors, at a rate of 8.00% per year on the liquidation preference of \$1,000 per share. With certain limited exceptions, if Wintrust does not pay full cash dividends on the series A preferred for the most recently completed dividend period, Wintrust may not pay dividends on, or repurchase, redeem or make a liquidation payment with respect to, Wintrust common stock or other

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stock ranking equally with or junior to the Wintrust series A preferred, including the Wintrust series C preferred. The series A preferred is not redeemable by the holders thereof or by Wintrust.

Conversion. Holders of the series A preferred may convert their shares into common stock at any time. Wintrust may convert all of the series A preferred into common stock upon the consummation of certain Fundamental Transactions (as defined in the Series A Certificate of Designations), provided that Wintrust has declared and paid in full dividends on the series A preferred for the four most recently completed quarterly dividend periods. Wintrust may convert any or all of the series A preferred into common stock if, for 20 trading days during any period of 30 consecutive trading days, the closing price of Wintrust common stock exceeds \$35.59 and Wintrust has declared and paid in full dividends on the series A preferred for the four most recently completed quarterly dividend periods. The conversion price of the series A preferred is subject to customary anti-dilution adjustments.

Reorganization Events and Fundamental Transactions. If Wintrust consummates a Reorganization Event (as defined in the Series A Certificate of Designations), each share of the series A preferred will, without the consent of the holders, become convertible into the kind of securities, cash and other property receivable in such Reorganization Event by a holder of the shares of common stock.

Voting Rights. Holders of the series A preferred generally do not have any voting rights, except as required by law. However, Wintrust may not amend its articles of incorporation or by-laws in a manner adverse to the rights of the series A preferred, issue capital stock ranking senior to the series A preferred or take certain other actions without the approval of the holders of the series A preferred. In addition, holders of the series A preferred, together with the holders of other parity securities having similar voting rights, may elect two directors if Wintrust has not paid dividends on Wintrust series A preferred for four or more quarterly dividend periods, whether or not consecutive.

Wintrust series C preferred stock

Dividends. Non-cumulative dividends on the series C preferred are payable quarterly in arrears if, when and as declared by Wintrust's board of directors, at a rate of 5.00% per year on the liquidation preference of \$1,000 per share. With certain limited exceptions, if Wintrust does not pay full cash dividends on the series C preferred for the most recently completed dividend period, Wintrust may not pay dividends on, or repurchase, redeem or make a liquidation payment with respect to, Wintrust common stock or other stock ranking equally with or junior to the series C preferred. The series C preferred is not redeemable by the holders thereof or by Wintrust.

Conversion. Holders of the series C preferred may convert their shares into Wintrust common stock at any time. On or after April 15, 2017, if the closing price of the Wintrust common stock exceeds 130% of the conversion price then in effect for 20 trading days during any 30 consecutive trading day period, including the last trading day of such period, ending on the trading day preceding the date Wintrust gives notice of mandatory conversion, Wintrust may at its option cause some or all of the series C preferred to be automatically converted into common stock at the then prevailing conversion rate. In addition, in connection with a Make-Whole Acquisition (as defined in the Series C Certificate of Designations), Wintrust will, under certain circumstances, be required to pay an adjustment in the form of an increase in the conversion rate upon any conversions of the series C preferred that occur during the period beginning on the effective date of the Make-Whole Acquisition and ending on the date that is 30 days after the effective date of such Make-Whole Acquisition. The adjustment in the conversion rate in the event of a Make-Whole Acquisition will be payable in shares of Wintrust common stock or the consideration into which the Wintrust common stock has been converted or exchanged in connection with the Make-Whole Acquisition. The amount of the adjustment in the conversion rate in the event of a Make-Whole Acquisition, if any, will be based on the stock price and the effective date of the Make-Whole Acquisition. The conversion price of the series C preferred is subject to customary anti-dilution adjustments.

Reorganization Events and Fundamental Transactions. If Wintrust consummates a Reorganization Event (as defined in the Series C Certificate of Designations), each share of the series C preferred will, without the consent of the holders, become convertible into the kind of securities, cash and other property receivable in such Reorganization Event by a holder of the shares of common stock.

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Voting Rights. Holders of the series C preferred generally do not have any voting rights, except as required by law. However, Wintrust may not amend its articles of incorporation in a manner adverse to the rights of the series C preferred, issue capital stock ranking senior to the series C preferred or take certain other actions without the approval of the holders of the series C preferred. In addition, holders of the series C preferred, together with the holders of other parity securities having similar voting rights, may elect two directors if Wintrust has not paid dividends on the series C preferred for six or more quarterly dividend periods, whether or not consecutive.

Preferred stock

Blank Check Preferred Stock. Under its amended and restated articles of incorporation, the Wintrust board of directors has the authority to issue preferred stock in one or more classes or series, and to fix for each class or series the voting powers and the distinctive designations, preferences and relative, participation, optional or other special rights and such qualifications, limitations or restrictions, as may be stated and expressed in the resolution or resolutions adopted by the Wintrust board of directors providing for the issuance of such class or series as may be permitted by the IBCA, including dividend rates, conversion rights, terms of redemption and liquidation preferences and the number of shares constituting each such class or series, without any further vote or action by Wintrust's shareholders.

Exchange agent and registrar

American Stock Transfer & Trust Company, LLC is the exchange agent for the merger and the transfer agent for the Wintrust common stock.

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LEGAL MATTERS

Certain matters pertaining to the validity of the authorization and issuance of the Wintrust common stock to be issued in the merger have been passed upon by Lisa J. Pattis, Wintrust's Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary. Ms. Pattis beneficially owns or has rights to acquire an aggregate of less than 1.0% of Wintrust's common stock.

Certain matters pertaining to the federal income tax consequences of the merger have been passed upon by Godfrey & Kahn, S.C., 780 North Water Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202.

EXPERTS

The consolidated financial statements of Wintrust incorporated by reference in Wintrust's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014 and the effectiveness of Wintrust's internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2014 have been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, as set forth in its reports thereon, and incorporated herein by reference. Such consolidated financial statements and Wintrust's management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2014 are incorporated herein by reference in reliance upon such reports given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The consolidated financial statements of CFS at December 31, 2014 and 2013, and for the years then ended, included in this proxy statement/prospectus have been audited by BKD, LLP as set forth in their report are included in reliance upon such report given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

SHAREHOLDER PROPOSALS

The next annual meeting of Wintrust's shareholders will be held on May 28, 2015. The proxy statement for such meeting was filed with the SEC on April 10, 2015. Shareholder proposals intended to be presented at Wintrust's 2015 Annual Meeting of Shareholders must have been received in writing by the Secretary of Wintrust no later than December 5, 2014 in order to be considered for inclusion in the proxy material for that meeting. In order for any shareholder to properly propose any business for consideration at Wintrust's 2015 Annual Meeting, including the nomination of any person for election as a director, on any matter raised other than pursuant to Rule 14a-8 of the proxy rules adopted under the Exchange Act, written notice of the shareholder's intention to make such proposal must have been furnished to Wintrust by February 21, 2015 (but not before January 22, 2015).

Shareholder proposals intended to be presented at Wintrust's 2016 Annual Meeting of Shareholders must be received in writing by the Secretary of Wintrust no later than December 18, 2015 in order to be considered for inclusion in the proxy material for that meeting. Any such proposals shall be subject to the requirements of the proxy rules adopted under the Exchange Act. Furthermore, in order for any shareholder to properly propose any business for consideration at Wintrust's 2016 Annual Meeting of Shareholders, including the nomination of any person for election as a director, or any other matter raised other than pursuant to Rule 14a-8 of the proxy rules adopted under the Exchange Act, written notice of

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the shareholder's intention to make such proposal must be furnished to Wintrust in accordance with Wintrust's by-laws. Under the existing provisions of Wintrust's by-laws, the deadline for such notice is February 28, 2016 (but not before January 29, 2016).

The next annual meeting of CFS stockholders is scheduled to be held in 2015. CFS plans to hold its 2015 annual meeting only if the merger is not completed. Proposals will be considered timely and may be eligible for inclusion in CFS's 2015 proxy statement if they are received by CFS at 357 Roosevelt Road, Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137 in the form of a written notice no later than August 15, 2015. If next year's annual meeting is held on a date more than 30 calendar days from January 29, 2016, a stockholder proposal must be received by a reasonable time before CFS begins to print and mail its proxy solicitation materials. Otherwise, such a proposal will be considered untimely. Any stockholder proposal will be subject to the requirements of the proxy rules adopted by the SEC.

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WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

Wintrust and CFS file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. These filings are available to the public over the Internet at the SEC's website at www.sec.gov. You may also read and copy any document Wintrust or CFS files with the SEC at the SEC's public reference room located at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington D.C. 20549. Copies of these documents also can be obtained at prescribed rates by writing to the Public Reference Section of the SEC, at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington D.C. 20549 or by calling 1 800 SEC-0330 for additional information on the operation of the public reference facilities. Wintrust's SEC filings are also available on its website at <http://www.wintrust.com>. CFS's SEC filings are also available on its website at <http://www.cbwge.com/>. Except for those SEC filings incorporated by reference in this proxy statement/prospectus, none of the other information on our website is part of this proxy statement/prospectus.

If you would like to request documents from Wintrust, please send a request in writing or by telephone to Wintrust at the following address: Lisa J. Pattis, Wintrust's Corporate Secretary, at 9700 W. Higgins Road, Suite 800, Rosemont, Illinois 60018, (847) 939-9000.

