



**FEBRUARY 15, 2024**

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This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of VitalStone Financial, LLC (“VitalStone”). If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at (210) 782-9855. The information in this brochure has not been approved or verified by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or by any state securities authority. VitalStone is a Registered Investment Adviser. Registration as an Investment Adviser with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or any state securities authority does not imply a certain level of skill or training.

Additional information about VitalStone Financial, LLC is available on the SEC’s website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov). You can search this site by a unique identifying number, known as an IARD number. The IARD number for VitalStone is IARD# 310485.

## ITEM 2 – MATERIAL CHANGES

### SUMMARY OF MATERIAL CHANGES

There have been no material changes since January 13, 2023, Form ADV filing on the IARD system.

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#### ITEM 4 – ADVISORY BUSINESS

This Disclosure document is being offered to you by VitalStone Financial, LLC (“VitalStone” or “Firm”) about the investment advisory services we provide. It discloses information about our services and the way those services are made available to you, the client.

Our Firm became a registered investment adviser in September 2020 and is owned by Jason Odette, Christopher McNeil, and James Jedrzewski. Jason Odette is the Chief Compliance Officer.

We are committed to helping clients build, manage, and preserve their wealth. Our Firm provides services that help clients to achieve their stated financial goals. We will offer an initial complimentary meeting upon our discretion; however, investment advisory services are initiated only after you and VitalStone execute an Investment Management Agreement.

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#### INVESTMENT AND WEALTH MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION SERVICES

We manage advisory accounts on a discretionary basis. For discretionary accounts, once we have determined a profile and investment plan with a client, we will execute the day-to-day transactions without seeking prior client consent but within the expected investment guidelines. We may accept accounts with certain restrictions if circumstances warrant. We primarily allocate client assets among individual stocks, bonds, exchange traded funds (“ETFs”), options, mutual funds and other public and private securities or investments. Portfolios will be designed to meet a particular investment goal, determined to be suitable to the client’s circumstances. Once the appropriate portfolio has been determined, portfolios are continuously and regularly monitored, and if necessary, rebalanced based upon the client’s individual needs, stated goals and objectives.

During personal discussions with clients, we determine the client’s objectives, time horizons, risk tolerance, and liquidity needs. As appropriate, we also review a client’s prior investment history, as well as family composition and background. Based on client needs, we develop a client’s personal profile and investment plan. We then create and manage the client’s investments based on that policy and plan. It is the client’s obligation to notify us immediately if circumstances have changed with respect to their goals.

Once we have determined the types of investments to be included in a client’s portfolio and have allocated the assets, we provide ongoing investment review and management services.

With our discretionary relationship, we will make changes to the portfolio, as we deem appropriate, to meet client financial objectives. We trade these portfolios based on the combination of our market views and client objectives, using our investment process. We tailor our advisory services to meet the needs of our clients and seek to ensure that your portfolio is managed in a manner consistent with those needs and objectives. Clients have the ability to leave standing instructions with us to refrain from investing in particular industries or invest in limited amounts of securities.

In all cases, clients have a direct and beneficial interest in their securities, rather than an undivided interest in a pool of securities. We do have limited authority to direct the Custodian to deduct our investment advisory fees from your accounts, but only with the appropriate written authorization from clients.

Where appropriate, we provide advice about any type of legacy position held in client portfolios. Typically, these are assets that are ineligible to be custodied at our primary custodian. Clients will engage us to advise on certain investment products that are not maintained at their primary

custodian, such as variable life insurance, annuity contracts, and assets held in employer sponsored retirement plans and qualified tuition plans (i.e., 529 plans).

You are advised and are expected to understand that our past performance is not a guarantee of future results. Certain market and economic risks exist that adversely affect an account's performance. This could result in capital losses in your account.

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## **FINANCIAL PLANNING**

Through the financial planning process, our team strives to engage our clients in conversations around the client's goals, objectives, priorities, vision, and legacy – both for the near term as well as for future generations. With the unique goals and circumstances of each client in mind, our team will offer financial planning ideas and strategies to address the client's holistic financial picture, including estate, income tax, charitable, cash flow, wealth transfer, and client legacy objectives. Our team partners with our client's other advisors (CPAs, Enrolled Agents, Estate Attorneys, Insurance Brokers, etc.) to ensure a coordinated effort of all parties toward the client's stated goals. Such services include various reports on specific goals and objectives or general investment and/or planning recommendations, guidance to outside assets, and periodic updates.

Our specific services in preparing your plan may include:

- Review and clarification of your financial goals
- Assessment of your overall financial position including cash flow, balance sheet, investment strategy, risk management, and estate planning
- Creation of a unique plan for each goal you have, including personal and business real estate, education, retirement or financial independence, charitable giving, estate planning, business succession, and other personal goals.
- Development of a goal-oriented investment plan, with input from various advisors to our clients around tax suggestions, asset allocation, expenses, risk, and liquidity factors for each goal. This includes IRA and qualified plans, taxable, and trust accounts that require special attention.
- Design of a risk management plan including risk tolerance, risk avoidance, mitigation, and transfer, including liquidity as well as various insurance and possible company benefits; and
- Crafting and implementation of, in conjunction with your estate and/or corporate attorneys as tax adviser, an estate plan to provide for you and/or your heirs in the event of an incapacity or death.

A written evaluation of each client's initial situation or Financial Plan is provided to the client. An annual review will be provided by the Adviser, if indicated by the Client and Adviser per the Agreement. More frequent reviews occur but are not necessarily communicated to the client unless immediate changes are recommended.

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## **THIRD PARTY MONEY MANAGERS ("TPMM")**

Our firm utilizes the services of a TPMM for the management of client accounts. Investment advice and trading of securities will only be offered by or through the chosen TPMM. Our firm will not offer advice on any specific securities or other investments in connection with this service. Prior to referring clients, our firm will provide initial due diligence on third party money managers and ongoing reviews of their management of client accounts. In order to assist in the selection of a TPMM, our firm will gather client information pertaining to financial situation, investment objectives, and reasonable restrictions to be imposed upon the management of the account.

Our firm will periodically review third party money manager reports provided to the client at least annually. Our firm will contact clients from time to time in order to review their financial situation and objectives; communicate information to third party money managers as warranted; and assist the client in understanding and evaluating the services provided by the TPMM. Clients will be expected to notify our firm of any changes in their financial situation, investment objectives, or account restrictions that could affect their financial standing.

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## **RETIREMENT PLAN SERVICES**

We can also be engaged to provide Plan Consulting Services. Plan Consulting Services include financial education to Plan participants, benchmarking the Plan services, education to fiduciary committee members, and monitoring the service provider. The scope of education provided to participants will not constitute “investment advice” within the meaning of ERISA and participant education will relate to general principles for investing and information about the investment options currently in the Plan. We may also participate in initial enrollment meetings and periodic workshops and enrollment meetings for new participants.

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## **DISCLOSURE REGARDING ROLLOVER RECOMMENDATIONS**

We are fiduciaries under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 and when we provide investment advice to you regarding your retirement plan account or individual retirement account, we are also fiduciaries within the meaning of Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act and/or the Internal Revenue Code, as applicable, which are laws governing retirement accounts. We have to act in your best interest and not put our interest ahead of yours. At the same time, the way we make money creates some conflicts with your interests.

