

PEAPACK GLADSTONE FINANCIAL CORP
Form DEF 14A
March 30, 2009

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington D.C. 20549

SCHEDULE 14A
(Rule 14a-101)

INFORMATION REQUIRED IN PROXY STATEMENT
SCHEDULE 14A INFORMATION

Proxy Statement Pursuant to Section 14(a) of the
Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Filed by the Registrant
Filed by a Party other than the Registrant
Check the appropriate box:

- Preliminary Proxy Statement
- Confidential, for Use of the Commission Only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))
- Definitive Proxy Statement
- Definitive Additional Materials
- Soliciting Material Pursuant to Rule 14a-11(c) or Rule 14a-12

PEAPACK-GLADSTONE FINANCIAL CORPORATION

(Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)
(Name of Person(s) Filing Proxy Statement, if other than the Registrant)

Payment of Filing Fee (Check the appropriate box):

- No fee required
- Fee Computed on table below per Exchange Act Rules 14a-6(i)(1) and 0-11

(1) Title of each class of securities to which transaction applies:

(2) Aggregate number of securities to which transaction applies:

(3) Per unit price or other underlying value of transaction computed pursuant to
Exchange Act Rule 0-11 (set forth the amount on which the filing fee is calculated
and state how it was determined):

(4) Proposed maximum aggregate value of transaction:

(5) Total fee paid:

o Fee paid previously with preliminary materials.

o Check box if any part of the fee is offset as provided by Exchange Act Rule 0-11(a)(2) and identify the filing for which the offsetting fee was paid previously. Identify the previous filing by registration statement number, or the Form or Schedule and the date of its filing.

(1) Amount Previously Paid:

(2) Form, Schedule or Registration Statement No.:

(3) Filing Party:

(4) Date Filed:

PEAPACK-GLADSTONE FINANCIAL CORPORATION
158 ROUTE 206 NORTH
GLADSTONE, NEW JERSEY 07934

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS
TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2009

To Our Shareholders:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of Shareholders of Peapack-Gladstone Financial Corporation will be held at Bridgewater Manor, 1251 Route 202/206, Bridgewater, New Jersey, on Tuesday, April 28, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. local time for the purpose of considering and voting upon the following matters:

1. Election of eleven directors to serve until the expiration of their terms and thereafter until their successors shall have been duly elected and qualified.
2. To approve, on a non-binding basis, the compensation of the Corporation's named executive officers as determined by the Compensation Committee.
3. The ratification of the appointment of Crowe Horwath LLP as the Corporation's independent registered public accounting firm for the year ending December 31, 2009.
4. Such other business as may properly come before the meeting or any adjournment thereof.

Only shareholders of record at the close of business on March 16, 2009, are entitled to receive notice of, and to vote at, the meeting.

You are urged to read carefully the attached proxy statement relating to the meeting.

Shareholders are cordially invited to attend the meeting in person. Whether or not you expect to attend the meeting, we urge you to date and sign the enclosed proxy form and return it in the enclosed envelope as promptly as possible. You may revoke your proxy by filing a later-dated proxy or a written revocation of the proxy with the Corporate Secretary of Peapack-Gladstone prior to the meeting. If you attend the meeting, you may revoke your proxy by filing a later-dated proxy or written revocation of the proxy with the Corporate Secretary of the meeting prior to the voting of such proxy.

By Order of the Board of Directors

ANTOINETTE ROSELL,
CORPORATE SECRETARY

Gladstone, New Jersey
March 30, 2009

YOUR VOTE IS IMPORTANT. PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THE
ENCLOSED PROXY IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED.