If you would like to request documents from CFS, please send a request in writing or by telephone to Wintrust at the following address: Christopher P. Barton, CFS's Secretary, at 357 Roosevelt Road, Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137, (630) 545-0900.

Wintrust filed with the SEC a registration statement on Form S-4 under the Securities Act to register the shares of Wintrust common stock to be issued to CFS stockholders upon completion of the merger. This proxy statement/prospectus is a part of that registration statement and constitutes a prospectus of Wintrust in addition to being a proxy statement of CFS for its special meeting. As permitted by the SEC rules, this proxy statement/prospectus does not contain all of the information that you can find in the registration statement or in the exhibits to the registration statement. The additional information may be inspected and copied as set forth above.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows Wintrust to incorporate by reference information into this proxy statement/prospectus. This means that Wintrust can disclose important information to you by referring you to another document filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is an important part of this proxy statement/prospectus, except for any information superseded by information in this proxy statement/prospectus of any subsequent filing incorporated by reference in this proxy statement/prospectus. This proxy statement/prospectus incorporates by reference the documents set forth below that Wintrust has filed previously with the SEC and any additional filings Wintrust makes with the SEC pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act after the date of this proxy statement/prospectus and before the special meeting; provided, however, that this proxy statement/prospectus does not incorporate by reference any documents, portions of documents or other information that is deemed to have been furnished and not filed with the SEC:

- Wintrust's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014;

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- the sections of Wintrust's Definitive Proxy Statement for the 2015 Annual Meeting of Shareholders filed with the SEC on April 10, 2015 that are incorporated by reference in Wintrust's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014;
- Wintrust's Current Reports on Form 8-K, filed with the SEC on March 2, 2015 and April 8, 2015; and
- the description of Wintrust common stock, which is registered under Section 12 of the Securities Exchange Act, in Wintrust's Form 8-A filed with the SEC on January 3, 1997, including any subsequently filed amendments and reports updating such description.

You may request, either orally or in writing, and Wintrust will provide, a copy of these filings without charge by contacting Lisa J. Pattis, Wintrust's Corporate Secretary, at 9700 W. Higgins Road, Suite 800, Rosemont, Illinois 60018, (847) 939-9000. **If you would like to request documents, please do so by [redacted], 2015, to receive them before the special meeting.**

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All information concerning Wintrust and its subsidiaries has been furnished by Wintrust, and all information concerning CFS and its subsidiaries has been furnished by CFS.

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this proxy statement/prospectus to vote on the proposals to CFS stockholders in connection with the merger. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with information that is different from what is contained in this proxy statement/prospectus. This proxy statement/prospectus is dated _____, 2015. You should not assume that the information contained in this proxy statement/prospectus is accurate as of any date other than such date, and neither the mailing of this proxy statement/prospectus to shareholders nor the issuance of shares of Wintrust common stock as contemplated by the merger agreement will create any implication to the contrary.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

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Report of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

Audit Committee, Board of Directors and Stockholders

Community Financial Shares, Inc.

Glen Ellyn, Illinois

We have audited the accompanying consolidated balance sheets of Community Financial Shares, Inc. as of December 31, 2014 and 2013, and the related consolidated statements of operations, comprehensive income (loss), stockholders' equity and cash flows for the years then ended. The Company's management is responsible for these financial statements. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with the standards of the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (United States). Those standards require that we plan and perform the audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. The Company is not required to have, nor were we engaged to perform, an audit of its internal control over financial reporting. Our audits included consideration of internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing auditing procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. Our audits also included examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management and evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Community Financial Shares, Inc. as of December 31, 2014, and 2013, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

/s/ BKD, LLP

Indianapolis, Indiana

March 13, 2015

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEETS

December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Dollars in thousands except share data)

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|---|------------|------------|
| ASSETS | | |
| Cash and due from banks | \$ 11,256 | \$ 4,485 |
| Interest-bearing deposits | 12,359 | 25,068 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 23,615 | 29,553 |
| Interest-bearing time deposits | | 945 |
| Securities available for sale | 105,985 | 95,829 |
| Loans held for sale | | 804 |
| Loans, less allowance for loan losses of \$2,442 and \$2,500 | 182,573 | 193,451 |
| Foreclosed assets | 2,199 | 2,269 |
| Federal Home Loan Bank stock | 1,119 | 926 |
| Premises and equipment, net | 14,473 | 14,862 |
| Cash value of life insurance | 6,857 | 6,644 |
| Interest receivable and other assets | 6,191 | 3,688 |
| Total assets | \$ 343,012 | \$ 348,971 |
| LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS EQUITY | | |
| Deposits | \$ 305,421 | \$ 315,709 |
| Federal Home Loan Bank advances | 2,000 | 4,500 |
| Subordinated debentures | 3,609 | 3,609 |
| Interest payable and other liabilities | 3,406 | 3,526 |
| Total liabilities | 314,436 | 327,344 |
| Commitments and contingencies | | |
| Stockholders equity | | |
| Common stock - \$0.01 par value, 75,000,000 shares authorized; 10,781,988 shares issued and outstanding | | |
| Preferred stock - \$1.00 par value, \$100 liquidation preference 1,000,000 shares authorized; 191,246 shares issued and outstanding | 191 | 191 |
| Paid-in capital | 30,395 | 30,386 |
| Accumulated deficit | (1,750) | (7,133) |
| Accumulated other comprehensive loss | (260) | (1,817) |
| Total stockholders equity | 28,576 | 21,627 |
| Total liabilities and stockholders equity | \$ 343,012 | \$ 348,971 |

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF OPERATIONS

Years ended December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Dollars in thousands, except per share data)

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|---|----------|------------|
| Interest and dividend income | | |
| Interest and fees on loans | \$ 9,933 | \$ 10,629 |
| Securities | | |
| Taxable | 1,384 | 1,132 |
| Exempt from federal income tax | 374 | 282 |
| Federal Home Loan Bank dividends and other | 51 | 129 |
| Total interest income | 11,742 | 12,172 |
| Interest expense | | |
| Deposits | 1,195 | 1,451 |
| Federal Home Loan Bank advances and other borrowed funds | 83 | 118 |
| Subordinated debentures | 70 | 69 |
| Total interest expense | 1,348 | 1,638 |
| Net interest income | 10,394 | 10,534 |
| Provision for loan losses | (75) | 1,427 |
| Net interest income after provision for loan losses | 10,469 | 9,107 |
| Noninterest income | | |
| Service charges on deposit accounts | 370 | 350 |
| Gain on sale of loans | 484 | 1,144 |
| Loss on sale of foreclosed assets | (21) | (328) |
| Loss on sale of assets | (74) | (175) |
| Gain (loss) on sale of securities | (15) | 55 |
| Increase in cash surrender value of bank-owned life insurance | 213 | 223 |
| Other service charges and fees | 828 | 980 |
| Total noninterest income | 1,785 | 2,249 |
| Noninterest expense | | |
| Salaries and employee benefits | 5,730 | 5,943 |
| Net occupancy expense | 801 | 821 |
| Equipment expense | 405 | 447 |
| Data processing | 1,004 | 1,287 |
| Advertising and marketing | 168 | 179 |
| Professional fees | 940 | 1,412 |
| Write-down on foreclosed assets | 349 | 1,323 |
| FDIC premiums | 470 | 747 |
| Other real estate owned expenses | 172 | 587 |
| Other operating expenses | 788 | 1,251 |
| Total noninterest expense | 10,827 | 13,997 |
| Income (loss) before income taxes | 1,427 | (2,641) |
| Income tax expense (benefit) | (3,956) | 146 |
| Net income (loss) | \$ 5,383 | \$ (2,787) |

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| Earnings (loss) per share | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|------|----|--------|
| Basic | \$ | 0.18 | \$ | (0.38) |
| Diluted | \$ | 0.18 | \$ | (0.38) |

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/(LOSS)

Years ended December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Dollars in thousands, except share data)

| | 2014 | Year Ended December 31, | 2013 |
|--|--------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Net income/(loss) | \$ 5,383 | \$ | (2,787) |
| Other comprehensive income (loss): | | | |
| Unrealized holding gains (losses) arising during the period: | | | |
| Unrealized net gains/(losses) | 2,526 | | (3,288) |
| Related income tax benefit (expense) | (979) | | 1,275 |
| Net unrealized gains/(losses) | 1,547 | | (2,013) |
| Less: reclassification adjustment for net gains realized during the period | | | |
| Realized net gains/(losses) | (15) | | 55 |
| Related income tax (expense)/benefit | 5 | | (20) |
| Net realized gains/(losses) | (10) | | 35 |
| Other comprehensive income/(loss) | 1,557 | | (2,048) |
| Comprehensive income/(loss) | \$ 6,940 | \$ | (4,835) |