A client or prospect leaving an employer typically has four options regarding an existing retirement plan (and may engage in a combination of these options): (i) leave the money in the former employer’s plan, if permitted, (ii) roll over the assets to the new employer’s plan, if one is available and rollovers are permitted, (iii) rollover to an Individual Retirement Account (“IRA”), or (iv) cash out the account value (which could, depending upon the client’s age, result in adverse tax consequences). Our Firm may recommend an investor roll over plan assets to an IRA for which our Firm provides investment advisory services. As a result, our Firm and its representatives may earn an asset-based fee. In contrast, a recommendation that a client or prospective client leave their plan assets with their previous employer or roll over the assets to a plan sponsored by a new employer will generally result in no compensation to our Firm. Our Firm therefore has an economic incentive to encourage a client to roll plan assets into an IRA that our Firm will manage, which presents a conflict of interest. To mitigate the conflict of interest, there are various factors that our Firm will consider before recommending a rollover, including but not limited to: (i) the investment options available in the plan versus the investment options available in an IRA, (ii) fees and expenses in the plan versus the fees and expenses in an IRA, (iii) the services and responsiveness of the plan’s investment professionals versus those of our Firm, (iv) protection of assets from creditors and legal judgments, (v) required minimum distributions and age considerations, and (vi) employer stock tax consequences, if any. Our Firm’s Chief Compliance Officer remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client has regarding the oversight.

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## **WRAP FEE PROGRAMS**

Our Firm does not sponsor a Wrap Fee Program.

## ASSETS

As of December 31, 2023, we have \$ 199,749,459 of discretionary assets under management and \$0 of non-discretionary assets under management.

## ITEM 5 - FEES AND COMPENSATION

### INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT FEES AND COMPENSATION

Our Firm charges a fee as compensation for providing Investment Management services on your account. These services include advisory services, trade entry, investment supervision, and other account maintenance activities. Our recommended Custodian charges transaction costs, custodial fees, redemption fees, retirement plan and administrative fees or commissions. See Additional Fees and Expenses below for details.

A calendar monthly investment management fee is billed in arrears based on the average daily balance of your account during the previous calendar month. Our maximum annual advisory fee is 2.00%. The relevant fee and billing method is defined and agreed to by the firm and the client in the executed Investment Advisory Agreement. This fee may be debited directly from your investment account, or you may pay this fee separately. You will need to indicate how you would like to pay this fee in your Investment Advisory Agreement. Unless otherwise agreed upon and stated in the Investment Management Agreement, fees are assessed on all assets under management, including securities, cash, and money market balances. Additional fees and expenses you may incur are brokerage commissions, principal markups and discounts, SEC fees, mutual fund/ETF expense ratios, mutual fund 12B-1 fees, tax withholding on certain foreign securities, postage fees, wire fees, bank charges, and other administration fees as authorized by you. ***Please refer to Section 12 for information on brokerage fees and services.***

Fees may vary based on the size of the account, complexity of the portfolio, extent of activity in the account, or other reasons agreed upon by our Firm and you as the client. In certain circumstances, our fees and the timing of the fee payments may be negotiated. Our employees and their family-related accounts are charged a reduced fee for our services.

Unless otherwise instructed by the Client, we will aggregate related client accounts for the purposes of determining the account size and annualized fee. The common practice is often referred to as “house-holding” portfolios for fee purposes and may result in lower fees than if fees were calculated on portfolios separately. Our method of house-holding accounts for fee purposes looks at the overall family dynamic and relationship. When applicable, and noted in the Appendix of the Investment Management Agreement, legacy positions will also be excluded from the fee calculation.

The independent and qualified custodian holding your funds and securities will debit your account directly for the advisory fee and pay that fee to us. When establishing a relationship with VitalStone, you provide written authorization permitting the fees to be paid directly from your account held by the qualified custodian. Further, the qualified Custodian agrees to deliver an account statement to you on a monthly basis indicating all the amounts deducted from the account including our advisory fees. If agreed to by the Firm and Client in the Agreement, a direct bill for the advisory fee may be arranged. In that case, there would be an invoice sent directly to the client each month.

Either VitalStone or you may terminate the management agreement immediately upon written notice to the other party. The management fee will be pro-rated to the date of termination, for the month in which the cancellation notice was given and any earned fee will be billed to you by our Firm.

Upon termination, you are responsible for monitoring the securities in your account, and we will have no further obligation to act or advise with respect to those assets. In the event of client's death or disability, VitalStone will continue management of the account until we are notified of client's death or disability and given alternative instructions by an authorized party.

In no case are VitalStone fees based on, or related to, the performance of your funds or investments.

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### **FINANCIAL PLANNING FEES**

For our Investment Management clients, financial planning services are included in the Investment Management fees described above.

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### **THIRD PARTY MONEY MANAGER ("TPMM") FEES**

As discussed in Item 4 above, there are occasions where an independent TPMM acts as a sub-adviser to our firm. In those circumstances, the TPMM manages the assets based upon the parameters provided by our firm. Under such arrangements where our firm elects to utilize a TPMM, depending on the TPMM contract with VitalStone, the total advisory fee may be collected from the custodian by our firm or the TPMM. This total fee includes our firm's portion of the investment advisory fee as well as the TPMM fee. Total fees for clients utilizing a TPMM will not exceed 2.00%.

The fee billed is defined in the relevant Investment Management Contract as well as in the individual Form ADV Filing of the respective Third Party Manager. This fee may be debited directly from your investment account or you may pay this fee separately. You will need to indicate how you would like to pay this fee in your investment management contract. Additional fees and expenses you may incur are brokerage commissions, principal markups and discounts, SEC fees, mutual fund/ETF expense ratios, mutual fund 12B-1 fees, tax withholding on certain foreign securities, postage fees, wire fees, bank charges, and other administration fees as authorized by you.

A TPMM relationship may be terminated at the IAR's discretion. VitalStone may at any time terminate the relationship with a TPMM that manages your assets. VitalStone will notify you of instances where we have terminated a relationship with any TPMM you are investing with. VitalStone will not conduct on-going supervisory reviews of the TPMM following such termination. Factors involved in the termination of a TPMM may include a failure to adhere to their stated management style or your objectives, a material change in the professional staff of the TPMM, unexplained poor performance, unexplained inconsistency of account performance, or our decision to no longer include the TPMM on our list of approved TPMMs.

Account custodial services may be provided by several account Custodians depending on the investment management program offered. Programs may have higher or lower fees than other programs available through VitalStone or available elsewhere. Investment management programs may differ in the services provided and method or type of management offered, and each may have different account minimums. Client reports will depend upon the management



program selected. Please see complete details in the program brochure and custodial account agreement for each program recommended and offered.

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## **RETIREMENT PLAN SERVICES**

For Retirement Plan Advisory Services compensation, we charge an advisory fee as negotiated with the Plan Sponsor and as disclosed in the Employer Sponsored Retirement Plans Consulting Agreement (“Plan Sponsor Agreement”). The compensation method is explained and agreed upon in advance before any services are rendered and detailed in the Agreement.

**FLAT ADVISORY FEE ARRANGEMENT** - We will bill your 401(k) plan, or build in a markup with the service provider, a flat advisory fee which we will collect periodically depending on the service provider. Typically, the periodicity of these transactions is monthly, every 6 weeks, or quarterly. This fee is generally negotiable, but terms and advisory fee is agreed to in advance and acknowledged by the Plan Sponsor through the Plan Sponsor Agreement.

Either party may terminate your management agreement at any time with written notice.

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## **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

We have contracted with an unaffiliated firm (“Technology Firm”) to utilize their technology platform which supports data reconciliation, performance reporting, fee calculation, client relationship maintenance, at least quarterly performance evaluations, and other functions related to the administrative tasks of managing client accounts. Due to this arrangement, Technology Firm will have access to client accounts, but Technology Firm will not serve as an investment adviser to our clients. VitalStone and Technology Firm are non-affiliated companies. Technology Firm charges our Firm an annual fee for each account administered by its software. Please note that the fee charged to the client will not increase due to the annual fee VitalStone pays to Technology Firm. The annual fee is paid from the portion of the management fee retained by VitalStone.