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING THE AVAILABILITY OF PROXY MATERIALS FOR

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THE SHAREHOLDER MEETING TO BE HELD ON APRIL 28, 2009

This Proxy Statement and our Annual Report are available at
<http://phx.corporate-ir.net/phoenix.zhtml?c=100168&p=proxy>

PEAPACK-GLADSTONE FINANCIAL CORPORATION
158 ROUTE 206 NORTH
GLADSTONE, NEW JERSEY 07934

PROXY STATEMENT
DATED MARCH 30, 2009

GENERAL PROXY STATEMENT INFORMATION

This proxy statement is furnished to the shareholders of Peapack-Gladstone Financial Corporation (“Peapack-Gladstone”) in connection with the solicitation by the Board of Directors of Peapack-Gladstone of proxies for use at the Annual Meeting of Shareholders to be held at Bridgewater Manor, 1251 Route 202/206, Bridgewater, New Jersey on Tuesday, April 28, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. local time. This proxy statement is first being mailed to shareholders on approximately March 30, 2009.

VOTING INFORMATION

Outstanding Securities and Voting Rights

The record date for determining shareholders entitled to notice of, and to vote at, the meeting is March 16, 2009. Only shareholders of record as of the record date will be entitled to notice of, and to vote at, the meeting.

On the record date 8,299,249 shares of Peapack-Gladstone's common stock, no par value, were outstanding and eligible to be voted at the meeting. Each share of Peapack-Gladstone's common stock is entitled to one vote.

Required Vote

The election of directors requires the affirmative vote of a plurality of Peapack-Gladstone's common stock voted at the meeting, whether voted in person or by proxy. At the meeting, inspectors of election will tabulate both ballots cast by shareholders present and voting in person, and votes cast by proxy. Under applicable New Jersey law and Peapack-Gladstone's certificate of incorporation and by-laws, abstentions and broker non-votes are counted for purpose of establishing a quorum but have no impact on the election of directors.

The approval, on a non-binding basis, of the compensation of the Corporation's named executive officers as determined by the Compensation Committee requires the affirmative vote of a majority of the votes cast at the meeting, whether voted in person or by proxy. Abstentions and broker non-votes will have no impact on the approval of this advisory proposal.

The ratification of the appointment of Crowe Horwath LLP requires the affirmative vote of a majority of the votes cast at the meeting, whether voted in person or by proxy. Abstentions and broker non-votes will have no impact on the ratification of Crowe Horwath LLP.

All shares represented by valid proxies received pursuant to this solicitation will be voted FOR the election of the 11 nominees for director who are named in this proxy statement, FOR the approval, on a non-binding basis, of the compensation of the Corporation's named executive officers as determined by the Compensation Committee, and FOR ratification of the appointment of Crowe Horwath LLP as the Corporation's independent registered public accounting firm for the year ending December 31, 2009, unless the shareholder specifies a different choice by means of the proxy or revokes the proxy prior to the time it is exercised. Should any other matter properly come before the meeting, the persons named as proxies will vote upon such matters according to their discretion.

Revocability of Proxy

Any shareholder giving a proxy has the right to attend and to vote at the meeting in person. A proxy may be revoked prior to the meeting by filing a later-dated proxy or a written revocation if it is sent to the Corporate Secretary of Peapack-Gladstone, Antoinette Rosell, at 158 Route 206 North, Gladstone, New Jersey, 07934, and is received by Peapack-Gladstone in advance of the meeting. A proxy may be revoked at the meeting by filing a later-dated proxy or a written revocation with the Secretary of the meeting prior to the voting of such proxy.

Solicitation of Proxies

This proxy solicitation is being made by the Board of Peapack-Gladstone and its agent Laurel Hill Advisory Group, LLC, and the costs of the solicitation will be borne by Peapack-Gladstone. In addition to the use of the mails, proxies may be solicited personally or by telephone, e-mail or facsimile transmission by directors, officers and employees of Peapack-Gladstone and its subsidiaries or Laurel Hill who, with the exception of Laurel Hill, will not be specially compensated for such solicitation activities. The amount Peapack-Gladstone will pay Laurel Hill for its proxy solicitation services is \$6,500 plus certain out of pocket costs. Peapack-Gladstone will also make arrangements with brokers, dealers, nominees, custodians and fiduciaries to forward proxy soliciting materials to the beneficial owners of shares held of record by such persons, and Peapack-Gladstone may reimburse them for their reasonable expenses incurred in forwarding the materials.