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF STOCKHOLDERS EQUITY

Years ended December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Dollars in thousands, except share data)

| | Number of Common Shares | Preferred Stock | Paid-in Capital | Accumulated Deficit | Accumulated Other Comprehensive Income (Loss) | Total Stockholders Equity |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Balance at January 1, 2013 | 5,560,567 | \$ 197 | \$ 26,270 | \$ (4,346) | \$ 231 | \$ 22,352 |
| Net loss | | | | (2,787) | | (2,787) |
| Other comprehensive income | | | | | (2,048) | (2,048) |
| Net proceeds of private offering | 3,670,221 | | 4,090 | | | 4,090 |
| Preferred stock conversion to common | 1,551,200 | (16) | 16 | | | |
| Preferred stock issued | | 10 | | | | 10 |
| Amortization of stock option compensation | | | 10 | | | 10 |
| Balance at December 31, 2013 | 10,781,988 | 191 | 30,386 | (7,133) | (1,817) | 21,627 |
| Net income | | | | 5,383 | | 5,383 |
| Other comprehensive loss | | | | | 1,557 | 1,557 |
| Amortization of stock option compensation | | | 9 | | | 9 |
| Balance at December 31, 2014 | 10,781,988 | \$ 191 | \$ 30,395 | \$ (1,750) | \$ (260) | \$ 28,576 |

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

Years ended December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Dollars in thousands)

| Cash flows from operating activities | | | |
|--|----|----------|------------|
| Net income/(loss) | \$ | 5,383 | \$ (2,787) |
| Adjustments to reconcile net loss to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities | | | |
| Amortization on securities, net | | 1,066 | 709 |
| Depreciation | | 596 | 609 |
| Provision for loan losses | | (75) | 1,427 |
| (Gain) Loss on sale of securities | | 15 | (55) |
| Write-down on foreclosed assets | | 349 | 1,323 |
| Gain on sale of loans | | (484) | (1,144) |
| Originations of loans for sale | | (18,748) | (46,365) |
| Proceeds from sales of loans | | 20,037 | 53,934 |
| Loss on sale of foreclosed assets | | 21 | 328 |
| Loss on sale of assets | | 74 | 175 |
| Deferred income taxes | | (3,956) | 146 |
| Compensation cost of stock options | | 9 | 10 |
| Change in cash value of life insurance | | (213) | (223) |
| Change in interest receivable and other assets | | 382 | (1,126) |
| Change in interest payable and other liabilities | | (121) | 374 |
| Net cash provided by operating activities | | 4,335 | 7,335 |
| Cash flows from investing activities | | | |
| Purchases of securities available for sale | | (33,192) | (75,194) |
| Proceeds from maturities and calls of securities available for sale | | 17,922 | 14,893 |
| Proceeds from sales of securities available for sale | | 6,573 | 8,063 |
| Proceeds from sales of foreclosed assets | | 167 | 7,725 |
| Net change in interest-bearing time deposits | | 945 | 996 |
| Amount paid for acquisition of foreclosed assets | | | (674) |
| Purchase of Federal Home Loan Bank stock | | (193) | |
| Net change in loans | | 10,498 | (2,602) |
| Premises and equipment expenditures, net | | (206) | (114) |
| Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities | | 2,514 | (46,907) |
| Cash flows from financing activities | | | |
| Change in | | | |
| Non-interest bearing and interest bearing demand deposits and savings | | 2,121 | 5,533 |
| Certificates and other time deposits | | (12,408) | (7,029) |
| Repayment of borrowings | | (2,500) | (4,500) |
| Proceeds from private offering | | | 4,100 |
| Net cash used in financing activities | | (12,787) | (1,896) |
| Net change in cash and cash equivalents | | (5,938) | (41,468) |
| Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year | | 29,553 | 71,021 |

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| | | | | |
|--|----|--------|----|--------|
| Cash and cash equivalents at end of year | \$ | 23,615 | \$ | 29,553 |
| Supplemental disclosures | | | | |
| Interest paid | \$ | 1,424 | \$ | 1,614 |
| Transfers from loans to foreclosed assets | | 455 | | 1,979 |
| Transfer property from held for sale to premises and equipment | | | | 634 |

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Nature of Operations and Principles of Consolidation: The consolidated financial statements include Community Financial Shares, Inc. (the Holding Company) and its wholly owned subsidiary, Community Bank - Wheaton/Glen Ellyn (the Bank) together referred to herein as the Company.

The Bank was chartered by the Illinois Commissioner of Banks and Real Estate in 1994. The Bank provides a range of banking and financial services through its operation as a commercial bank with offices located in Wheaton and Glen Ellyn, Illinois. The Bank's primary activities include deposit services and commercial and retail lending. Interest income is also earned on investments in debt securities, federal funds sold, and short-term investments.

Significant intercompany transactions and balances have been eliminated in consolidation.

Internal financial information is reported and aggregated as one line of business.

Use of Estimates: To prepare financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, management makes estimates and assumptions based on available information. These estimates and assumptions affect the amounts reported in the financial statements and the disclosures provided and future results could differ. The allowance for loan losses and fair values of financial instruments are particularly subject to change.

Securities: Certain debt securities that management has the positive intent and ability to hold to maturity are classified as held to maturity and recorded at amortized cost. Securities not classified as held to maturity, including equity securities with readily determinable fair values, are classified as available for sale and recorded at fair value, with unrealized gains and losses excluded from earnings and reported in other comprehensive income. Purchase premiums and discounts are recognized in interest income using the interest method over the terms of the securities. Gains and losses on the sale of securities are recorded on the trade date and are determined using the specific identification method.

When the Company does not intend to sell a debt security, and it is more likely than not, the Company will not have to sell the security before recovery of its cost basis, it recognizes the credit component of an other-than-temporary impairment of a debt security in earnings and the

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remaining portion in other comprehensive income. For held-to-maturity debt securities, the amount of an other-than-temporary impairment recorded in other comprehensive income for the noncredit portion of a previous other-than-temporary impairment is amortized prospectively over the remaining life of the security on the basis of the timing of future estimated cash flows of the security.

For equity securities, when the Company has decided to sell an impaired available-for-sale security and the entity does not expect the fair value of the security to fully recover before the expected time of sale, the security is deemed other-than-temporarily impaired in the period in which the decision to sell is made. The Company recognizes an impairment loss when the impairment is deemed other than temporary even if a decision to sell has not been made.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Loans Held for Sale: Mortgage loans originated and intended for sale in the secondary market are carried at the lower of cost or fair value in the aggregate. Net unrealized losses, if any, are recognized through a valuation allowance by charges to noninterest income. Gains and losses on loan sales are recorded in noninterest income, and direct loan origination costs and fees are deferred at origination of the loan and are recognized in noninterest income upon sale of the loan.

Loans and Loan Income: Loans that management has the intent and ability to hold for the foreseeable future or until maturity or payoffs are reported at their outstanding principal balances adjusted for unearned income, charge-offs, the allowance for loan losses, any unamortized deferred fees or costs on originated loans and unamortized premiums or discounts on purchased loans.

For loans amortized at cost, interest income is accrued based on the unpaid principal balance. Loan origination fees, net of certain direct origination costs, as well as premiums and discounts, are deferred and amortized as a level yield adjustment over the respective term of the loan.

The accrual of interest on mortgage and commercial loans is discontinued at the time the loan is 90 days past due unless the credit is well-secured and in process of collection. Past due status is based on contractual terms of the loan. In all cases, loans are placed on nonaccrual or charged off at an earlier date if collection of principal or interest is considered doubtful.

All interest accrued but not collected for loans that are placed on nonaccrual or charged off are reversed against interest income. The interest on these loans is accounted for on the cash-basis or cost-recovery method, until qualifying for return to accrual. Loans are returned to accrual status when all the principal and interest amounts contractually due are brought current and future payments are reasonably assured.

Discounts and premiums on purchased residential real estate loans are amortized to income using the interest method over the remaining period to contractual maturity, adjusted for anticipated prepayments. Discounts and premiums on purchased consumer loans are recognized over the expected lives of the loans using methods that approximate the interest method.

Allowance for Loan Losses: The allowance for loan losses is established as losses are estimated to have occurred through a provision for loan losses charged to income. Loan losses are charged against the allowance when management believes the uncollectibility of a loan balance is

confirmed. Subsequent recoveries, if any, are credited to the allowance.

The allowance for loan losses is evaluated on a regular basis by management and is based upon management's periodic review of the collectibility of the loans in light of historical experience, the nature and volume of the loan portfolio, adverse situations that may affect the borrower's ability to repay, estimated value of any underlying collateral and prevailing economic conditions. This evaluation is inherently subjective as it requires estimates that are susceptible to significant revision as more information becomes available.

The allowance consists of allocated and general components. The allocated component relates to loans that are classified as impaired. For those loans that are classified as impaired, an allowance is established when the discounted cash flows (or collateral value or observable market price) of the impaired loan is lower than the carrying value of that loan. The general component covers nonclassified loans and is based on historical charge-off experience and expected loss given default derived from the Company's internal risk rating process. Other adjustments may be made to the allowance for pools of loans after an assessment of internal or external influences on credit quality that are not fully reflected in the historical loss or risk rating data.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

A loan is considered impaired when, based on current information and events, it is probable that the Company will be unable to collect the scheduled payments of principal or interest when due according to the contractual terms of the loan agreement. Factors considered by management in determining impairment include payment status, collateral value and the probability of collecting scheduled principal and interest payments when due. Loans that experience insignificant payment delays and payment shortfalls generally are not classified as impaired. Management determines the significance of payment delays and payment shortfalls on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration all of the circumstances surrounding the loan and the borrower, including the length of the delay, the reasons for the delay, the borrower's prior payment record and the amount of the shortfall in relation to the principal and interest owed. Impairment is measured on a loan-by-loan basis for commercial and construction loans by either the present value of expected future cash flows discounted at the loan's effective interest rate, the loan's obtainable market price or the fair value of the collateral if the loan is collateral dependent.