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## **ADDITIONAL FEES AND EXPENSES:**

In addition to the advisory fees paid to our Firm, you also incur certain charges imposed by other third parties, such as broker-dealers, custodians, trust companies, banks and other financial institutions (collectively “Financial Institutions”). These additional charges include custodial fees, charges imposed by a mutual fund or ETF in a client’s account, as disclosed in the fund’s prospectus (e.g., fund management fees and other fund expenses), deferred sales charges, odd-lot differentials, transfer taxes, wire transfer and electronic fund fees, and other fees and taxes on brokerage accounts and securities transactions. Our brokerage practices are described at length in Item 12, below.

### *Non-Transaction Fee (NTF) Mutual/ETF Funds*

When selecting investments for our clients’ portfolios we might choose mutual funds on your account custodian’s Non-Transaction Fee (NTF) list. This means that your account custodian will not charge a transaction fee or commission associated with the purchase or sale of the mutual fund.

The mutual fund companies that choose to participate in your custodian’s NTF fund program pay a fee to be included in the NTF program. The fee that a mutual fund company pays to participate in the program is ultimately borne by the owners of the mutual fund including clients of our Firm. When we decide whether to choose a fund from your custodian’s NTF list or not, we consider our expected holding period of the fund, the position size and the expense ratio of the fund versus

alternative funds. Depending on our analysis and future events, NTF funds might not always be in your best interest.

#### ITEM 6 - PERFORMANCE BASED FEES AND SIDE-BY-SIDE MANAGEMENT

We do not charge advisory fees on a share of the capital appreciation of the funds or securities in a client account (so-called performance-based fees), nor engage side by side management.

#### ITEM 7 - TYPES OF CLIENTS

We provide investment advice to individuals, high net worth individuals, foundations, employer sponsored retirement plans, charitable organizations, trusts, estates, and corporations, limited liability companies and other business types. Additionally, we also provide asset management services for investors of other independent registered investment advisors (RIA), in a sub-advisor capacity.

Our Firm does not maintain a minimum in aggregate investable assets to become a client of VitalStone.

#### ITEM 8 - METHODS OF ANALYSIS, INVESTMENT STRATEGIES AND RISK OF LOSS

VitalStone offers ongoing portfolio management services based on the individual goals, objectives, time horizon, and risk tolerance of each client. We oversee a consultative process which evaluates the client's unique needs and preferences and matches those with a strategically and/or tactically managed investment portfolio. Our investment management process includes the due diligence and oversight of a diverse set of signal providers with specifically targeted strategies to meet varying risk/return and tax aware expectations. We believe that successful investment management is a combination of skilled analytics and targeted portfolio guidelines organized around specific outcomes tied to the client's financial plan. The financial plan is driven by the clients' unique priority matrix and risk tolerance. Risk tolerance is often specific to account type or goal while also being generalized across the financial plan.

VitalStone prioritizes (but is not exclusive to) investment strategies that are supported by rigorous data analytics and algorithmic intelligence. This intelligence is more important than traditional "theories" of investment performance such as "Modern Portfolio Theory." While our Firm strongly believes in the power of asset allocation and diversification, we also believe that a tactical approach to the balancing of those diversified asset classes is preferred when possible. When tax efficiency priorities of the client preclude trading activity, those preferences may be prioritized. VitalStone generally limits its investment advice and/or money management to mutual funds, equities, bonds, fixed income, and ETFs. VitalStone may use other securities to help diversify a portfolio when applicable.

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#### METHODS OF ANALYSIS

Our Firm's methods of analysis include charting analysis, fundamental analysis, technical analysis, and cyclical analysis.

**CHARTING ANALYSIS** involves the use of patterns in performance charts. VITALSTONE uses this technique to search for patterns used to help predict favorable conditions for buying and/or selling a security.

**FUNDAMENTAL ANALYSIS** involves the analysis of financial statements, the general financial health of companies, and/or the analysis of management or competitive

advantages. Our Firm uses this primarily in stock or bond only portfolios where insight into individual company behaviors is informative.

**TECHNICAL ANALYSIS** involves the analysis of past market data; primarily price and volume. Technical analysis can be done at the signal provider level where they are making ETF recommendations based on their data analytics models.

**CYCLICAL ANALYSIS** involved the analysis of business cycles to find favorable conditions for buying and/or selling a security. Because of the uncertainty of economic modeling, cyclical analysis is not used to forecast future economic conditions.

**ACTIVELY MANAGED ACCOUNTS:** We choose targeted ETFs, mutual funds and/or individual companies in which to invest according the analytical results above. Insights from these analytics are prioritized heavily over human perception or preference. Equity accounts may be traded tactically where the portfolios move in and out of market risk exposure based on a technical and/or fundamental analysis of the current market environment. ETF accounts may also include ETFs derived from bond market or other non-stock market indices. Our Firm generally seeks investment strategies that do not involve significant or unusual risk beyond that of the general domestic and/or international equity markets.

There is no guarantee that a particular strategy will meet its investment goals. The investment strategies we use will vary over time depending on various factors. Our Firm may give advice and take action for clients which differs from advice given or the timing or nature of action taken for other clients with different objectives. Our Firm is not obligated to initiate transactions for clients in any security which its principals, affiliates or employees may purchase or sell for their own accounts or for other clients.

Clients should be aware that ETFs and mutual funds have unique characteristics, and their cost structures differ, sometimes significantly.

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#### **ADVISORY SERVICES TO PLAN PARTICIPANTS OF 401(K) PLANS**

**GAP ANALYSIS** – In order to generate a target 401(k) withholding rate for a Plan Participant, we utilize a software system that derives this calculation taking into consideration such variables as: Inflation Rate, Growth Assumptions, Current Income, Anticipated Income, Retirement Age, & Current Retirement Savings, Anticipated Social Security Income, and other variables.

**RETIREMENT ACCOUNT INVESTMENT ALLOCATION** – We will ask you to fill out a short questionnaire designed to quantify your tolerance for investment risk. We will then use your responses to generate a suggested Investment Allocation that you may implement at your discretion.

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#### **SIGNAL PROVIDERS**

Our Firm does engage the services of “Signal Providers” to receive buy and sell signals, research, or other information that the Firm uses to manage a particular strategy/portfolio. Additionally, our Firm has engaged other unaffiliated Registered Investment Advisers. Such Signal Providers will not act as fiduciaries with respect to any client as they are engaged to provide market-related services to our Firm. In providing individualized investment advice, our Firm will invest a client’s assets in accordance with the recommendations of one or more Signal Providers or may invest the account in any manner it deems appropriate based on the client’s personal objectives. All fees incurred by the subscription to various Signal Providers are paid by our Firm (as a percentage of

the fees generated within a particular strategy). Thus, a portion of the advisory fee paid by a client to our Firm may be used to compensate such third-party providers or consultants.

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### **INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY MANAGER SERVICES**

We seek to recommend investment strategies that will give a client a diversified portfolio consistent with the client's investment objective. We do this by analyzing the various securities, investment strategies, and third-party management firms. The goal is to identify a client's risk tolerance, and then find a manager with the maximum expected return for that level of risk.

We examine the experience, expertise, investment philosophies and past performance of independent, third-party managers in an attempt to determine if that manager has demonstrated an ability to invest over a period of time and in different economic conditions. We monitor the managers' underlying holdings, strategies, concentrations and leverage as part of our overall periodic risk assessment. Additionally, as part of our due-diligence process, we survey the managers' compliance and business enterprise risks.