PROPOSAL 1 - ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

DIRECTOR INFORMATION

Peapack-Gladstone's certificate of incorporation and by-laws authorize a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 25 directors, but leave the exact number to be fixed by resolution of Peapack-Gladstone's Board of Directors. The Board has currently fixed the number of directors at 11 and the Board is presently comprised of 11 members. Directors are elected annually by the shareholders for one-year terms. Peapack-Gladstone's Nominating Committee has recommended to the Board the 11 current directors for reelection to serve for one-year terms expiring at Peapack-Gladstone's 2009 Annual Meeting of Shareholders or until their successors shall have been duly elected and qualified. If, for any reason, any of the nominees become unavailable for election, the proxy solicited by the Board will be voted for a substitute nominee selected by the Board. The Board has no reason to believe that any of the named nominees is not available or will not serve if elected.

Unless a shareholder indicates otherwise on the proxy, the proxy will be voted for the persons named in the table below to serve until the expiration of their terms, and thereafter until their successors have been duly elected and qualified.

The following table sets forth the names and ages of the Board's nominees for election, the nominees' position with Peapack-Gladstone (if any), the principal occupation or employment of each nominee for the past five years and the period during which each nominee has served as a director of Peapack-Gladstone. The nominee's prior service as a director includes prior service as a director of Peapack-Gladstone Bank (the "Bank") prior to the formation of the holding company.

Name and Position With Peapack-Gladstone	NOMINEES FOR ELECTION AS DIRECTORS		
	Age	Director Since	Principal Occupation or Employment for the Past Five Years; Other Company Directorships
Anthony J. Consi, II	63	2000	Retired; previously Senior Vice President of Finance and Operations, Weichert Realtors
Pamela Hill	71	1991	President of Ferris Corp., a real estate management company; previously Vice President of Ferris Corp.
Frank A. Kissel Chairman and CEO	58	1989	Chairman and CEO of Peapack-Gladstone and the Bank
John D. Kissel	56	1987	Real Estate Broker, Turpin Real Estate, Inc.
James R. Lamb	66	1993	Principal of James R. Lamb, P.C., Attorney at Law.
Edward A. Merton	68	1981	President of Merton Excavating and Paving Co.

F. Duffield Meyercord	62	1991	Partner of Carl Marks Advisory Group, LLC; President, Meyercord Advisors, Inc.; Director of Wayside Technology Group (formerly Programmer's Paradise, Inc.); Director of Headway Corporation
John R. Mulcahy	70	1981	Retired; previously President of Mulcahy Realty and Construction.
Robert M. Rogers, President and COO	50	2002	President and COO of Peapack-Gladstone and the Bank
Philip W. Smith, III	53	1995	President, Phillary Management, Inc., a real estate management company.
Craig C. Spengeman, President, PGB Trust and Investments	53	2002	President, PGB Trust and Investments, a division of the Bank and Executive Vice President of Peapack-Gladstone

Frank A. Kissel and John D. Kissel are brothers.

RECOMMENDATION AND VOTE REQUIRED ON PROPOSAL 1

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS UNANIMOUSLY RECOMMENDS A VOTE 'FOR' THE NOMINATED SLATE OF DIRECTORS INCLUDED IN PROPOSAL 1. Directors will be elected by a plurality of the votes cast at the meeting. Abstentions and broker non votes will have no impact on the election of directors.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

General

The business and affairs of Peapack-Gladstone are managed under the direction of the Board of Directors. Members of the Board are kept informed of Peapack-Gladstone's business through discussions with the Chairman and Peapack-Gladstone's other officers, by reviewing materials provided to them and by participating in meetings of the Board and its committees. All members of the Board also served as directors of Peapack-Gladstone's subsidiary bank, Peapack-Gladstone Bank, during 2008. The Board of Directors of Peapack-Gladstone and Peapack-Gladstone Bank held twelve meetings during 2008. During 2008, all directors of Peapack-Gladstone attended no fewer than 75% of the total number of meetings of Peapack-Gladstone's Board and meetings of committees on which such director served. It is Peapack-Gladstone's policy to encourage director attendance at the Annual Meeting absent a compelling reason such as illness. Last year, all but two directors attended the Annual Meeting.

