



Community Financial System (CBU)

Updated August 12th, 2026, by Josh Arnold

Key Metrics

Current Price:	\$65	5 Year CAGR Estimate:	16.2%	Market Cap:	\$3.3 B
Fair Value Price:	\$69	5 Year Growth Estimate:	13.0%	Ex-Dividend Date:	09/15/2026
% Fair Value:	94%	5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:	1.2%	Dividend Payment Date:	10/13/2026
Dividend Yield:	3.0%	5 Year Price Target	\$127	Years Of Dividend Growth:	35
Dividend Risk Score:	C	Sector:	Financials	Rating:	Hold

Overview & Current Events

Community Financial System was formed in 1983 and since that time, it has expanded to become a diversified financial services company with more than 200 locations in the northeastern U.S. Its principal business is traditional community banking, but it also owns a large benefits administration business, in addition to offering a variety of insurance products. Its market capitalization is \$3.3 billion, and it produces about \$900 million in annual revenue.

Community Financial posted second quarter earnings on July 28th, 2026, and results were mixed. Adjusted earnings-per-share came to \$1.16, which was two cents light of estimates. Revenue was up 12% year-over-year to \$223 million, beating estimates by \$1.4 million.

Net interest income was \$139 million, a \$4.4 million increase, or 3.3%, from the first quarter of this year. Net interest margin was four basis points higher to 3.49%, as the company's cost of funds was 1.18%.

Noninterest revenue was 36% of total operating revenue during the second quarter. There was also a \$4.6 million provision for credit losses during the second quarter.

Total noninterest expenses were \$138 million. Ending loans were up 1.4%, or \$152 million, while total deposits were off 1.1%, or \$160 million. The company blamed the latter on seasonal outflows of municipal customers.

We now see \$4.60 in adjusted earnings-per-share for this year, which would comfortably be a record, if achieved.

Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2031
EPS	\$2.32	\$2.55	\$3.23	\$3.28	\$3.24	\$3.49	\$3.58	\$3.35	\$3.43	\$4.04	\$4.60	\$8.48
DPS	\$1.26	\$1.34	\$1.44	\$1.58	\$1.66	\$1.70	\$1.76	\$1.78	\$1.82	\$1.86	\$1.96	\$2.16
Shares¹	44	49	51	52	54	54	54	53	53	53	53	53

Earnings-per-share have been volatile in the past decade but in recent years, growth has been steadier. We see that continuing as the bank is focused on profitable growth, but we forecast 13% earnings-per-share growth annually. We are less cautious given interest rate headwinds have abated, and CBU stands to benefit greatly should that continue. We see interest rates, as well as higher loan balances as drivers for earnings growth.

Community Financial System continues to see earnings tailwinds from very low deposit funding costs and organic revenue growth, as well as a constant flow of acquisitions. Growth-by-acquisition is generally tough in the financial services industry, but Community Financial System has proven adept at executing this strategy over time, and this should be the primary growth driver going forward. Community Financial System is performing well, but its lending margins are already strong, so we think upside from there is somewhat limited. However, credit quality remains favorable, and the loan-to-deposit ratio provides some additional leverage for growth in the future.

Dividend growth has been moderate, but management appears to be willing to pay out half of earnings or more on the dividend. We see modest dividend growth ahead given the pace of earnings growth.

¹ Share count in millions

Disclosure: This analyst has no position in the security discussed in this research report, and no plans to initiate one in the next 72 hours.



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Valuation Analysis

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Now	2031
Avg. P/E	18.9	17.8	18.3	19.5	18.5	21.1	17.6	15.6	18.0	14.2	14.1	15.0
Avg. Yld.	2.9%	2.5%	2.4%	2.5%	2.8%	2.3%	2.8%	3.4%	3.0%	3.2%	3.0%	1.7%

Community Financial System’s price-to-earnings multiple has moved around significantly in the past decade as its fortunes have improved and deteriorated. We set our target valuation at 15 times earnings given the sector is seeing better valuations applied by investors. As the stock trades just below that, we see a small tailwind from the valuation. We see the dividend yield at 1.7% in five years, lower than today’s levels as we think the share price will markedly outpace growth in the dividend.

Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2031
Payout	54%	53%	45%	48%	51%	49%	49%	53%	53%	46%	43%	26%

