**FOMC Update – Jun 19, 2019**

By Steve Brown, President & CEO of PCBB

The FOMC voted to leave the Fed Funds target unchanged at 2 ¼% - 2 ½%, although one committee member did vote for a 25 basis point cut. While the statement cited a still-strong labor market and pickup in consumer spending, continued weakness in business investment and soft inflation seem to have tilted the overall tone to the dovish side. In light of these factors, the Fed now sees increased uncertainties for continued economic expansion, and including the language that the Fed…"will act as appropriate to sustain the expansion," was viewed as opening the door for a rate cut at the next meeting in July.

**Rates and Market:**

- Fed Funds Target: 2.25% - 2.50%
- Policy Bias: Interpreted as dovish
- Market Reaction: Yields fell 5-6bp immediately following the announcement

**The FOMC announced the following actions and analysis:**

- 9-1 vote
- Economic activity is rising at a moderate rate
- Inflation is below 2%
- Risks to economic outlook have increased

**The Statement:**

Information received since the Federal Open Market Committee met in May indicates that the labor market remains strong and that economic activity is rising at a moderate rate. Job gains have been solid, on average, in recent months, and the unemployment rate has remained low. Although growth of household spending appears to have picked up from earlier in the year, indicators of business fixed investment have been soft. On a 12-month basis, overall inflation and inflation for items other than food and energy are running below 2 percent. Market-based measures of inflation compensation have declined; survey-based measures of longer-term inflation expectations are little changed.

Consistent with its statutory mandate, the Committee seeks to foster maximum employment and price stability. In support of these goals, the Committee decided to maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 2-1/4 to 2-1/2 percent. The Committee continues to view sustained expansion of economic activity, strong labor market conditions, and inflation near the Committee's symmetric 2 percent objective as the most likely outcomes, but uncertainties about this outlook have increased. In light of these uncertainties and muted inflation pressures, the Committee will closely monitor the implications of incoming information for the economic outlook and will act as appropriate to sustain the expansion, with a strong labor market and inflation near its symmetric 2 percent objective.

In determining the timing and size of future adjustments to the target range for the federal funds rate, the Committee will assess realized and expected economic conditions relative to its maximum employment objective and its symmetric 2 percent inflation objective. This assessment will take into account a wide range of information, including measures of labor market conditions, indicators of inflation pressures and inflation expectations, and readings on financial and international developments.

Voting for the monetary policy action were Jerome H. Powell, Chair; John C. Williams, Vice Chair; Michelle W. Bowman; Lael Brainard; Richard H. Clarida; Charles L. Evans; Esther L. George; Randal K. Quarles; and Eric S. Rosengren. Voting against the action was James Bullard, who preferred at this meeting to lower the target range for the federal funds rate by 25 basis points.

**About Steve Brown:**

Steve has over 30 years of banking and capital markets experience, is frequently quoted in the press on banking issues and trends and is a regular speaker at industry conferences. He is also the author of the popular Banc Investment Daily, distributed to over 75,000 community bankers and regulators nationwide. Steve joined PCBB in 2002, where he was CEO of its broker dealer subsidiary and later became President/CEO of PCBB in 2007. Prior to joining PCBB, Steve was cofounder of a financial technology (fintech) company; ran a sales group at Bank of America Securities focused on community banks; and was on the sales team at the world's largest wholesale broker of federal funds, interest rate hedging and foreign exchange. Steve began his banking career in the finance and treasury departments of a large community bank in Arizona in the mid-1980's.