A risk of investing with a third-party manager who has been successful in the past is that he/she may not be able to replicate that success in the future. In addition, as we do not control the underlying investments in a managers' portfolio, there is also a risk that the manager may deviate from the stated investment mandate or strategy of the portfolio, making it a less suitable investment for our clients. Moreover, as we do not control the managers' daily business and compliance operations, we may be unaware of the lack of internal controls necessary to prevent business, regulatory or reputational deficiencies.

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### **USE OF ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENTS**

If deemed appropriate for your portfolio, our Firm may recommend investments classified as "alternative investments". Alternative investments may include a broad range of underlying assets including, but not limited to, hedge funds, private equity, venture capital, and registered, publicly traded securities. Alternative investments are speculative, not suitable for all clients and intended for only experienced and sophisticated investors who are willing to bear the high risk of the investment, which can include: loss of all or a substantial portion of the investment due to leveraging, short-selling, or other speculative investment practices; lack of liquidity in that there may be no secondary market for the fund and none expected to develop; volatility of returns; potential for restrictions on transferring interest in the fund; potential lack of diversification and resulting higher risk due to concentration of trading authority with a single adviser; absence of information regarding valuations and pricing; potential for delays in tax reporting; less regulation and typically higher fees than other investment options such as mutual funds. The SEC requires investors be accredited to invest in these more speculative alternative investments. Investing in a fund that concentrates its investments in a few holdings may involve heightened risk and result in greater price volatility.

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### **RISK OF LOSS**

A client's investment portfolio is affected by general economic and market conditions, such as interest rates, availability of credit, inflation rates, economic conditions, changes in laws and national and international political circumstances.

Investing in securities involves certain investment risks. Securities may fluctuate in value or lose value. Clients should be prepared to bear the potential risk of loss. VitalStone will assist Clients in determining an appropriate strategy based on their tolerance for risk.

Each Client engagement will entail a review of the Client's investment goals, financial situation, time horizon, tolerance for risk and other factors to develop an appropriate strategy for managing a Client's account. Client participation in this process, including full and accurate disclosure of requested information, is essential for the analysis of a Client's account(s). VitalStone shall rely on the financial and other information provided by the Client or their designees without the duty or obligation to validate the accuracy and completeness of the provided information. It is the responsibility of the Client to inform VitalStone of any changes in financial condition, goals or other factors that may affect this analysis.

Our methods rely on the assumption that the underlying companies within our security allocations are accurately reviewed by the rating agencies and other publicly-available sources of information about these securities, are providing accurate and unbiased data. While we are alert to indications that data may be incorrect, there is always a risk that our analysis may be compromised by inaccurate or misleading information.

Investors should be aware that accounts are subject to the following risks:

- **MARKET RISK** - Even a long-term investment approach cannot guarantee a profit. Economic, political, and issuer-specific events will cause the value of securities to rise or fall. Because the value of investment portfolios will fluctuate, there is the risk that you will lose money and your investment may be worth more or less upon liquidation.
- **FOREIGN SECURITIES AND CURRENCY RISK** - Investments in international and emerging-market securities include exposure to risks such as currency fluctuations, foreign taxes and regulations, and the potential for illiquid markets and political instability.
- **CAPITALIZATION RISK** - Small-cap and mid-cap companies may be hindered as a result of limited resources or less diverse products or services. Their stocks have historically been more volatile than the stocks of larger, more established companies.
- **INTEREST RATE RISK** - In a rising rate environment, the value of fixed-income securities generally declines, and the value of equity securities may be adversely affected.
- **CREDIT RISK** - Credit risk is the risk that the issuer of a security may be unable to make interest payments and/or repay principal when due. A downgrade to an issuer's credit rating or a perceived change in an issuer's financial strength may affect a security's value and thus impact the fund's performance.
- **SECURITIES LENDING RISK** - Securities lending involves the risk that the fund loses money because the borrower fails to return the securities in a timely manner or at all. The fund could also lose money if the value of the collateral provided for loaned securities, or the value of the investments made with the cash collateral, falls. These events could also trigger adverse tax consequences for the fund.
- **EXCHANGE-TRADED FUNDS** - ETFs face market-trading risks, including the potential lack of an active market for shares, losses from trading in the secondary markets, and disruption in the creation/redemption process of the ETF. Any of these factors may lead to the fund's shares trading at either a premium or a discount to its "net asset value."
- **PERFORMANCE OF UNDERLYING MANAGERS** - We select the mutual funds and ETFs in the asset allocation portfolios. However, we depend on the manager of such funds to select individual investments in accordance with their stated investment strategy.

- **NON-LIQUID ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENTS** - From time to time, our Firm will recommend to certain qualifying clients that a portion of such clients' assets be invested in private funds, private fund-of-funds and/or other alternative investments (collectively, "Nonliquid Alternative Investments"). Nonliquid Alternative Investments are not suitable for all our Firm's clients and are offered only to those qualifying clients for whom our Firm believes such an investment is suitable and in line with their overall investment strategy. Nonliquid Alternative Investments typically are available to only a limited number of sophisticated investors who meet the definition of "accredited investor" under Regulation D of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act"), or "qualified client" under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, or "qualified purchaser" under the Investment Company Act of 1940. Nonliquid Alternative Investments present special risks for our Firm's clients, including without limitation, limited liquidity, higher fees and expenses, volatile performance, no assurance of investment returns, heightened risk of loss, limited transparency, additional reliance on underlying management of the investment, special tax considerations, subjective valuations, use of leverage and limited regulatory oversight. When a Nonliquid Alternative Investment invests part or all of its assets in real estate properties, there are additional risks that are unique to real estate investing, including but not limited to: limitations of the appraisal value; the borrower's financial conditions (if the underlying property has been obtained by a loan), including the risk of foreclosures on the property; neighborhood values; the supply of and demand for properties of like kind; and certain city, state and/or federal regulations. Additionally, real estate investing is also subject to possible loss due to uninsured losses from natural and man-made disasters. The above list is not exhaustive of all risks related to an investment in Nonliquid Alternative Investments. A more comprehensive discussion of the risks associated with a particular Nonliquid Investment is set forth in that fund's offering documents, which will be provided to each client subscribing to a Nonliquid Alternative Investment, for review and consideration. It is important that each potential, qualified investor carefully read each offering or private placement memorandum prior to investing.
- **COMMODITIES RISK** - If the commodity is purchased in physical form, such as gold bars and coins, for example, there are risks associated with transporting it from the place of purchase and of storing it securely over time. There are also risks that the transaction costs of buying or selling the physical commodity may be high. Additionally, there may be liquidity risks (one-half of a gold coin cannot be sold, for example). If the commodity is purchased in non-physical form, such as unallocated gold accounts, ETFs or other unit and investment trusts, there are risks associated with the movement in gold prices and the ability of the fund or trust manager to respond or deal with those price movements. There also may be initial charges as well as annual management fees associated with the fund or trust.
- **DIGITAL CURRENCY** - Our Firm's use of digital currency in a client portfolio is limited only to publicly traded securities that passively or actively invest in digital currency assets. The shares of certain Products are also publicly quoted on OTC Markets and shares that have become unrestricted in accordance with the rules and regulations of the SEC may be bought and sold throughout the day through any brokerage account. Cryptocurrency (notably, bitcoin), often referred to as "virtual currency", "digital currency," or "digital assets," operates as a decentralized, peer-to-peer financial exchange and value storage that is used like money. If deemed appropriate, Clients may have exposure to bitcoin, a cryptocurrency. Cryptocurrency operates without central authority or banks and is not

