

SEACOAST BANKING CORP OF FLORIDA
Form 8-K
March 26, 2012

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20549

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT

Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the
Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Date of report (Date of earliest event reported): March 26, 2012

SEACOAST BANKING CORPORATION OF FLORIDA

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

Florida
(State or Other Jurisdiction

of Incorporation)

001-13660
(Commission

File Number)

59-2260678
(IRS Employer

Identification No.)

Edgar Filing: SEACOAST BANKING CORP OF FLORIDA - Form 8-K

815 Colorado Avenue, Stuart, Florida

34994
(Zip Code)

(Address of Principal Executive Offices)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: (772) 287-4000

(Former Name or Former Address, if Changed Since Last Report)

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions:

- .. Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
- .. Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)
- .. Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))
- .. Pre-commencement communication pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))

Item 8.01 Other Events.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK

General

The following description of shares of our common stock, par value \$0.10 per share, or common stock is a summary only and is subject to applicable provisions of the Florida Business Corporation Act, as amended (the Florida Act) and to our amended and restated articles of incorporation, as amended (Articles of Incorporation) and our amended and restated bylaws (Bylaws). Our Articles of Incorporation provide that we may issue up to 300 million shares of common stock, par value of \$0.10 per share. Our common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol SBCF.

Voting Rights

Each outstanding share of our common stock entitles the holder to one vote on all matters submitted to a vote of shareholders, including the election of directors. The holders of our common stock possess exclusive voting power, except as otherwise provided by law or by articles of amendment establishing any series of our preferred stock, including the voting rights held by holders of our Series A Preferred Stock.

There is no cumulative voting in the election of directors, which means that the holders of a plurality of our outstanding shares of common stock can elect all of the directors then standing for election. Since the closing of the CapGen offering on December 17, 2009 (the CapGen Offering), CapGen Capital Group III LP, or CapGen, has been entitled to appoint one director to our board of directors, so long as CapGen retains ownership of all six million shares of common stock purchased in that offering. When a quorum is present at any meeting, questions brought before the meeting will be decided by the vote of the holders of a majority of the shares present and voting on such matter, whether in person or by proxy, except when the meeting concerns matters requiring the vote of the holders of a majority of all outstanding shares under applicable Florida law. Our Articles of Incorporation provide certain anti-takeover provisions that require super-majority votes, which may limit shareholders rights to effect a change in control as described under the section below entitled Anti-Takeover Effects of Certain Articles of Incorporation Provisions.

Dividends, Liquidation and Other Rights

Holders of shares of common stock are entitled to receive dividends only when, as and if approved by our board of directors from funds legally available for the payment of dividends, after payment of dividends on our outstanding series of preferred stock. Our shareholders are entitled to share ratably in our assets legally available for distribution to our shareholders in the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, voluntarily or involuntarily, after payment of, or adequate provision for, all of our known debts and liabilities and of any preferences of Series A Preferred Stock or any other series of our preferred stock that may be outstanding in the future. These rights are subject to the preferential rights of any other series of our preferred stock that may then be outstanding.

Holders of shares of our common stock have no preference, conversion, exchange, sinking fund or redemption rights and have no preemptive rights to subscribe for any of our securities. Our board of directors, under our Articles of Incorporation, may issue additional shares of our common stock or rights to purchase shares of our common stock without the approval of our shareholders.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

Subject to compliance with applicable federal and state securities laws and the restrictions set forth below under the heading **Restrictions on Transfer**, our common stock may be transferred without any restrictions or limitations. The transfer agent and registrar for shares of our common stock is Continental Stock Transfer and Trust Company.

Restrictions on Transfer

On May 27, 2011, we filed with the Florida Secretary of State articles of amendment to our amended and restated articles of incorporation adding a new Section 4.06 to Article IV thereto, or the **Protective Amendment**, that is intended to help preserve certain tax benefits primarily associated with the Company's net operating losses, or NOLs.

The following is a summary of the material terms of the Protective Amendment.

Prohibited Transfers. Subject to certain exceptions pertaining to existing 5% or greater shareholders, the Protective Amendment generally will restrict any direct or indirect transfer (such as transfers of our stock that result from the transfer of interests in other entities that own our stock) if the effect would be to:

increase the direct or indirect ownership of our stock by any person (or any public group of shareholders, as that term is defined under Section 382 of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, or Section 382) from less than 5% to 5% or more of our common stock;

increase the percentage of our common stock owned directly or indirectly by a person (or public group) owning or deemed to own 5% or more of our common stock; or

create a new public group.