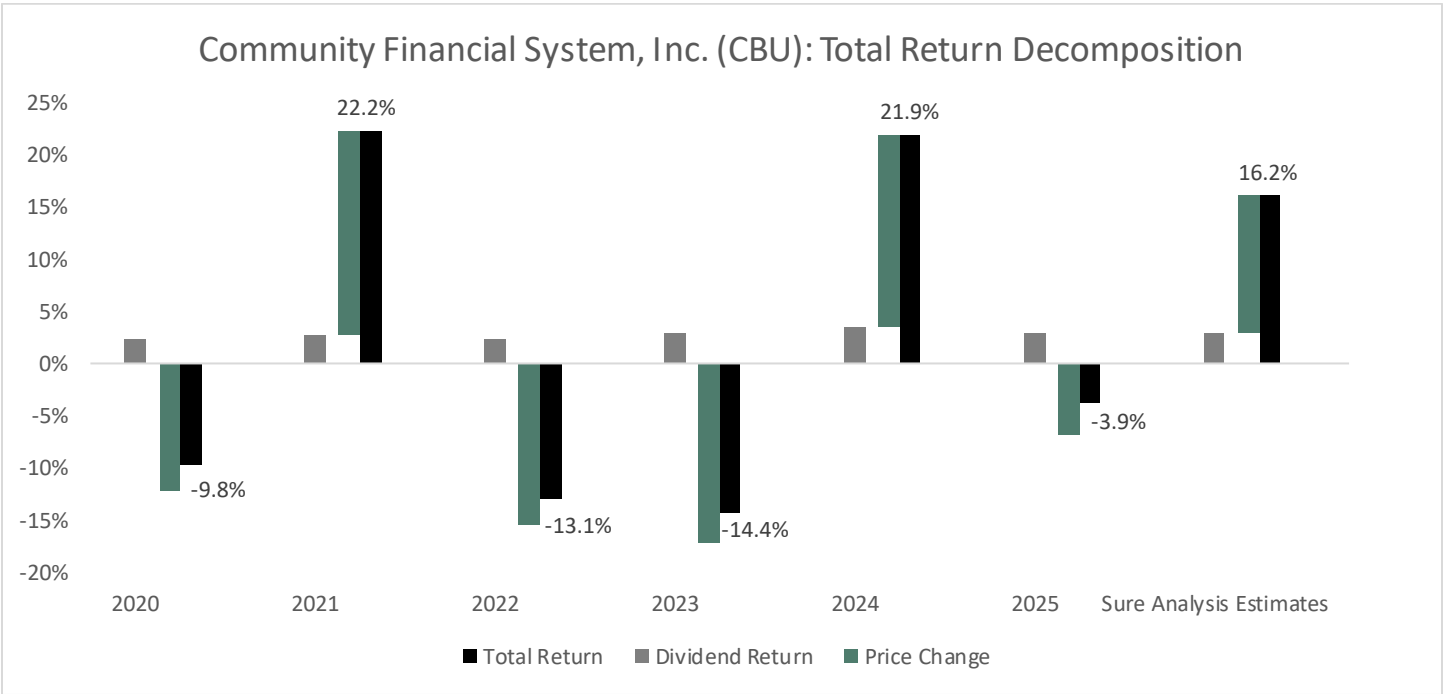
We see the payout ratio remaining well under half of earnings for the foreseeable future. The bank’s impressive dividend streak appears to be safe at this point, and we see many more years of increases coming, even if a recession strikes. Payout growth rates should be low, however, given management’s past tendencies.

Community Financial System’s competitive advantage is its dominant market position in many of its service areas. It competes in areas that have sparse levels of competition and thus the company is able to hold strong market share in those locations, with many at or above a third of total market deposits. That does not make it immune to recessions, but its strong performance means it can be an acquirer during downturns, softening the blow of economic weakness.

Final Thoughts & Recommendation

Overall, Community Financial’s total returns look further improved since our last report. We forecast total annual returns of 16.2%, and we’re reiterating the stock at a hold rating. The 3% yield is attractive at well over double the S&P 500, and the growth outlook for the bank remains strong.

Total Return Breakdown by Year



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Income Statement Metrics

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Revenue	430	518	569	590	596	621	679	652	746	818
SG&A Exp.	198	234	256	273	274	302	257	298	317	---
D&A Exp.	20	33	34	32	31	30	38	28	29	30
Net Profit	104	151	169	169	165	190	188	137	182	210
Net Margin	24.2%	29.1%	29.6%	28.7%	27.6%	30.6%	27.7%	20.9%	24.5%	25.7%
Free Cash Flow	123	179	209	197	165	189	202	210	222	233
Income Tax	51	9	44	40	41	52	52	38	54	65

Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Assets	8666	10746	10607	11410	13931	15553	15836	15555	16386	17303
Cash & Equivalents	174	221	212	205	1646	1875	210	191	197	302
Accounts Receivable	31	36	31	32	39	36	53	55	54	---
Goodwill & Int. Ass.	481	825	807	837	847	864	903	898	901	943
Total Liabilities	7468	9111	8894	9555	11827	13452	14284	13852	14623	15297
Accounts Payable	144	181	157	215	231	211	134	159	---	---
Long-Term Debt	248	149	154	103	87	330	791	461	737	459
Shareholder's Equity	1198	1635	1714	1855	2104	2101	1552	1703	1763	2006
LTD/E Ratio	0.21	0.09	0.09	0.06	0.04	0.16	0.51	0.27	0.42	0.34

Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Return on Assets	1.2%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%	0.9%	1.1%	1.2%
Return on Equity	8.9%	10.6%	10.1%	9.5%	8.3%	9.0%	10.3%	8.4%	10.5%	11.2%
ROIC	6.9%	9.3%	9.2%	8.8%	7.4%	8.2%	8.5%	6.1%	7.8%	7.6%
Shares Out.	44	49	51	52	54	54	54	54	53	53
Revenue/Share	9.66	10.47	11.00	11.29	11.15	11.39	12.53	12.08	14.07	19.13
FCF/Share	2.77	3.62	4.03	3.77	3.10	3.48	3.72	3.91	4.19	4.42

Note: All figures in millions of U.S. Dollars unless per share or indicated otherwise.

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