backed by any government. Cryptocurrencies (i.e., bitcoin) may experience very high volatility. Cryptocurrency is also not legal tender. Federal, state, or foreign governments may restrict the use and exchange of cryptocurrency, and regulation in the U.S. is still developing. The SEC has issued a public report stating U.S. federal securities laws require treating some digital assets as securities. Cryptocurrency exchanges may stop operating or permanently shut down due to fraud, technical glitches, hackers, or malware. Due to its relatively recent launch, bitcoin has a limited trading history, making it difficult for investors to evaluate investments in this cryptocurrency. It is possible that another entity could manipulate the blockchain in a manner that is detrimental to the bitcoin network. Bitcoin transactions are irreversible such that an improper transfer can only be undone by the receiver of the bitcoin agreeing to return the bitcoin to the original sender. Digital assets are highly dependent on their developers and there is no guarantee that development will continue or that developers will not abandon a project with little or no notice. Third parties may assert intellectual property claims relating to the holding and transfer of digital assets, including cryptocurrencies, and their source code. Any threatened action that reduces confidence in a network's long-term ability to hold and transfer cryptocurrency may affect investments in cryptocurrencies. Investments in the Products are speculative investments that involve high degrees of risk, including a partial or total loss of invested funds. The shares of each Product are intended to reflect the price of the digital asset(s) held by such Product (based on digital asset(s) per share), less such Product's expenses and other liabilities. Because each Product does not currently operate a redemption program, there can be no assurance that the value of such Product's shares will reflect the value of the assets held by such Product, less such Product's expenses and other liabilities, and the shares of such Product, if traded on any secondary market, may trade at a substantial premium over, or a substantial discount to, the value of the assets held by such Product, less such Product's expenses and other liabilities, and such Product may be unable to meet its investment objective.

- **CYBERSECURITY RISK** - In addition to the Material Investment Risks listed above, investing involves various operational and "cybersecurity" risks. These risks include both intentional and unintentional events at our firm or one of its third-party counterparties or service providers, that may result in a loss or corruption of data, result in the unauthorized release or other misuse of confidential information, and generally compromise our Firm's ability to conduct its business. A cybersecurity breach may also result in a third-party obtaining unauthorized access to our clients' information, including social security numbers, home addresses, account numbers, account balances, and account holdings. Our Firm has established business continuity plans and risk management systems designed to reduce the risks associated with cybersecurity breaches. However, there are inherent limitations in these plans and systems, including those certain risks may not have been identified, in large part because different or unknown threats may emerge in the future. As such, there is no guarantee that such efforts will succeed, especially because our Firm does not directly control the cybersecurity systems of our third-party service providers. There is also a risk that cybersecurity breaches may not be detected.

## ITEM 9 - DISCIPLINARY INFORMATION

On 11/19/13 Jason Odette entered into a Waiver and Consent agreement. Mr. Odette agreed to pay a \$5000 fine for failing to disclose that he had made security transactions in his personal

brokerage while another financial representative had a financial interest in his account. This was stated to violate FINRA rule 2010 and Consent states that he neither agreed nor denied the allegations.

We do not have any further legal, financial or other “disciplinary” item to report.

## **ITEM 10 - OTHER FINANCIAL INDUSTRY ACTIVITIES AND AFFILIATIONS**

### **INSURANCE**

Some of our Investment Adviser Representatives (“IARs”) of the Firm are licensed Insurance agents registered with various State(s) Insurance Departments. IARs receives compensation (commissions, trails, or other compensation from the respective insurance products) as a result effecting insurance transactions for mutual client(s) of VitalStone. Commissions generated by insurance sales do not offset regular advisory fees. Our firm has an incentive to recommend insurance products and this incentive creates a conflict of interest between your interests and our Firm. We mitigate this conflict by disclosing to clients they have the right to decide whether to engage the Insurance services offered through our IARs. Further, clients should note they have the right to decide whether to act on the recommendations and the right to choose any professional to execute the advice for any insurance products through any licensed insurance agent not affiliated with our Firm. We recognize the fiduciary responsibility to place the client’s interests first and have established policies in this regard to avoid any conflicts of interest.

### **BROKER DEALER**

Certain IARs of our Firm are registered representatives of Private Client Services, LLC (“PCS”) a securities broker-dealer and will be compensated for effecting securities transactions or providing advisory services. A portion of the time of the Firm and these IARs is spent in connection with broker/dealer activities.

As a broker-dealer, PCS engages in a broad range of activities normally associated with securities brokerage firms. Pursuant to the investment advice given by our Firm or its IARs, investments in securities may be recommended for clients. If PCS is selected as the broker-dealer, PCS and its registered representatives, including IARs of our Firm, may receive commissions for executing securities transactions. When IARs of our Firm receive commissions in connection with the advice given to advisory clients, we may reduce a portion of its fees by the amount of the commissions earned by our IARs.

You are advised that if PCS is selected as the broker-dealer, the transaction charges may be higher or lower than the charges you may pay if the transactions were executed at other broker/dealers. You should note, however, that you are under no obligation to purchase securities through IARs of our Firm or PCS.

Our Firm may provide advice regarding investment company securities. You should be aware that, in addition to the advisory fees you pay in connection with any of our Firm’s program, each investment company also pays its own separate investment advisory fees and other expenses. Such fees and expenses are disclosed in the mutual fund’s prospectus. In addition, clients should be aware that mutual funds may be purchased separately, independent of the investment management services of our Firm.



Moreover, you should note that under the rules and regulations of FINRA, Private Client Services, LLC has an obligation to maintain certain client records and perform other functions regarding certain aspects of the investment advisory activities of its registered representatives. These obligations require PCS to coordinate with and have the cooperation of its registered representatives that operate as, or are otherwise associated with, investment advisers other than PCS. Certain IARs of our Firm may, in their capacity as registered representatives of PCS, or as agents appointed with various life, disability or other insurance companies, receive commissions, 12(b)-1 fees, trails, or other compensation from the respective product sponsors and/or as a result of effecting securities transactions for clients. As previously noted, when commissions or fees are received by our Firm or these IARs in connection with the advice given to advisory clients, our Firm may, but is not obligated to, reduce its fee proportionate to the amount of the commission or fee earned by our Firm or these IARs. However, clients should note that they are under no obligation to purchase any investment products through our Firm or its IARs.

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## **OTHER FINANCIAL AFFILIATIONS**

The following is a list of other affiliated companies under common ownership with VitalStone Financial, LLC:

***VitalStone Properties, LLC*** –Commonly owned entity with the Firm and used for personal real estate holdings. There is less than 5% of time spent on this entity and it is not investment related.

Clients should be aware that the ability to receive additional compensation by our Firm and its management persons or employees creates conflicts of interest that impair the objectivity of the Firm and these individuals when making advisory recommendations. Our Firm endeavors at all times to put the interest of its clients first as part of our fiduciary duty as a registered investment adviser; we take the following steps, among others to address this conflict:

- we disclose to clients the existence of all material conflicts of interest, including the potential for the Firm and our employees to earn compensation from advisory clients in addition to the Firm's advisory fees;
- we disclose to clients that they have the right to decide to purchase recommended investment products from our employees;
- we collect, maintain and document accurate, complete and relevant client background information, including the client's financial goals, objectives, and liquidity needs;
- the Firm conducts regular reviews of each client advisory account to verify that all recommendations made to a client are in the best interest of the client's needs and circumstances;
- we require that our employees seek prior approval of any outside employment activity so that we may ensure that any conflicts of interests in such activities are properly addressed;
- we periodically monitor these outside employment activities to verify that any conflicts of interest continue to be properly addressed by the Firm; and
- we educate our employees regarding the responsibilities of a fiduciary, including the need for having a reasonable and independent basis for the investment advice provided to clients.