Groups of loans with similar risk characteristics are collectively evaluated for impairment based on the group's historical loss experience adjusted for changes in trends, conditions and other relevant factors that affect repayment of the loans. Accordingly, the Company does not separately identify individual consumer and residential loans for impairment measurements, unless such loans are the subject of a restructuring agreement due to financial difficulties of the borrower.

Federal Home Loan Bank Stock: Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) stock is a required investment for institutions that are members of the Federal Home Loan Bank system. The required investment in the common stock is based on a predetermined formula.

The Bank owned \$1,118,900 and \$925,700 of FHLB stock as of December 31, 2014 and 2013, respectively. The FHLB of Chicago paid average cash dividends totaling 0.50% and 0.30% in 2014 and 2013, respectively. The FHLB will continue to assess their dividend capacity each quarter, and will obtain the necessary approval if a dividend is to be made. Management performed an analysis and deemed the investment in FHLB stock was not impaired.

Foreclosed Assets: Assets acquired through or instead of loan foreclosure are initially recorded at fair value less costs to sell when acquired, establishing a new cost basis. If fair value declines, a valuation allowance is recorded through expense. Costs incurred after acquisition that do not meet the criteria for capitalization are expensed.

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Premises and Equipment: Land is carried at cost. Premises and equipment are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. Buildings and related components are depreciated using the straight-line method with useful lives ranging from 10 to 50 years. Furniture, fixtures, and equipment are depreciated using the straight-line (or accelerated) method with useful lives ranging from 3 to 10 years.

Long-Term Assets: Premises and equipment and other long-term assets are reviewed for impairment when events indicate that their carrying amount may not be recoverable from future undiscounted cash flows. If impaired, the assets are recorded at fair value.

Stock Compensation: At December 31, 2014, the Company has a stock-based employee compensation plan, which is described more fully in Note 13.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Income Taxes: The Company accounts for income taxes in accordance with income tax accounting guidance (ASC 740, *Income Taxes*). The income tax accounting guidance results in two components of income tax expense: current and deferred. Current income tax expense reflects taxes to be paid or refunded for the current period by applying the provisions of the enacted tax law to the taxable income or excess of deductions over revenues. The Company determines deferred income taxes using the liability (or balance sheet) method. Under this method, the net deferred tax asset or liability is based on the tax effects of the differences between the book and tax bases of assets and liabilities, and enacted changes in tax rates and laws are recognized in the period in which they occur. Deferred income tax expense results from changes in deferred tax assets and liabilities between periods. Deferred tax assets are reduced by a valuation allowance if, based on the weight of evidence available, it is more likely than not that some portion or all of a deferred tax asset will not be realized.

Uncertain tax positions are recognized if it is more likely than not, based on the technical merits, that the tax position will be realized or sustained upon examination. The term more likely than not means a likelihood of more than 50 percent; the terms examined and upon examination also include resolution of the related appeals or litigation processes, if any. A tax position that meets the more-likely-than-not recognition threshold is initially and subsequently measured as the largest amount of tax benefit that has a greater than 50 percent likelihood of being realized upon settlement with a taxing authority that has full knowledge of all relevant information. The determination of whether or not a tax position has met the more-likely-than-not recognition threshold considers the facts, circumstances and information available at the reporting date and is subject to management's judgment. The Company recognizes interest and penalties on income taxes as a component of income tax expense.

The Company files consolidated income tax returns with its subsidiaries.

With few exceptions, the Company is no longer subject to U.S. federal, state and local or non U.S. income tax examinations by tax authorities for years prior to 2011. The Company has net operating loss carryovers for federal and Illinois purposes for all years subsequent and including 1999 and 1998, respectively. To the extent these losses get used to offset future years' taxable income, the taxing authorities have the right to audit those loss years.

Off-balance-sheet Financial Instruments: Financial instruments include off-balance-sheet credit instruments, such as commitments to make loans and standby letters of credit, issued to meet customer financing needs. The face amount for these items represents the exposure to loss, before considering customer collateral or ability to repay. Such financial instruments are recorded when they are funded.

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Statements of Cash Flows: For purposes of reporting cash flows, cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, amounts due from banks, and interest-bearing deposits. Most federal funds are sold for one-day periods. Net cash flows are reported for customer loan and deposit transactions.

Earnings Per Share: Basic earnings per share is net income available to common shareholders divided by the weighted average number of shares outstanding during the year. Diluted earnings per share include the dilutive effect of additional potential shares issuable under stock options. For 2014 the Company is required to calculate basic and diluted earnings per share using the two-class method. Calculations of earnings per share under the two-class method (i) exclude from the numerator any dividends paid or owed on participating securities and any undistributed earnings considered to be attributable to participating securities and (ii) exclude from the denominator the dilutive impact of the participating securities.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Comprehensive Income or Loss: Comprehensive income or loss consists of net income or loss and other comprehensive income or loss. Other comprehensive income or loss includes unrealized gains and losses on securities available for sale, which are also recognized as a separate component of equity.

Dividend Restriction: Banking regulations require maintaining certain capital levels and may limit the dividends paid by the Bank to the Holding Company or by the Holding Company to the stockholders. In addition, the Bank and the Holding Company are currently subject to regulatory orders limiting their ability to declare and pay dividends. See Note 9 for more information. In addition, pursuant to the terms of the Merger Agreement, the Company may not declare or pay any dividends or other distributions prior to the Effective Time without prior written consent of Wintrust.

Fair Value of Financial Instruments: Fair values of financial instruments are estimated using relevant market information and other assumptions, as more fully disclosed in a separate note. Fair value estimates involve uncertainties and matters of significant judgment regarding interest rates, credit risk, prepayments, and other factors, especially in the absence of active markets for particular items. Changes in assumptions or in market conditions could significantly affect the estimates.

Recently Issued Accounting Standards: *Accounting Standards Update No. 2014-08- Reporting Discontinued Operations and Disclosures of Disposals of Components of an Entity* In April 2014, FASB issued ASU 2014-08. This update seeks to better define the groups of assets which qualify for discontinued operations, in order to ease the burden and cost for preparers and stakeholders. This issue changed the criteria for reporting discontinued operations and related reporting requirements, including the provision for disclosures about the disposal of and individually significant component of an entity that does not qualify for discontinued operations presentation.

The amendments in this Update are effective for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2014. Early adoption is permitted only for disposals or classifications as held for sale. The Company adopted the methodologies prescribed by this ASU by the date required, and this ASU did not have a material effect on its financial position or results of operations.

Accounting Standards Update No. 2014-09- Revenue from Contracts with Customers In May 2014, FASB, in joint cooperation with IASB, issued ASU 2014-09. The topic of Revenue Recognition had become broad, with several other regulatory agencies issuing standards which lacked cohesion. The new guidance establishes a common framework and reduces the number of requirements to which an entity must consider

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in recognizing revenue and yet provides improved disclosures to assist stakeholders reviewing financial statements.

The amendments in this Update are effective for annual reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2016. Early adoption is not permitted. The Company will adopt the methodologies prescribed by this ASU by the date required, and does not anticipate that the ASU will have a material effect on its financial position or results of operations.

Accounting Standards Update No. 2014-11- Transfers and Servicing In June 2014, FASB, issued ASU 2014-11. This update addresses the concerns of stakeholders by changing the accounting practices surrounding repurchase agreements. The new guidance changes the accounting for repurchase-to-maturity transactions and linked repurchase financings to secured borrowing accounting, which is consistent with the accounting for other repurchase agreements.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

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(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

The amendments in this Update are effective for annual reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2015. Early adoption is prohibited. The Company adopted the methodologies prescribed by this ASU by the date required, and this ASU did not have a material effect on its financial position or results of operations.

Accounting Standards Update No. 2014-12- Compensation - Stock Compensation In June 2014, FASB, issued ASU 2014-12. This update defines the accounting treatment for share-based payments and resolves the diverse accounting treatment of those awards in practice. The new requirement mandates that a performance target that affects vesting and that could be achieved after the requisite service period be treated as a performance condition.

Compensation cost will now be recognized in the period in which it becomes likely that the performance target will be met.

The amendments in this Update are effective for annual reporting periods beginning after December 15, 2015. Early adoption is permitted. The Company adopted the methodologies prescribed by this ASU by the date required, and this ASU did not have a material effect on its financial position or results of operations.

NOTE 2 - CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

The Company considers all liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less to be cash equivalents.

Beginning January 1, 2013, noninterest-bearing transaction accounts are subject to a \$250,000 limit on FDIC insurance per covered institution.

At December 31, 2014, the Company's cash accounts exceeded federally insured limits by approximately \$20.1 million. The Company had cash balances of \$12.2 million at the FRB and FHLB that did not have FDIC insurance coverage.

Cash on hand or on deposit with the Federal Reserve Bank of \$2.3 million was required to meet regulatory reserve and clearing requirements at year-end 2014.