Consequences of Prohibited Transfers. Upon adoption of the Protective Amendment, any direct or indirect transfer attempted in violation of the Protective Amendment would be void *ab initio* as of the date of the prohibited transfer as to the purported transferee (or, in the case of an indirect transfer, the ownership of the direct owner of our common stock would terminate effective simultaneously with the transfer), and the purported transferee (or in the case of any indirect transfer, the direct owner) would not be recognized as the owner of the shares owned in violation of the Protective Amendment for any purpose, including for purposes of voting and receiving dividends or other distributions in respect of such common stock, or in the case of options or warrants, receiving our common stock in respect of their exercise. Prohibited transfers are also subject to other restrictions, as set forth in the Articles of Amendment.

Modification and Waiver of Transfer Restrictions. The Company's board of directors will have the discretion to approve a transfer of our common stock or securities convertible into shares of our common stock that would otherwise violate the transfer restrictions if it determines that the transfer is in the Company's and our shareholders' best interests. If the board of directors decides to permit such a transfer, that transfer or later transfers may result in an ownership change that could limit our use of our NOLs for tax benefits.

The board of directors may establish, modify, amend or rescind by-laws, regulations and procedures for purposes of determining whether any transfer of common stock would jeopardize our ability to use our NOLs.

The Protective Amendment will expire on the earliest of:

the Board of Director's determination that the Protective Amendment is no longer necessary for the preservation of our NOLs because of the amendment or repeal of Section 382 or any successor statute;

the beginning of a taxable year to which the board of directors determines that none of our NOLs may be carried forward;

such date as the board of directors otherwise determines that the Protective Amendment is no longer necessary for the preservation of tax benefits associated with our NOLs; or

three years from its adoption, unless reapproved by shareholders.

The board of directors may also accelerate the expiration date of the Protective Amendment in the event of a change in the law.

Restrictions on Ownership

The Bank Holding Company Act requires any bank holding company, as defined in the Bank Holding Company Act, to obtain the approval of the Federal Reserve Board prior to the acquisition of 5% or more of our common shares. Any person, other than a bank holding company, is required to obtain prior approval of the Federal Reserve Board to acquire 10% or more of our common shares under the Change in Bank Control Act. Any holder of 25% or more of our common shares, or a holder of 5% or more if such holder otherwise exercises a controlling influence over us, is subject to regulation as a bank holding company under the Bank Holding Company Act.

Certain provisions included in our Articles of Incorporation and bylaws, as described further below, as well as certain provisions of the Florida Business Corporation Act and federal law, may discourage, delay or prevent potential acquisitions of control of us, particularly when attempted in a transaction that is not negotiated directly with, and approved by, our board of directors, despite possible benefits to our shareholders.

ANTI-TAKEOVER EFFECTS OF CERTAIN ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION PROVISIONS

Our Articles of Incorporation contain certain provisions that make it more difficult to acquire control of us by means of a tender offer, open market purchase, a proxy fight or otherwise. These provisions are designed to encourage persons seeking to acquire control of us to negotiate with our directors. We believe that, as a general rule, the interests of our shareholders would be best served if any change in control results from negotiations with our directors.

Our Articles of Incorporation provide for a classified board to which approximately one-third of our board of directors is elected each year at our annual meeting of shareholders. Accordingly, our directors serve three-year terms rather than one-year terms. The classification of our board of directors has the effect of making it more difficult for shareholders to change the composition of our board of directors. At least two annual meetings of shareholders, instead of one, will generally be required to effect a change in a majority of our board of directors. Such a delay may help ensure that our directors, if confronted by a shareholder attempting to force a proxy contest, a tender or exchange offer, or an extraordinary corporate transaction, would have sufficient time to review the proposal as well as any available alternatives to the proposal and to act in what they believe to be the best interests of our shareholders. The classification provisions apply to every election of directors, however, regardless of whether a change in the composition of our board of directors would be beneficial to us and our shareholders and whether or not a majority of our shareholders believe that such a change would be desirable.

The classification of our board of directors could also have the effect of discouraging a third party from initiating a proxy contest, making a tender offer or otherwise attempting to obtain control of us, even though such an attempt might be beneficial to us and our shareholders. The classification of our board of directors could thus increase the likelihood that incumbent directors will retain their positions. In addition, because the classification of our board of directors may discourage accumulations of large blocks of our stock by purchasers whose objective is to take control of us and remove a majority of our board of directors, the classification of our board of directors could tend to reduce the likelihood of fluctuations in the market price of our common stock that might result from accumulations of large blocks of our common stock for such a purpose. Accordingly, our shareholders could be deprived of certain opportunities to sell their shares at a higher market price than might otherwise be the case.