Our Firm does not have an application pending to register, as a futures commission merchant, commodity pool operator, a commodity trading adviser, or an associated person of the foregoing entities.

Our firm nor any of its management persons are registered or have an application pending to register as a broker-dealer or a registered representative of a broker-dealer.

#### ITEM 11 - CODE OF ETHICS

Our Firm and persons associated with us are allowed to invest for their own accounts, or to have a financial investment in the same securities or other investments that we recommend or acquire for your account and may engage in transactions that are the same as or different than transactions recommended to or made for your account. This creates a conflict of interest. We recognize the fiduciary responsibility to act in your best interest and have established policies to mitigate conflicts of interest.

We have developed and implemented a Code of Ethics that sets forth standards of conduct expected of our advisory personnel to mitigate this conflict of interest. The Code of Ethics addresses, among other things, personal trading, gifts, and the prohibition against the use of inside information.

The Code of Ethics is designed to protect our clients to detect and deter misconduct, educate personnel regarding the Firm's expectations and laws governing their conduct, remind personnel that they are in a position of trust and must act with complete propriety at all times, protect the reputation of VitalStone, safeguard against the violation of the securities laws, and establish procedures for personnel to follow so that we may determine whether their personnel are complying with the Firm's ethical principles.

We have established the following restrictions in order to ensure our Firm's fiduciary responsibilities:

- A director, officer, or employee of VitalStone shall not buy or sell any securities for their personal portfolio(s) where their decision is substantially derived, in whole or in part, by reason of his or her employment unless the information is also available to the investing public on reasonable inquiry. No supervised employee of VitalStone shall prefer his or her own interest to that of the advisory client. Trades for supervised employees are traded alongside client accounts.
- We maintain a list of all securities holdings of anyone associated with this advisory practice with access to advisory recommendations. These holdings are reviewed on a regular basis by an appropriate officer/individual of VitalStone.
- We emphasize the unrestricted right of the client to decline implementation of any advice rendered, except in situations where we are granted discretionary authority of the client's account.
- We require that all supervised employees must act in accordance with all applicable Federal and State regulations governing registered investment advisory practices.
- Any supervised employee not in observance of the above may be subject to termination.

None of our associated persons may affect for himself/herself or for accounts in which he/she holds a beneficial interest, any transactions in a security which is being actively recommended to any of our clients, unless in accordance with the Firm's procedures.

You may request a complete copy of our Code by contacting us at the address, telephone, or email on the cover page of this Part 2; ATTN: Jason Odette, Chief Compliance Officer.

## ITEM 12 - BROKERAGE PRACTICES

For the past several years, VitalStone has participated in the Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("Schwab") member FINRA/SIPC. Schwab offers services to independent investment advisors that include custody of securities, trade execution, clearance, and settlement of transactions. Advisor receives some benefits from Schwab through its participation in the program. (Please see the disclosure under Item 14 below.) VitalStone will be transitioning to Schwab. New clients will be onboarded to the Schwab platform, while existing clients will remain on the Schwab platform until a pre-announced turnover date, in order to assure the smoothest transition. Schwab's Brokerage Services In addition to the advisory services, the wrap fee program includes certain brokerage services of Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("Schwab") a broker-dealer registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and a member of FINRA and SIPC. We are independently owned and operated and not affiliated with Schwab. Schwab will act solely as a broker-dealer and not as an investment advisor to you. It will have no discretion over your account and will act solely on instructions it receives from us [or you]. Schwab has no responsibility for our services and undertakes no duty to you to monitor our firm's management of your account or other services we provide to you. Schwab will hold your assets in a brokerage account and buy and sell securities and execute other transactions when we [or you] instruct them to. We do not open the account for you. (Please see the disclosure under Item 14 below.)

VitalStone does not maintain custody of your assets on which we advise, although we may be deemed to have custody of your assets if you give us authority to withdraw assets from your account (see Item 15—Custody, below). Your assets must be maintained in an account at a "qualified custodian," generally a broker-dealer or bank. We require that our clients use) Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. (Schwab), a registered broker-dealer, member SIPC, as the qualified custodian.

We are independently owned and operated and are not affiliated with either Schwab. Schwab will hold your assets in a brokerage account and buy and sell securities when we instruct them to. While we require that you use either Schwab as custodian/broker, you will decide whether to do so and will open your account with Schwab by entering into an account agreement directly with them. Conflicts of interest associated with this arrangement are described below as well as in Item 14 (Client referrals and other compensation). You should consider these conflicts of interest when selecting your custodian.

We do not open the account for you, although we may assist you in doing so. If you do not wish to place your assets with Schwab, then we cannot manage your account. Even though your account is maintained at r Schwab, and we anticipate that most trades will be executed through Schwab, we can still use other brokers to execute trades for your account as described below.

### **How we select brokers/custodians**

We seek to use Schwab, custodians/brokers that will hold your assets and execute transactions. When considering whether the terms that Schwab provide are, overall, most advantageous to you when compared with other available providers and their services, we take consider a wide range of factors, including:

- Combination of transaction execution services and asset custody services (generally without a separate fee for custody)
- Capability to execute, clear, and settle trades (buy and sell securities for your account)
- Capability to facilitate transfers and payments to and from accounts (wire transfers, check requests, bill payment, etc.)
- Breadth of available investment products (stocks, bonds, mutual funds, exchange-traded funds [ETFs], etc.)
- Availability of investment research and tools that assist us in making investment decisions
- Quality of services
- Competitiveness of the price of those services (commission rates, margin interest rates, other fees, etc.) and willingness to negotiate the prices
- Reputation, financial strength, security and stability
- Prior service to us and our clients
- Services delivered or paid for by Schwab
- Availability of other products and services that benefit us, as discussed below (see “Products and services available to us from Schwab”)

#### **Your brokerage and custody costs**

For our clients’ accounts that Schwab maintains, Schwab generally charges you separately for custody services but are compensated by charging you commissions or other fees on trades that it executes or that settle into your Schwab account. Certain trades (for example, many mutual funds and ETFs) may not incur Schwab commissions or transaction fees. Schwab are also compensated by earning interest on the uninvested cash in your account.

Although we are not required to execute all trades through Schwab, we have determined that having Schwab execute most trades is consistent with our duty to seek “best execution” of your trades. Best execution means the most favorable terms for a transaction based on all relevant factors, including those listed above (see “How we select brokers/custodians”). By using another broker or dealer you may pay lower transaction costs.

#### **Products and services available to us from Schwab:**

- Schwab Advisor Services™ is Schwab’s business serving independent investment advisory firms like us. They provide us and our clients with access to their institutional brokerage

services (trading, custody, reporting, and related services), many of which are not typically available to Schwab retail customers. However, certain retail investors may be able to get institutional brokerage services from Schwab without going through us.