NOTE 3 - SECURITIES AVAILABLE FOR SALE

The fair value of securities available for sale at year end is as follows:

| 2014 | Fair Value | Gross Unrealized Gains | Gross Unrealized Losses |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| U. S. government agency debt securities | \$ 7,738 | \$ | \$ (236) |
| States and political subdivisions | 19,913 | 112 | (92) |
| U.S. government agency mortgage-backed securities | 66,139 | 316 | (483) |
| Preferred stock | 15 | 11 | |
| SBA securities | 12,180 | 13 | (66) |
| | \$ 105,985 | \$ 452 | \$ (877) |

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 3 - SECURITIES AVAILABLE FOR SALE (Continued)

| 2013 | Fair Value | Gross Unrealized Gains | Gross Unrealized Losses |
|---|---------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| U. S. government agency debt securities | \$ 11,059 | \$ | (1,414) |
| States and political subdivisions | 16,367 | 50 | (419) |
| U.S. government agency mortgage-backed securities | 60,065 | 124 | (1,235) |
| Preferred stock | 35 | 31 | |
| SBA securities | 8,303 | 1 | (104) |
| | \$ 95,829 | \$ 206 | \$ (3,172) |

Securities classified as U. S. government agency debt securities include notes issued by government-sponsored enterprises such as the Federal National Mortgage Association, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, and the Federal Home Loan Bank. The SBA securities are pools of the loans guaranteed by the Small Business Administration.

The fair values of securities available for sale at December 31, 2014, by contractual maturity, are shown below. Expected maturities will differ from contractual maturities because borrowers may have the right to call or prepay obligations with or without call or prepayment penalties. Securities not due at a single maturity are shown separately.

| | Amortized Cost | Fair Value |
|--|-------------------|---------------|
| Due in one year or less | \$ 481 | \$ 482 |
| Due after one year through five years | 3,244 | 3,222 |
| Due after five years through ten years | 16,992 | 16,959 |
| Due after ten years | 7,150 | 6,988 |
| U.S. government agency mortgage-backed | 66,306 | 66,139 |
| Preferred stock | 4 | 15 |
| SBA securities | 12,233 | 12,180 |
| | \$ 106,410 | \$ 105,985 |

Securities with a carrying value of approximately \$7.6 million and \$18.0 million at December 31, 2014 and 2013, respectively, were pledged to secure public deposits, Federal Home Loan Bank advances and for other purposes as required or permitted by law.

Sales of securities were as follows:

| | 2014 | | 2013 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|----|-------------|
| Sales proceeds | \$ 6,573 | \$ | 8,063 |
| Gross gains/(losses) on sales | (15) | | 55 |

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 3 - SECURITIES AVAILABLE FOR SALE (Continued)

Certain investments in debt securities are reported in the financial statements at an amount less than their historical cost. Total fair value of these investments at December 31, 2014 and 2013 was \$65.7 million and \$77.1 million, respectively, which is approximately 62.0% and 80.5% of the Company's investment portfolio, respectively. These declines primarily resulted from changes in market interest rates and current depressed market conditions. Based on evaluation of available evidence, including recent changes in market interest rates, credit rating information and information obtained from regulatory filings, management believes the declines in fair value for these securities are temporary. Should the impairment of any of these securities become other than temporary, the cost basis of the investment will be reduced and the resulting loss recognized in net income in the period the other-than-temporary impairment is identified.

The following tables show gross unrealized losses and fair value, aggregated by investment category and length of time that individual securities have been in a continuous unrealized loss position at December 31, 2014 and 2013:

| 2014 Description of Securities | Less than 12 Months | | 12 Months or More | | Total | |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------|
| | Fair Value | Unrealized Losses | Fair Value | Unrealized Losses | Fair Value | Unrealized Losses |
| U.S. Government agency debt securities | \$ | \$ | \$ 7,738 | \$ (236) | \$ 7,738 | \$ (236) |
| State and political subdivisions | 6,601 | (31) | 3,801 | (61) | 10,402 | (92) |
| U.S. Government agency mortgage-backed securities | 13,988 | (59) | 23,516 | (424) | 37,504 | (483) |
| SBA Securities | 5,065 | (22) | 4,978 | (44) | 10,043 | (66) |
| Total temporarily impaired securities | \$ 25,654 | \$ (112) | \$ 40,033 | \$ (765) | \$ 65,687 | \$ (877) |

U.S. Government Agency Debt Securities and U.S. Government Agency Mortgage-backed Securities

The unrealized losses on the Company's investments in obligations of U.S. government agencies were caused by interest rate changes. The contractual terms of those investments do not permit the issuer to settle the securities at a price less than the amortized cost bases of the investments. Because the Company does not intend to sell the investments and it is not more likely than not the Company will be required to sell the investments before recovery of their amortized cost bases, which may be maturity, the Company does not consider those investments to be other-than-temporarily impaired at December 31, 2014.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

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(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 3 - SECURITIES AVAILABLE FOR SALE (Continued)

| 2013 Description of Securities | Less than 12 Months | | 12 Months or More | | Total | |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------|
| | Fair Value | Unrealized Losses | Fair Value | Unrealized Losses | Fair Value | Unrealized Losses |
| U.S. Government agency debt securities | \$ 6,694 | \$ (797) | \$ 4,365 | \$ (617) | \$ 11,059 | \$ (1,414) |
| State and political subdivisions | 10,027 | (419) | | | 10,027 | (419) |
| U.S. Government agency mortgage-backed securities | 48,023 | (1,234) | 16 | (1) | 48,039 | (1,235) |
| SBA Securities | 7,987 | (104) | | | 7,987 | (104) |
| Total temporarily impaired securities | \$ 72,731 | \$ (2,554) | \$ 4,381 | \$ (618) | \$ 77,112 | \$ (3,172) |

NOTE 4 - LOANS

Loans consisted of the following at December 31:

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| Real estate | | |
| Commercial | \$ 92,669 | \$ 97,813 |
| Construction | 1,853 | 1,856 |
| Residential | 26,676 | 26,240 |
| Home equity | 46,339 | 47,050 |
| Total real estate loans | 167,537 | 172,959 |
| Commercial | 16,048 | 21,379 |
| Consumer | 1,163 | 1,384 |
| Total loans | 184,748 | 195,722 |
| Deferred loan costs, net | 267 | 229 |
| Allowance for loan losses | (2,442) | (2,500) |
| Loans, net | \$ 182,573 | \$ 193,451 |

The risk characteristics of each loan portfolio segment are as follows:

Commercial

Commercial loans are primarily based on the identified cash flows of the borrower and secondarily on the underlying collateral provided by the borrower. The cash flows of borrowers, however, may not be as expected and the collateral securing these loans may fluctuate in value. Most commercial loans are secured by the assets being financed or other business assets such as accounts receivable or inventory and may incorporate a personal guarantee; however, some short-term loans may be made on an unsecured basis. In the case of loans secured by accounts receivable, the availability of funds for the repayment of these loans may be substantially dependent on the ability of the borrower to collect amounts due from its customers.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 4 LOANS(Continued)

Commercial Real Estate

These loans are viewed primarily as cash flow loans and secondarily as loans secured by real estate. Commercial real estate lending typically involves higher loan principal amounts and the repayment of these loans is generally dependent on the successful operation of the property securing the loan or the business conducted on the property securing the loan. Commercial real estate loans may be more adversely affected by conditions in the real estate markets or in the general economy. The properties securing the Company's commercial real estate portfolio are diverse in terms of type and geographic location. Management monitors and evaluates commercial real estate loans based on collateral, geography and risk grade criteria. As a general rule, the Company avoids financing single purpose projects unless other underwriting factors are present to help mitigate risk. In addition, management tracks the level of owner-occupied commercial real estate loans versus non-owner occupied loans.

Construction

Construction loans are underwritten utilizing feasibility studies, independent appraisal reviews, sensitivity analysis of absorption and lease rates and financial analysis of the developers and property owners. Construction loans are generally based on estimates of costs and value associated with the completed project. These estimates may be inaccurate. Construction loans often involve the disbursement of substantial funds with repayment substantially dependent on the success of the ultimate project. Sources of repayment for these types of loans may be pre-committed permanent loans from approved long-term lenders, sales of developed property or an interim loan commitment from the Company until permanent financing is obtained. These loans are closely monitored by on-site inspections and are considered to have higher risks than other real estate loans due to their ultimate repayment being sensitive to interest rate changes, governmental regulation of real property, general economic conditions and the availability of long-term financing.

Residential and Consumer, including Home Equity Lines of Credit (HELOC)

With respect to residential loans that are secured by one-to-four family residences and are generally owner occupied, the Company generally establishes a maximum loan-to-value ratio and may require private mortgage insurance if that ratio is exceeded. Home equity loans are typically secured by a subordinate interest in one-to-four family residences, and consumer loans are secured by consumer assets such as automobiles or recreational vehicles. Some consumer loans are unsecured such as small installment loans and certain lines of credit. Repayment of these loans

is primarily dependent on the personal income of the borrowers, which can be impacted by economic conditions in their market areas such as unemployment levels. Repayment can also be impacted by changes in property values on residential properties. Risk is mitigated by the fact that the loans are of smaller individual amounts and spread over a large number of borrowers.

Policy for charging off loans:

Management's general practice is to establish a reserve or proactively charge down loans individually evaluated for impairment to the fair value of the underlying collateral.

Consistent with regulatory guidance, charge-offs on all loan segments are taken when specific loans, or portions thereof, are considered uncollectible. The Company's policy is to promptly charge these loans off in the period the uncollectible loss is reasonably determined.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 4 LOANS(Continued)

For all loan portfolio segments except one-to-four family residential loans and consumer loans, the Company promptly establishes a reserve or charges-off loans, or portions thereof, when available information confirms that specific loans are uncollectible based on information that includes, but is not limited to, (1) the deteriorating financial condition of the borrower, (2) declining collateral values, and/or (3) legal action, including bankruptcy, that impairs the borrower's ability to adequately meet its obligations. For impaired loans that are considered to be solely collateral dependent, a partial charge-off is recorded when a loss has been confirmed by an updated appraisal or other appropriate valuation of the collateral.