Our Board of Directors believes that the purpose of corporate governance is to maximize shareholder value in a manner consistent with legal requirements. The Board has adopted corporate governance principles, which the Board and senior management believe promote this purpose. We periodically review these governance principles, the rules and listing standards of the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations (NASDAQ) and Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") regulations.

Director Independence

The Board has determined that a majority of the directors and all current members of the Nominating, Compensation, and Audit Committees are "independent" for purposes of Section 121 of the NASDAQ Company Guide, and that the members of the Audit Committee are also "independent" for purposes of Section 10A-3 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 and Section 803 of the NASDAQ Company Guide. The Board based these determinations primarily on a review of the responses of the directors and executive officers to questions regarding employment and transaction history, affiliations and family and other relationships and on discussions with the directors. The independent directors are Anthony J. Consi, II, Pamela Hill, James R. Lamb, Edward A. Merton, F. Duffield Meyercord, John R. Mulcahy, and Philip W. Smith, III.

To assist it in making determinations of independence, the Board has concluded that the following relationships are immaterial and that a director whose only relationships with Peapack-Gladstone fall within these categories is independent:

- A loan made by the Bank to a director, his or her immediate family member or an entity affiliated with a director or his or her immediate family member, or a loan personally guaranteed by such persons if such loan (i) complies with state and federal regulations on insider loans, where applicable; and (ii) is not classified by the Bank's credit committee or by any bank regulatory agency which supervised the Bank as substandard, doubtful or loss.
- A deposit, trust, insurance brokerage, securities brokerage or similar customer relationship between Peapack-Gladstone or its subsidiaries and a director, his or her immediate family member or an affiliate of his or her immediate family member if such relationship is on customary and usual market terms and conditions.
- The employment by Peapack-Gladstone or its subsidiaries of any immediate family member of the director if the employee serves below the level of a senior vice president.
- Annual contributions by Peapack-Gladstone or its subsidiaries to any charity or non-profit corporation with which a director is affiliated if the contributions do not exceed an aggregate of \$20,000 in any calendar year and the

contribution is made in the name of Peapack-Gladstone.

- Purchases of goods or services by Peapack-Gladstone or any of its subsidiaries from a business in which a director or his or her immediate family member is a partner, shareholder or officer, if the director or his or her immediate family member owns five percent or less of the equity interests of that business and does not serve as an executive officer of the business.
- Purchases of goods or services by Peapack-Gladstone, or any of its subsidiaries, from a director or a business in which the director or his or her immediate family member is a partner, shareholder or officer if the annual aggregate purchases of goods or services from the director, his or her immediate family member or such business in the last calendar year does not exceed the greater of \$60,000 or two percent of the gross revenues of the business.
 - Fixed retirement benefits paid or payable to a director either currently or on retirement.

The following categories or types of transactions, relationships or arrangements were considered by the Board in determining that each listed director is independent in accordance with the NASDAQ listing standards and Peapack-Gladstone's Corporate Governance Principles.

Independent Director	Category or Type
Mr. Consi	Deposits
Ms. Hill	Deposits, Trust
Mr. Lamb	Loans, Deposits, Trust
Mr. Merton	Loans, Deposits, Trust
Mr. Meyercord	Loans, Deposits, Trust
Mr. Mulcahy	Loans, Deposits, Trust
Mr. Smith	Loans, Deposits, Trust, Employment of Immediate Family Member below level of Senior Vice President

Executive Sessions of Non-Management Directors

Our Corporate Governance Principles require the Board to provide for at least semi-annual executive sessions to include non-management directors. At least once a year, the Board holds an executive session including only independent directors. Peapack-Gladstone's Board has chosen to rotate the presiding director for each meeting among the Chairperson of the Audit, Compensation, and Nominating Committees.

Shareholder Communication with Directors

The Board of Directors has established the following procedures for shareholder communications with the Board of Directors:

- Shareholders wishing to communicate with the Board of Directors should send any communication to the Board of Directors, Peapack-Gladstone Financial Corporation, c/o Cor