Our Articles of Incorporation require the affirmative vote of the holders of not less than two-thirds of all the shares of our stock outstanding and entitled to vote generally in the election of directors in addition to the votes required by law or elsewhere in the Articles of Incorporation, the bylaws or otherwise, to approve: (a) any sale, lease, transfer, purchase and assumption of all or substantially all of our consolidated assets and/or liabilities, (b) any merger, consolidation, share exchange or similar transaction of the Company, or any merger of any significant subsidiary, into or with another person, or (c) any reclassification of securities, recapitalization or similar transaction that has the effect of increasing other than pro rata with the other shareholders, the proportionate amount of shares that is beneficially owned by an Affiliate (as defined in our Articles of Incorporation). Any business combination described above may instead be approved by the affirmative vote of a majority of all the votes entitled to be cast on the plan of merger if such business combination is approved and recommended to the shareholders by (x) the affirmative vote of two-thirds of our board of directors, and (y) a majority of the Continuing Directors (as defined in our Articles of Incorporation).

Our Articles of Incorporation also contain additional provisions that may make takeover attempts and other acquisitions of interests in us more difficult where the takeover attempt or other acquisition has not been approved by our board of directors. These provisions include:

A requirement that any change to our Articles of Incorporation relating to the structure of our board of directors, certain anti-takeover provisions and shareholder proposals must be approved by the affirmative vote of holders of two-thirds of the shares outstanding and entitled to vote;

A requirement that any change to our Bylaws, including any change relating to the number of directors, must be approved by the affirmative vote of either (a) (i) two-thirds of our board of directors, and (ii) a majority of the Continuing Directors (as defined in our Articles of Incorporation) or (b) two-thirds of the shares entitled to vote generally in the election of directors;

A requirement that shareholders may call a meeting of shareholders on a proposed issue or issues only upon the receipt by us from the holders of 50% of all shares entitled to vote on the proposed issue or issues of signed and dated written demands for the meeting describing the purpose for which it is to be held; and

A requirement that a shareholder wishing to submit proposals for a shareholder vote or nominate directors for election comply with certain procedures, including advanced notice requirements.

Our Articles of Incorporation provide that, subject to the rights of any holders of our preferred stock to act by written consent instead of a meeting, shareholder action may be taken only at an annual meeting or special meeting of the shareholders and may not be taken by written consent. The Articles of Incorporation also include provisions that make it difficult to replace directors. Specifically, directors may be removed only for cause and only upon the affirmative vote at a meeting duly called and held for that purpose upon not less than 30 days prior written notice of two-thirds of the shares entitled to vote generally in the election of directors. In addition, any vacancies on the board of directors for any reason, and any newly created directorships resulting from any increase in the number of directors, may be filled only by the board of directors (except if no directors remain on the board, in which case the shareholders may act to fill the vacant board).

We believe that the power of our board of directors to issue additional authorized but unissued shares of our common stock or preferred stock without further action by our shareholders, unless required by applicable law or the rules of any stock exchange or automated quotation system on which our securities may be listed or traded, will provide us with increased flexibility in structuring possible future financings and acquisitions and in meeting other needs that might arise. Our board of directors could authorize and issue a class or series of stock that could, depending upon the terms of such class or series, delay, defer or prevent a transaction or a change in control of us that might involve a premium price for holders of our common stock or that our shareholders otherwise consider to be in their best interest.

Additionally, the reason the board of directors adopted the Protective Amendment was to preserve the long-term value of our NOLs. However, the Protective Amendment could be deemed to have an anti-takeover effect because, among other things, it will restrict the ability of a person, entity or group to accumulate more than 5% of our common stock and the ability of persons, entities or groups now owning more than 5% of our common stock from acquiring additional shares of our common stock without the approval of the board of directors. Accordingly, the overall effect of the Protective Amendment may be to render more difficult, or discourage, a merger, tender offer, proxy contest or assumption of control by a substantial holder of our securities.

SIGNATURE

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

**SEACOAST BANKING CORPORATION OF
FLORIDA**

By: /s/ William R. Hahl
Name: William R. Hahl
Title: Executive Vice President and Chief Financial
Officer

Date: March 26, 2012