The Company charges-off one-to-four family residential and consumer loans, or portions thereof, when the Company reasonably determines the amount of the loss. The Company adheres to timeframes established by applicable regulatory guidance which provides for the charge-down of one-to-four family first and junior lien mortgages to the net realizable value less costs to sell when the loan is 180 days past due, charge-off of unsecured open-end loans when the loan is 180 days past due, and charge down to the net realizable value when other secured loans are 120 days past due. Loans at these respective delinquency thresholds for which the Company can clearly document that the loan is both well-secured and in the process of collection, such that collection will occur regardless of delinquency status, need not be charged off.

Policy for determining delinquency:

The entire balance of a loan is considered delinquent if the minimum payment contractually required to be made is not received by the specified due date.

Period utilized for determining historical loss factors:

The historical loss experience is determined by portfolio segment and is based on the actual loss history experienced by the Company over the prior five years. Management believes the five year historical loss experience methodology is appropriate in the current economic environment, as it captures loss rates that are comparable to the current period being analyzed.

Policy for recognizing interest income on impaired loans:

Interest income on loans individually classified as impaired is recognized on a cash basis after all past due and current principal payments have been made.

Policy for recognizing interest income on nonaccrual loans:

Subsequent payments on nonaccrual loans are recorded as a reduction of principal, and interest income is recorded only after principal recovery is reasonably assured. Nonaccrual loans are returned to accrual status when, in the opinion of management, the financial position of the borrower indicates there is no longer any reasonable doubt as to the timely collection of interest or principal. The Company requires a period of satisfactory performance of not less than six months before returning a nonaccrual loan to accrual status.

The Bank has entered into transactions, including the making of direct and indirect loans, with certain directors and their affiliates (related parties). In management's opinion such transactions were made in the ordinary course of business and were made on substantially the same terms (including interest rates and collateral) as those prevailing at the time for comparable transactions with other persons. Further, in management's opinion, these loans did not involve more than normal risk of collectibility or present other unfavorable features.

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 4 LOANS(Continued)

The aggregate amount of loans, as defined, to such related parties were as follows:

| | 2014 | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| Balances, January 1, 2014 | \$ | 1,006 |
| New loans including renewals | | 113 |
| Payments, etc., including renewals | | (363) |
| Balances, December 31, 2014 | \$ | 756 |
| | 2013 | |
| Balances, January 1, 2013 | \$ | 2,432 |
| New loans including renewals | | 156 |
| Payments, etc., including renewals | | (1,582) |
| Balances, December 31, 2013 | \$ | 1,006 |

The following table presents the balance in the allowance for loan losses and the recorded investment in loans based on portfolio segment and impairment method as of December 31, 2014 and 2013:

| | 2014 | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Commercial | Commercial Real Estate | Construction | Consumer | Residential | HELOC | Total |
| Balance at beginning of period | \$ 483 | \$ 1,336 | \$ 44 | \$ 41 | \$ 266 | \$ 330 | \$ 2,500 |
| Provision for loan losses | (205) | (138) | (13) | (23) | 50 | 254 | (75) |
| Charge-offs | | (28) | | (3) | | (64) | (95) |
| Recoveries | 75 | 5 | | | 30 | 2 | 112 |
| Balance at end of period | \$ 353 | \$ 1,175 | \$ 31 | \$ 15 | \$ 346 | \$ 522 | \$ 2,442 |
| Ending balance: individually evaluated for | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ 38 | \$ 88 | \$ 126 |

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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|----|--------|----|--------|----|---------|
| impairment | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ending balance: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| collectively | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| evaluated for | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| impairment | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| \$ | 353 | \$ | 1,175 | \$ | 31 | \$ | 15 | \$ | 308 | \$ | 434 | \$ | 2,316 |
| Total Loans: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ending balance | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| \$ | 16,048 | \$ | 92,669 | \$ | 1,853 | \$ | 1,163 | \$ | 26,676 | \$ | 46,339 | \$ | 184,748 |
| Ending balance: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| individually | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| evaluated for | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| impairment | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| \$ | | \$ | 823 | \$ | | \$ | | \$ | 528 | \$ | 964 | \$ | 2,315 |
| Ending balance: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| collectively | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| evaluated for | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| impairment | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| \$ | 16,048 | \$ | 91,846 | \$ | 1,853 | \$ | 1,163 | \$ | 26,148 | \$ | 45,375 | \$ | 182,433 |

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

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(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 4 LOANS(Continued)

| | 2013 | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------------|--------------|----------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| | Commercial | Commercial Real Estate | Construction | Consumer | Residential | HELOC | Total |
| Balance at beginning of period | \$ 621 | \$ 1,386 | \$ 53 | \$ 21 | \$ 305 | \$ 646 | \$ 3,032 |
| Provision for loan losses | 129 | 221 | (9) | 34 | 773 | 279 | 1,427 |
| Charge-offs | (267) | (357) | | (15) | (835) | (600) | (2,074) |
| Recoveries | | 86 | | 1 | 23 | 5 | 115 |
| Balance at end of period | \$ 483 | \$ 1,336 | \$ 44 | \$ 41 | \$ 266 | \$ 330 | \$ 2,500 |
| Ending balance: individually evaluated for impairment | \$ | \$ 26 | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ 46 | \$ 72 |
| Ending balance: collectively evaluated for impairment | \$ 483 | \$ 1,310 | \$ 44 | \$ 41 | \$ 266 | \$ 284 | \$ 2,428 |
| Total Loans: | | | | | | | |
| Ending balance | \$ 21,379 | \$ 97,813 | \$ 1,856 | \$ 1,384 | \$ 26,240 | \$ 47,050 | \$ 195,722 |
| Ending balance: individually evaluated for impairment | \$ 1,566 | \$ 437 | \$ | \$ | \$ 398 | \$ 505 | \$ 2,906 |
| Ending balance: collectively evaluated for impairment | \$ 19,813 | \$ 97,376 | \$ 1,856 | \$ 1,384 | \$ 25,842 | \$ 46,545 | \$ 192,816 |

The following table summarizes the Company's nonaccrual loans by class at December 31, 2014 and 2013.

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|--------------------|------|------|
| Real estate loans: | | |

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| | | | | |
|----------------------|----|-------|----|-----|
| Commercial | \$ | 823 | \$ | 437 |
| Residential mortgage | | 528 | | |
| Home equity | | 964 | | 505 |
| Total | \$ | 2,315 | \$ | 942 |

The following table presents impaired loans as of December 31, 2014:

| | Recorded Balance | Unpaid Principal Balance | Specific Allowance | Average Investment in Impaired Loans | Interest Income Recognized |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| With no related allowance recorded: | | | | | |
| Commercial real estate | \$ 823 | \$ 835 | \$ | \$ 837 | \$ 30 |
| Residential | | | | 7 | |
| HELOC | 509 | 514 | | 632 | 8 |
| Subtotal | 1,332 | 1,349 | | 1,476 | 38 |
| With an allowance recorded: | | | | | |
| Commercial real estate | | | | 792 | 12 |
| Residential | 528 | 531 | 38 | 532 | 24 |
| HELOC | 456 | 516 | 88 | 579 | 22 |
| Subtotal | 984 | 1,047 | 126 | 1,903 | 58 |
| Total Impaired Loans | \$ 2,316 | \$ 2,396 | \$ 126 | \$ 3,379 | \$ 96 |

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 4 LOANS (Continued)

The following table presents impaired loans as of December 31, 2013:

| | Recorded Balance | Unpaid Principal Balance | Specific Allowance | Average Investment in Impaired Loans | Interest Income Recognized |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| With no related allowance recorded: | | | | | |
| Commercial real estate | \$ 1,566 | \$ 1,566 | \$ | \$ 1,549 | \$ 62 |
| Residential | 398 | 398 | | 402 | 21 |
| HELOC | 166 | 166 | | 165 | |
| Subtotal | 2,130 | 2,130 | | 2,116 | 83 |
| With an allowance recorded: | | | | | |
| Commercial real estate | 437 | 812 | 26 | 834 | |
| Residential | | | | | |
| HELOC | 339 | 396 | 46 | 396 | |
| Subtotal | 776 | 1,208 | 72 | 1,230 | |
| Total Impaired Loans | \$ 2,906 | \$ 3,338 | \$ 72 | \$ 3,346 | \$ 83 |

The Company categorizes loans into risk categories based on relevant information about the ability of borrowers to service their debt such as: current financial information, historical payment experience, credit documentation and current economic trends, among other factors. The Company analyzes loans individually by classifying the loans as to credit risk. This analysis is performed during the loan approval process and is updated as circumstances warrant. The Company uses the following definitions for risk ratings:

Special Mention. Loans classified as special mention have a potential weakness that deserves management's close attention. If left uncorrected, these potential weaknesses may result in deterioration of the repayment prospects for the loan or of the Company's credit position at some future date.

Substandard. Loans classified as substandard are inadequately protected by the current net worth and paying capacity of the borrower or of the collateral pledged, if any. Loans so classified have a well-defined weakness or weaknesses that jeopardize the liquidation of the debt. They are characterized by the distinct possibility that the Company will sustain some loss if the deficiencies are not corrected.

Doubtful. Loans classified as doubtful have all the weaknesses inherent in those classified as substandard with the added characteristic that weaknesses make collection or liquidation in full, on the basis of currently existing facts, conditions, and values, highly questionable and improbable.