- Schwab also makes available various support services. Some of those services help us manage or administer our clients' accounts, while others help us manage and grow our business. Schwab's support services are generally available on an unsolicited basis (we don't have to request them) and at no charge to us. Following is a more detailed description of Schwab's support services:
- Services that benefit you. Schwab's institutional brokerage services include access to a broad range of investment products, execution of securities transactions, and custody of client assets.
- The investment products available through Schwab include some to which we might not otherwise have access or that would require a significantly higher minimum initial investment by our clients.
- Schwab's services described in this paragraph generally benefit you and your account.
- Services that do not directly benefit you. Schwab also makes available to us other products and services that benefit us but do not directly benefit you or your account. These products and services assist us in managing and administering our clients' accounts and operating our firm. They include investment research, both Schwab's own and that of third parties. We use this research to service all or a substantial number of our clients' accounts, including accounts not maintained at Schwab. In addition to investment research, Schwab also makes available software and other technology that:
  - Provide access to client account data (such as duplicate trade confirmations and account statements)
  - Facilitate trade execution and allocate aggregated trade orders for multiple client accounts
  - Provide pricing and other market data
  - Facilitate payment of our fees from our clients' accounts
  - Assist with back-office functions, recordkeeping, and client reporting

Services that generally benefit only us. Schwab also offers other services intended to help us manage and further develop our business enterprise. These services include:

- Educational conferences and events
- Consulting on technology and business needs
- Consulting on legal and related compliance needs
- Publications and conferences on practice management and business succession

- Access to employee benefits providers, human capital consultants, and insurance providers
- Marketing consulting and support

#### **Our interest in Schwab's services**

We believe that taken in the aggregate, our recommendation of Schwab as custodian and broker is in the best interests of our clients. Our selection is primarily supported by the scope, quality, and price of Schwab's services (see "How we select brokers/ custodians") and not Schwab's services that benefit only us.

There is no direct link between our participation in the program and the investment advice we give to our clients, although we receive economic benefits through our participation in the program that are typically not available to any other independent investment advisors participating in the program. These benefits include the following products and services (provided without cost or at a discount): receipt of duplicate Client statements and confirmations; research related products and tools; consulting services; access to a trading desk serving advisor participants; access to block trading (which provides the ability to aggregate securities transactions for execution and then allocate the appropriate shares to Client accounts); the ability to have advisory fees deducted directly from Client accounts; access to an electronic communications network for Client order entry and account information; access to mutual funds with no transaction fees and to certain institutional money managers; and discounts on compliance, marketing, research, technology, and practice management products or services provided to us by third party vendors. Schwab may also have paid for business consulting and professional services received by some of our related person. Some of the products and services made available by Schwab through the program may benefit us but may not benefit your account. These products or services may assist us in managing and administering your account, including accounts not maintained at Schwab. Other services made available by Schwab are intended to help us manage and further develop our business enterprise. The benefits received by our firm or our personnel through participation in the program do not depend on the amount of brokerage transactions directed to Schwab. As part of our fiduciary duties to clients, we endeavor at all times to put the interests of our clients first. You should be aware, however, that the receipt of economic benefits by our Firm or our related persons in and of itself creates a conflict of interest and may indirectly influence our choice of Schwab for custody and brokerage services.

In the event you request us to recommend a broker/dealer custodian for execution and/or custodial services, we generally recommend your account to be maintained at Schwab. We may recommend that you establish accounts with Schwab to maintain custody of your assets and to effect trades for your accounts. You are under no obligation to act upon any recommendations, and if you elect to act upon any recommendations, you are under no obligation to place the transactions through any broker/dealer we recommend. Our recommendation is generally based on the broker's cost and fees, skills, reputation, dependability and compatibility with the client. You may be able to obtain lower commissions and fees from other brokers and the value of products, research and services given to us is not a factor in determining the selection of broker/dealer or the reasonableness of their commissions.

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## **AGGREGATION AND ALLOCATION OF TRANSACTIONS**

We may aggregate transactions if we believe that aggregation is consistent with the duty to seek best execution for our clients and is consistent with the disclosures made to clients and terms defined in the client Investment Advisory Agreement. No advisory client will be favored over any other client, and each account that participates in an aggregated order will participate at the average share price (per custodian) for all transactions in that security on a given business day. We will aggregate trades for ourselves or our associated persons with your trades, providing that the following conditions are met:

1. Our policy for the aggregation of transactions shall be fully-disclosed separately to our existing clients (if any) and the broker/dealer(s) through which such transactions will be placed;
2. We will not aggregate transactions unless we believe that aggregation is consistent with our duty to seek the best execution (which includes the duty to seek best price) for you and is consistent with the terms of our Investment Advisory Agreement with you for which trades are being aggregated.
3. No advisory client will be favored over any other client; each client that participates in an aggregated order will participate at the average share price for all our transactions in a given security on a given business day, with transaction costs based on each client's participation in the transaction;
4. We will prepare a written statement ("Allocation Statement") specifying the participating client accounts and how to allocate the order among those clients;
5. If the aggregated order is filled in its entirety, it will be allocated among clients in accordance with the allocation statement; if the order is partially filled, the accounts that did not receive the previous trade's positions should be "first in line" to receive the next allocation.
6. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the order may be allocated on a basis different from that specified in the Allocation Statement if all client accounts receive fair and equitable treatment and the reason for difference of allocation is explained in writing and is reviewed by our compliance officer. Our books and records will separately reflect, for each client account, the orders of which aggregated, the securities held by, and bought for that account.
7. We will receive no additional compensation or remuneration of any kind as a result of the proposed aggregation; and
8. Individual advice and treatment will be accorded to each advisory client.

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## **BROKERAGE FOR CLIENT REFERRALS**

Our Firm does not receive client referrals from any Custodian or third party in exchange for using that broker-dealer or third party.

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## **TRADE ERRORS**

We have implemented procedures designed to prevent trade errors; however, trade errors in client accounts cannot always be avoided. Consistent with our fiduciary duty, it is our policy to correct trade errors in a manner that is in the best interest of the client. In cases where the client

causes the trade error, the client will be responsible for any loss resulting from the correction. Depending on the specific circumstances of the trade error, the client may not be able to receive any gains generated as a result of the error correction. In all situations where the client does not cause the trade error, the client will be made whole and we will absorb any loss resulting from the trade error if the error was caused by the firm. If the error is caused by the Custodian, the Custodian will be responsible for covering all trade error costs. If an investment gain results from the correcting trade, the gain will be donated to charity. We will never benefit or profit from trade errors.

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#### **DIRECTED BROKERAGE**

We do not routinely recommend, request or require that you direct us to execute transaction through a specified broker dealer. Additionally, we typically do not permit you to direct brokerage. We place trades for your account subject to our duty to seek best execution and other fiduciary duties.

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### **ITEM 13 - REVIEW OF ACCOUNTS**

#### **ACCOUNT REVIEWS AND REVIEWERS – INVESTMENT SUPERVISORY SERVICES**

Our Investment Adviser Representatives will monitor client accounts on a regular basis and perform annual reviews with each client. All accounts are reviewed for consistency with client investment strategy, asset allocation, risk tolerance, and performance relative to the appropriate benchmark. More frequent reviews may be triggered by changes in an account holder's personal, tax, or financial status. Geopolitical and macroeconomic specific events may also trigger reviews.

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#### **STATEMENTS AND REPORTS**

The custodian for the individual client's account will provide clients with an account statement at least monthly. Upon request, clients can receive a prepared written report detailing their current positions, asset allocation, and year-to-date performance provided by our Firm.

You are urged to compare the reports provided by VitalStone against the account statements you receive directly from your account custodian.

- *Selection and Monitoring of Third Party Managed Accounts* – If you have an account with us that is managed by a third-party manager, we typically review your account holdings weekly to insure that your account remains within reasonable variances of the asset allocation targets and investment models in place.
- *Financial Planning Services* – Your review will be conducted by your assigned Investment Advisor. We realize that events and circumstances could change dramatically in between normal reviews. Therefore, if you experience an event in your life that might necessitate an early review of your Financial Plan, please let us know and we will be happy to schedule a more frequent review. Such an event might include a marriage, divorce, birth of a child, death or disability of an immediate family member, impending retirement, employment status, or you bought or sold a business. We also encourage you to ask us if you have any questions about your Financial Plan or the reports that we generate.
- *Advisory Services to ERISA Qualified Plans* – Under normal circumstances, our regular practice is to review your retirement plan quarterly and generate written reports and written suggestions of fund replacements for your review and consideration conducted



by one of our Investment Adviser Representatives. These written performance reports may be generated less frequently, (semi-annually or annually) at your request.