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NOTE 4 LOANS(Continued)

The following table summarizes credit quality of the Company at December 31, 2014 and 2013:

| | 2014 | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|----------|------|------------|
| | Pass | Special Mention | Substandard | Doubtful | Loss | Total |
| Commercial | \$ 15,983 | \$ | \$ 65 | \$ | \$ | \$ 16,048 |
| Real estate loans: | | | | | | |
| Construction | 1,853 | | | | | 1,853 |
| Commercial real estate | 89,644 | 227 | 2,798 | | | 92,669 |
| Residential mortgage | 26,448 | | 528 | | | 26,676 |
| Home equity | 45,048 | 28 | 963 | | | 46,339 |
| Consumer | 1,163 | | | | | 1,163 |
| Total | \$ 180,139 | \$ 255 | \$ 4,354 | \$ | \$ | \$ 184,748 |

| | 2013 | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|----------|------|------------|
| | Pass | Special Mention | Substandard | Doubtful | Loss | Total |
| Commercial | \$ 19,536 | \$ 209 | \$ 1,634 | \$ | \$ | \$ 21,379 |
| Real estate loans: | | | | | | |
| Construction | 1,856 | | | | | 1,856 |
| Commercial real estate | 93,679 | 3,235 | 899 | | | 97,813 |
| Residential mortgage | 24,763 | 1,477 | | | | 26,240 |
| Home equity | 46,515 | 29 | 506 | | | 47,050 |
| Consumer | 1,384 | | | | | 1,384 |
| Total | \$ 187,733 | \$ 4,950 | \$ 3,039 | \$ | \$ | \$ 195,722 |

The following table summarizes aging of the Company's loan portfolio at December 31, 2014 and 2013:

| | 2014 | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------------|
| | 30-59 Days Past Due | 60-89 Days Past Due | Greater Than 90 Days | Total Past Due | Current | Total Loans |

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| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|----|-----|----|-------|----|-------|----|--------|----|---------|--------|
| Commercial | \$ | 133 | \$ | 56 | \$ | 189 | \$ | 15,859 | \$ | 16,048 | \$ |
| Real estate loans: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Construction | | | | | | | | 1,853 | | 1,853 | |
| Commercial real estate | | 301 | | 823 | | 1,124 | | 91,545 | | 92,669 | |
| Residential mortgage | | | | 89 | | 528 | | 617 | | 26,059 | 26,676 |
| Home equity | | 339 | | 1,096 | | 1,435 | | 44,903 | | 46,339 | 133 |
| Consumer | | 3 | | | | 3 | | 1,160 | | 1,163 | |
| Total | \$ | 776 | \$ | 145 | \$ | 2,447 | \$ | 3,368 | \$ | 181,380 | \$ 133 |

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 4 LOANS(Continued)

| | 30-59 Days Past Due | 60-89 Days Past Due | Greater Than 90 Days | 2013 Total Past Due | Current | Total Loans | Loans > 90 Days and Accruing |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Commercial | \$ 100 | \$ | \$ | \$ 100 | \$ 21,279 | \$ 21,379 | \$ |
| Real estate loans: | | | | | | | |
| Construction | | | | | 1,856 | 1,856 | |
| Commercial real estate | | 569 | 168 | 737 | 97,076 | 97,813 | 168 |
| Residential mortgage | 687 | 1,342 | 11 | 2,040 | 24,200 | 26,240 | 11 |
| Home equity | 445 | 328 | 555 | 1,328 | 45,722 | 47,050 | 50 |
| Consumer | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1,382 | 1,384 | 1 |
| Total | \$ 1,232 | \$ 2,240 | \$ 735 | \$ 4,207 | \$ 191,515 | \$ 195,722 | \$ 230 |

The Company may grant a concession or modification for economic or legal reasons related to a borrower's financial condition that it would not otherwise consider resulting in a modified loan which is then identified as a troubled debt restructuring (TDR). The Company may modify loans through interest rate reductions, short-term extensions of maturity, interest only payments, or payment modifications to better match the timing of cash flows due under the modified terms with the cash flows from the borrowers' operations. Loan modifications are intended to minimize the economic loss and to avoid foreclosure or repossession of the collateral. TDRs are considered impaired loans for purposes of calculating the Company's allowance for loan losses.

The Company identifies loans for potential restructure primarily through direct communication with the borrower and evaluation of the borrower's financial statements, revenue projections, tax returns and credit reports. Even if the borrower is not presently in default, management will consider the likelihood that cash flow shortages, adverse economic conditions, and negative trends may result in a payment default in the near future.

For one-to-four family residential and home equity lines of credit, a restructure often occurs with past due loans and may be offered as an alternative to foreclosure. There are other situations where borrowers, who are not past due, experience a sudden job loss, become overextended with credit obligations, or other problems, have indicated that they will be unable to make the required monthly payment and request payment relief.

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When considering a loan restructure, management will determine if: (i) the financial distress is short or long term; (ii) loan concessions are necessary; and (iii) the restructure is a viable solution.

When a loan is restructured, the new terms often require a reduced monthly debt service payment. No TDRs that were on non-accrual status at the time the concessions were granted have been returned to accrual status. For commercial loans, management completes an analysis of the operating entity's ability to repay the debt. If the operating entity is capable of servicing the new debt service requirements and the underlying collateral value is believed to be sufficient to repay the debt in the event of a default, the new loan is generally placed on accrual status.

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NOTE 4 - LOANS(Continued)

For retail loans, an analysis of the individual's ability to service the new required payments is performed. If the borrower is capable of servicing the newly restructured debt and the underlying collateral value is believed to be sufficient to repay the debt in the event of a future default, the new loan is generally placed on accrual status. The reason for the TDR is also considered, such as paying past due real estate taxes or payments caused by a temporary job loss, when determining whether a retail TDR loan could be returned to accrual status. Retail TDRs remain on non-accrual status until sufficient payments have been made to bring the past due principal and interest current at which point the loan would be transferred to accrual status.

There were no loans restructured as TDRs for the years ended December 31, 2014 and 2013.

There were no defaults during 2014 or 2013 for loans restructured within the prior twelve months.

NOTE 5 - PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT

Premises and equipment consisted of the following at year end:

| | 2014 | | 2013 | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Land | \$ | 4,028 | \$ | 4,028 |
| Buildings | | 13,150 | | 13,116 |
| Furniture and equipment | | 3,593 | | 3,584 |
| Total cost | | 20,771 | | 20,728 |
| Accumulated depreciation | | (6,298) | | (5,866) |
| Net book value | \$ | 14,473 | \$ | 14,862 |

NOTE 6 - DEPOSITS

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| | 2014 | 2013 |
|--|------------|------------|
| Non-interest bearing DDA | \$ 44,754 | \$ 39,613 |
| NOW | 71,492 | 72,545 |
| Money market | 43,666 | 42,443 |
| Regular savings | 71,199 | 74,389 |
| Certificates and time deposits, \$100,000 and over | 25,641 | 32,621 |
| Other certificates and time deposits | 48,669 | 54,098 |
| Total deposits | \$ 305,421 | \$ 315,709 |

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

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December 31, 2014 and 2013

(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 6 DEPOSITS (Continued)

At December 31, 2014, scheduled maturities of certificates of deposit are as follows:

| | | |
|------|----|--------|
| 2015 | \$ | 43,712 |
| 2016 | | 19,006 |
| 2017 | | 8,218 |
| 2018 | | 2,677 |
| 2019 | | 697 |
| | \$ | 74,310 |

At December 31, 2014, total certificates and time deposits of \$250,000 and over totaled \$2,708,000. Deposits from related parties, as defined in Note 4, held by the Company at December 31, 2014 and 2013 totaled \$2,449,000 and \$2,478,000, respectively.

NOTE 7 - ADVANCES FROM THE FEDERAL HOME LOAN BANK AND OTHER BORROWINGS

Advances from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago totaled \$2.0 million and \$4.5 million at December 31, 2014 and 2013, respectively. There is one advance with an interest rate of 1.69% and is subject to restrictions or penalties in the event of prepayment.

The Company maintains a collateral pledge agreement covering advances whereby the Company has agreed to at all times keep on hand, free of all other pledges, liens, and encumbrances, whole first mortgage loans on improved residential property not more than 90 days delinquent, aggregating no less than 167 percent of the outstanding advances from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago. As noted in Note 3, the Company has also pledged securities on these advances.

At December 31, 2014, the Company has one outstanding advance with the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago totaling \$2.0 million maturing in 2015.

NOTE 8 - SUBORDINATED DEBENTURES

The Company and its financing trust subsidiary, Community Financial Shares Trust II, a Delaware statutory trust, consummated the issuance and sale of an aggregate amount of \$3,500,000 of the Trust's floating rate capital securities in a pooled trust preferred transaction. The subordinated debentures accrue interest at a variable rate based on three-month LIBOR plus 1.62%, reset and payable quarterly. The interest rate at December 31, 2014 was 1.86%. The debentures will mature on September 21, 2037, at which time the preferred securities must be redeemed. In addition, the Company may redeem the preferred securities in whole or part, beginning June 21, 2012 at a redemption price of \$1,000 per preferred security.

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(Table dollar amounts in thousands, except share data)

NOTE 8 - SUBORDINATED DEBENTURES (Continued)

The Company has provided a full, irrevocable, and unconditional guarantee on a subordinated basis of the obligations of the Trust under the preferred securities in the event of the occurrence of an event of default, as defined in such guarantee.

The Company deferred all payments of interest on its Floating Rate Junior Subordinated Deferrable Interest Debentures due 2037 beginning with the March 15, 2011 interest payment period through the December 15, 2012 interest payment period. On December 21, 2012, immediately following the consummation of the Investment, the Company paid all outstanding accrued and additional interest on its Floating Rate Junior Subordinated Deferrable Interest Debentures due 2037 through the March 15, 2013 interest payment period in accordance with a written approval letter from the FRB. Subsequently, the Company elected to defer payments of interest on its Floating Rate Junior Subordinated Deferrable Interest Debentures due 2037 beginning with the June 15, 2013 interest payment period. All of the outstanding accrued and additional interest was subsequently brought current on December 15, 2014.

NOTE 9 - CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

On January 10, 2014, the Bank received notification from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (the "FDIC") and the Division of Banking of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (the "IDFPR") that the Consent Order (the "Order") issued to the Bank by the FDIC and IDFPR on January 21, 2011 was terminated effective January 10, 2014. The material terms and conditions of the Order were previously disclosed in the Company's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on January 26, 2011. In connection with the termination of the Order, the Bank agreed to achieve Tier 1 capital at least equal to 8% of total assets and total capital at least equal to 12% of risk-weighted assets. At December 31, 2014, these capital ratios were 7.7% and 13.4%, respectively.

Capital adequacy guidelines and prompt corrective action regulations involve quantitative measures of assets, liabilities, and certain off-balance-sheet items calculated under regulatory accounting practices. Capital amounts and classifications are also subject to qualitative judgments by regulators about components, risk weightings, and other factors, and the regulators can lower classifications in certain cases. Failure to meet various capital requirements can initiate regulatory action that could have a direct material effect on the financial statements. The prompt corrective action regulations provide five classifications, including well capitalized, adequately capitalized, undercapitalized, significantly undercapitalized, and critically undercapitalized, although these terms are not used to represent overall financial condition. If undercapitalized, capital distributions are limited, as are asset growth and expansion, and plans for capital restoration are required. The minimum requirements are:

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| | Capital to Risk Weighted Assets | Tier 1 | Tier 1 Capital to Average Assets |
|------------------------|--|---------------|---|
| | Total | | |
| Well capitalized | 10% | 6% | 5% |
| Adequately capitalized | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| Undercapitalized | 6 | 3 | 3 |

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COMMUNITY FINANCIAL SHARES, INC.

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NOTE 9 CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS(Continued)

The actual capital levels and minimum required levels for the Bank were as follows at December 31:

| | Actual | | Minimum for Capital Adequacy Purposes | | Minimum to Be Well Capitalized | |
|--|-----------|-------|--|-------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| | Amount | Ratio | Amount | Ratio | Amount | Ratio |
| 2014 | | | | | | |
| Total capital (to risk-weighted assets) | \$ 27,941 | 13.4% | \$ 16,672 | 8.0% | \$ 20,840 | 10.0% |
| Tier 1 capital (to risk-weighted assets) | 25,499 | 12.2 | 8,336 | 4.0 | 12,504 | 6.0 |
| Tier 1 capital (to average assets) | 25,499 | 7.7 | 13,329 | 4.0 | 16,661 | 5.0 |
| 2013 | | | | | | |
| Total capital (to risk-weighted assets) | \$ 25,990 | 11.9% | \$ 17,426 | 8.0% | \$ 21,783 | 10.0% |
| Tier 1 capital (to risk-weighted assets) | 23,490 | 10.8 | 8,713 | 4.0 | 13,070 | 6.0 |
| Tier 1 capital (to average assets) | 23,490 | 6.8 | 13,763 | 4.0 | 17,204 | 5.0 |

At December 31, 2014, regulatory approval is required for all dividend declarations by both the Bank and the Company.

NOTE 10 - RETIREMENT PLANS

The Company maintains a profit sharing/401(k) plan, which covers substantially all employees. Employees may make contributions to the plan. Employer contributions to the plan are determined at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Annual employer contributions are charged to expense. Profit sharing/401(k) expense was \$67,000 and \$32,000 in 2014 and 2013, respectively.

The Company also maintains a nonqualified retirement program for directors. Expense for the directors' retirement program was \$24,000 and \$23,000 in 2014 and 2013, respectively.

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Under agreements with the Company, certain members of the Board of Directors have elected to defer their directors' fees. The cumulative amount of deferred directors' fees (included in other liabilities on the Company's balance sheet) was \$889,000 and \$1.0 million for December 31, 2014 and 2013, respectively. The liabilities for the nonqualified retirement program for directors and for directors' deferred fees are not secured by any assets of the Company. Deferred directors' fees accounts were credited with interest at 2.52% in 2014.

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NOTE 11 - INCOME TAXES

Income tax consists of the following:

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|-----------------------|------------|--------|
| Currently payable tax | | |
| Federal | \$ | \$ 145 |
| State | | (145) |
| Deferred tax | | |
| Federal | (1,866) | (3) |
| State | (2,090) | 149 |
| | \$ (3,956) | \$ 146 |

Income tax differs from federal statutory rates applied to financial statement income due to the following:

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|--|------------|----------|
| Federal rate of 34 percent | \$ 485 | \$ (898) |
| Add (subtract) effect of | | |
| Tax-exempt income, net of nondeductible interest expense | (123) | (92) |
| State income tax, net of federal benefit | (1,380) | 4 |
| Cash value of life insurance | (72) | (76) |
| Valuation allowance | (2,904) | 1,058 |
| Other items, net | 38 | 150 |
| Income tax | \$ (3,956) | \$ 146 |

The Company recorded a tax benefit of \$4.0 million on \$1.4 million pre-tax income for the year ended December 31, 2014. The tax benefit was composed entirely of a reverse of the deferred tax valuation allowance.

Year-end deferred tax assets and liabilities were due to the following:

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| | 2014 | | 2013 |
|--|----------|----|----------|
| Deferred tax assets | | | |
| Allowance for loan losses | \$ 297 | \$ | 1,120 |
| Deferred compensation | 545 | | 598 |
| Other-than-temporary-impairment | 50 | | 52 |
| Loss carryforward | 10,823 | | 9,400 |
| Net unrealized losses on securities available for sale | 165 | | 1,149 |
| AMT carryover | 275 | | 263 |
| Other real estate owned | 145 | | 67 |
| Other | 192 | | 211 |
| Total | 12,492 | | 12,860 |
| Deferred tax liabilities | | | |
| Accumulated depreciation | (788) | | (728) |
| Deferred loan fees and costs, net | (149) | | (155) |
| Prepaid expenses | (54) | | (57) |
| Federal Home Loan Bank stock dividends | (44) | | (47) |
| State income taxes | (714) | | (186) |
| Other | | | (51) |
| Total | (1,749) | | (1,224) |
| Valuation allowance | (6,625) | | (10,487) |
| Net deferred tax asset | \$ 4,118 | \$ | 1,149 |

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NOTE 11 - INCOME TAXES (Continued)

The following is the activity in net deferred tax assets:

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|-------|
| Balance, December 31, 2013 | \$ | 1,149 |
| Decrease in deferred tax assets | | (368) |
| Increase in deferred tax liabilities | | (525) |
| Decrease in valuation allowance | | 3,862 |
| Balance, December 31, 2014 | \$ | 4,118 |

Due to the capital raise during 2012 previously discussed, the Company has had an ownership change pursuant to IRC Section 382. This ownership change limits the amount of net operating loss which can be used annually for federal tax purposes. Due to this annual limitation and the number of years in which the net operating loss can be carried forward, a significant portion of the net operating loss will likely never be used. At December 31, 2014, the Company had \$25.6 million of federal loss carryforwards and \$27.4 million of Illinois state loss carryforwards which expire in varying amounts beginning in 2029 and 2021, respectively. At December 31, 2014, the Company had approximately \$275,000 of alternative minimum tax credits available to offset future federal income taxes. The credits have no expiration date.

NOTE 12 EARNINGS (LOSS) PER SHARE

The following is an analysis of the Company's basic and diluted EPS, reflecting the application of the two-class method as of December 31, 2014 and 2013:

| | 2014 |
|--|-------------|
| Net income available for distribution | \$ 5,383 |
| Dividends and undistributed earnings allocated to participating securities | (3,442) |
| Income attributable to common shareholders | \$ 1,941 |
| Average common shares outstanding for basic EPS | 10,781,988 |
| Effect of dilutive convertible preferred stock | |
| Effect of dilutive stock options | 30 |
| Average common and common-equivalent shares for dilutive EPS | 10,782,018 |

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| | | |
|---------|----|------|
| Basic | \$ | 0.18 |
| Diluted | \$ | 0.18 |

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NOTE 12 EARNINGS (LOSS) PER SHARE(Continued)

| | 2013 |
|--|-------------|
| Net income available for distribution | \$ (2,787) |
| Dividends and undistributed earnings allocated to participating securities | |
| Income attributable to common shareholders | \$ (2,787) |
| Average common shares outstanding for basic EPS | 7,278,781 |
| Effect of dilutive convertible preferred stock | |
| Effect of dilutive stock options | |
| Average common and common-equivalent shares for dilutive EPS | 7,278,781 |
| Basic | \$ (0.38) |
| Diluted | \$ (0.38) |

There were 20,680 and 23,580 anti-dilutive shares at December 31, 2014 and 2013, respectively.

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NOTE 13 - STOCK OPTIONS