#### **ITEM 14 – CLIENT REFERRALS AND OTHER COMPENSATION**

As disclosed under Item 12 Brokerage Practices, we participate in Schwab’s institutional customer program and we may recommend Schwab to you for custody and brokerage services. There is no direct link between our participation in the program and the investment advice we give to our clients, although we receive economic benefits through our participation in the program that are typically not available to any other independent Investment Advisors participating in the program. These benefits include the following products and services (provided without cost or at a discount): receipt of duplicate Client statements and confirmations; research related products and tools; consulting services; access to a trading desk serving advisor participants; access to block trading (which provides the ability to aggregate securities transactions for execution and then allocate the appropriate shares to Client accounts); the ability to have advisory fees deducted directly from Client accounts; access to an electronic communications network for Client order entry and account information; access to mutual funds with no transaction fees and to certain institutional money managers; and discounts on compliance, marketing, research, technology, and practice management products or services provided to us by third party vendors. Schwab may also have paid for business consulting and professional services received by some of our related persons. Some of the products and services made available by Schwab through the program may benefit us but may not benefit your account. These products or services may assist us in managing and administering your account, including accounts not maintained at Schwab. Other services made available by Schwab are intended to help us manage and further develop our business enterprise. The benefits received by our Firm or our personnel through participation in the program do not depend on the amount of brokerage transactions directed to Schwab. As part of our fiduciary duties to clients, we endeavor at all times to put the interests of our clients first. You should be aware, however, that the receipt of economic benefits by our Firm or our related persons in and of itself creates a conflict of interest and may indirectly influence our choice of Schwab for custody and brokerage services.

Our firm also receives from Schwab certain additional economic benefits (“Additional Services”) that may or may not be offered to any other independent investment Advisors participating in the program. Specifically, the Additional Services include reimbursement of “transfer fees” from moving assets from old Custodian to Schwab. Schwab provides the Additional Services to our firm in its sole discretion and at its own expense. Our firm does not pay any fees to Schwab for the Additional Services.

Our firm’s receipt of Additional Services raises potential conflicts of interest. In providing Additional Services to our firm, Schwab most likely considers the amount and profitability to Schwab of the assets in, and trades placed for, our firm’s Client accounts maintained with T Schwab. Schwab has the right to terminate the Additional Services Addendum with our firm, in its sole discretion, provided certain conditions are met. Consequently, in order

to continue to obtain the Additional Services from Schwab, our firm may have an incentive to recommend to its Clients that the assets under management by our firm be held in custody with Schwab and to place transactions for Client accounts with Schwab. Our firm's receipt of Additional Services does not diminish its duty to act in the best interests of its Clients, including to seek best execution of trades for Client accounts.

Our Firm may be asked to recommend a financial professional, such as an attorney, accountant, or mortgage broker. In such cases, our Firm does not receive any direct compensation in return for any referrals made to individuals or firms in our professional network. Clients must independently evaluate these firms or individuals before engaging in business with them and clients have the right to choose any financial professional to conduct business. Individuals and firms in our financial professional network may refer clients to our Firm. Again, our Firm does not pay any direct compensation in return for any referrals made to our Firm. Our Firm does recognize the fiduciary responsibility to place your interests first and have established policies in this regard to mitigate any conflicts of interest.

#### **ITEM 15 – CUSTODY**

We do not have physical custody, as it applies to investment advisors. Custody has been defined by regulators as having access or control over client funds and/or securities.

#### **DEDUCTION OF ADVISORY FEES**

For all accounts, our Firm has the authority to have fees deducted directly from client accounts. Our Firm has established procedures to ensure all client funds and securities are held at a qualified custodian in a separate account for each client under that client's name. Clients, or an independent representative of the client, will direct, in writing, the establishment of all accounts and therefore are aware of the qualified custodian's name, address, and the way the funds or securities are maintained. Finally, account statements are delivered directly from the qualified custodian to each client, or the client's independent representative, at least quarterly. You should carefully review those statements and are urged to compare the statements against reports received from VitalStone. When you have questions about your account statements, you should contact VitalStone or the qualified custodian preparing the statement.

#### **STANDING LETTERS OF AUTHORIZATION ("SLOA")**

Our Firm is deemed to have custody of clients' funds or securities when clients have standing authorizations with their custodian to move money from a client's account to a third-party ("SLOA") and, under that SLOA, it authorizes us to designate the amount or timing of transfers with the custodian. The SEC has set forth a set of standards intended to protect client assets in such situations, which we follow. We do not have a beneficial interest on any of the accounts we are deemed to have Custody where SLOAs are on file. In addition, account statements reflecting all activity on the account(s), are delivered directly from the qualified custodian to each client or the client's independent representative, at least quarterly. You should carefully review those statements and are urged to compare the statements against reports received from us. When you have questions about your account statements, you should contact us, your Advisor or the qualified custodian preparing the statement.

Please refer to Item 5 for more information about the deduction of adviser fees.

## ITEM 16 – INVESTMENT DISCRETION

For discretionary accounts, prior to engaging VitalStone to provide investment advisory services, you will enter a written Agreement with us granting the Firm the authority to supervise and direct, on an on-going basis, investments in accordance with the client's investment objective and guidelines. In addition, you will need to execute additional documents required by the Custodian to authorize and enable VitalStone, in its sole discretion, without prior consultation with or ratification by you, to purchase, sell, or exchange securities in and for your accounts. We are authorized, in our discretion and without prior consultation with you to: (1) buy, sell, exchange and trade any stocks, bonds or other securities or assets and (2) determine the amount of securities to be bought or sold, and (3) place orders with the custodian. Any limitations to such discretionary authority will be communicated to our Firm in writing by you, the client.

The limitations on investment and brokerage discretion held by VitalStone for you are:

- For discretionary accounts, we require that we be provided with authority to determine which securities and the amounts of securities to be bought or sold.
- Any limitations on this discretionary authority shall in writing as indicated on the investment advisory Agreement, Appendix B. You may change/amend these limitations as required.

In some instances, we may not have discretion. We will discuss all transactions with you prior to execution or you will be required to make the trades if in an employer sponsored account.

## ITEM 17 – VOTING CLIENT SECURITIES

We will not vote proxies on your behalf. You are welcome to vote proxies or designate an independent third-party at your own discretion. You designate proxy voting authority in the custodial account documents. You must ensure that proxy materials are sent directly to you or your assigned third party. We do not take action with respect to any securities or other investments that become the subject of any legal proceedings, including bankruptcies. You can contact our office with questions about a particular solicitation by phone at (210) 782-9855.

Third party money managers selected or recommended by our firm may vote proxies for you. Therefore, except in the event a third party money manager votes proxies, you maintain exclusive responsibility for: (1) directing the manner in which proxies solicited by issuers of securities beneficially owned by you shall be voted, and (2) making all elections relative to any mergers, acquisitions, tender offers, bankruptcy proceedings or other type events pertaining to your investment assets. Therefore (except for proxies that may be voted by a third-party money manager), our firm and/or you shall instruct your qualified custodian to forward to you copies of all proxies and shareholder communications relating to your investment assets.

## ITEM 18 – FINANCIAL INFORMATION

We do not require or solicit prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance. Therefore, we are not required to include a balance sheet for our most recent fiscal year. We are not subject to a financial condition that is reasonably likely to impair our ability to meet contractual commitments to clients. Finally, we have not been the subject of a bankruptcy petition at any time.