



## **MASTER SERVICES AGREEMENT**

We are pleased that you have chosen to engage Carr, Riggs & Ingram to provide certain accounting, advisory, assurance, consulting, tax, and/or related services.

## **ALTERNATIVE PRACTICE STRUCTURE**

"Carr, Riggs & Ingram" and "CRI" are the brand names under which Carr, Riggs & Ingram, P.L.L.C. ("CPA Firm") and CRI Advisors, PLLC ("CRI Advisors" or "Advisors") provide professional services. Carr, Riggs & Ingram, P.L.L.C., Carr, Riggs & Ingram Capital, LLC and their respective subsidiaries operate as an alternative practice structure in accordance with the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct and applicable law, regulations and professional standards. CPA Firm is a licensed independent CPA firm that provides attest services, as well as additional ancillary services, to its clients. CRI Advisors provides tax and business consulting services to its clients. CRI Advisors and its subsidiaries are not licensed CPA firms and will not provide any attest services. The entities falling under the Carr, Riggs & Ingram or CRI brand are independently owned and are not responsible or liable for the services and/or products provided, or engaged to be provided, by any other entity under the Carr, Riggs & Ingram or CRI brand. Our use of the terms "CRI," "we," "our," "us," and terms of similar import, denote the alternative practice structure conducted by CPA Firm and CRI Advisors, as appropriate.

This Master Services Agreement 2.0 ("MSA"), shall govern, throughout the entirety of our contractual relationship(s), including the provision of our services and deliverables as set forth in one or more Engagement Letters from CRI (the "services").

## **CLIENT**

"Client" (collectively referred to as "Client", "you", or "your") for the purposes of this MSA, shall mean the party or parties specifically listed as the Client(s) on the applicable Engagement Letter. As examples, the Client might include {ONLY AS SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED OR LISTED IN THE ENGAGEMENT LETTER(S)}:

- For Individual Client(s): you, your spouse (if filing jointly), your dependent children, other dependents, any grantor trusts for which you act as trustee, and any investment partnership or limited liability company if all of the ownership interests are owned by the foregoing persons;
- and
- For Business Client(s) (e.g. for-profit, not-for profit, or governmental entities; fiduciary clients, etc.): the primary business and any subsidiaries or controlled affiliates.

With respect to each Engagement Letter, our Client(s) for a particular engagement will include only those individuals and entities made known to us by you and specifically identified and listed under the Client Acknowledgement section of an Engagement Letter. Neither this MSA nor any Engagement Letter will create any client relationship nor any service-related obligation between us and any natural person or entity unknown to us and/or not specifically listed or identified in an Engagement Letter.

## **AUTHORITY TO BIND**

BY EXECUTING AN ENGAGEMENT LETTER THAT REFERENCES AND INCORPORATES THIS MSA, CLIENT ACCEPTS AND AGREES TO THE TERMS OF THIS MSA. ANY INDIVIDUAL EXECUTING OR ACCEPTING THIS MSA ON BEHALF OF ANY INDIVIDUAL, COMPANY, OR OTHER LEGAL ENTITY, REPRESENTS THAT THEY HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO BIND SUCH INDIVIDUAL, ENTITY, AND ITS AFFILIATES TO THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS, WILL PROVIDE UPON REQUEST ANY INFORMATION OR DOCUMENTATION VERIFYING, IN CRI'S SOLE DISCRETION, SUCH AUTHORITY, IN WHICH CASE THE TERM "CLIENT" SHALL REFER TO EACH REPRESENTED INDIVIDUAL, ENTITY, OR AFFILIATES. IF THE EXECUTING INDIVIDUAL DOES NOT HAVE SUCH AUTHORITY, OR DOES NOT AGREE WITH THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS, THEY MUST NOT EXECUTE OR ACCEPT THIS MSA AND MAY NOT USE THE SERVICES.

## **ENGAGEMENT LETTERS**

All services to be performed by us must be described in an Engagement Letter executed by the applicable CRI entity and the Client(s). Each Engagement Letter will identify the applicable CRI entity executing the Engagement letter and performing the services; the Engagement letter will also provide details on the nature of the work and any expected deliverable. Our services will be limited to the services specifically described in that Engagement Letter. Our agreement to perform services under any particular Engagement Letter does not obligate us to perform any future services under any additional Engagement Letters.

Engagement Letters are subject to the terms and conditions outlined in this MSA. Upon execution of an Engagement Letter, this MSA is incorporated into each Engagement Letter executed by the parties.

## **OUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

We will perform the services detailed in the Engagement Letter(s) in accordance with applicable professional standards. Our responsibility is limited to the period(s) covered by the service(s) detailed in the Engagement Letter(s) and does not extend to any later periods for which we are not engaged to provide applicable services, unless evidenced by a separate Engagement Letter.

We are available to provide you with business advice, but we are not obligated to do so unless you specifically engage us to do so via an Engagement Letter for this purpose. The parties agree that Client will only rely on written, not oral, statements or advice from CRI. We believe written advice is necessary to avoid confusion and to make clear the specific nature and limitations of our advice. You should not rely on any advice unless it has received a full supervisory review and is provided by us in writing directly to you.

Unless otherwise stipulated in the Engagement Letter:

1. we will not perform any procedures designed to:

- a. discover defalcations or other irregularities,
  - b. audit or otherwise verify the information you give us, or
  - c. detect immaterial misstatements or violations of laws or government regulations;
2. our engagement cannot be relied upon to identify or disclose any financial statement misstatements, including those caused by fraud or error, or to identify or disclose any wrongdoing within your entity or noncompliance with laws and regulations; and our services are not designed to provide assurance on internal control or to identify deficiencies in internal control.

We are not investment counselors or brokers. Our advice concerning a particular investment shall be limited to advising you with regard to any applicable tax ramifications of the investment. It shall not include advising you regarding the economic viability or consequences of the investment or whether or not you should make, retain, or dispose of the investment. Our advice regarding any applicable tax ramifications of the investment shall be based on documents and information that you provide us regarding the investment. However, if you would like investment advice, we are happy to provide contact information for (a) qualified investment advisor(s).

We, in our sole professional judgment, reserve the right to refuse to perform any procedure or take any action that could be construed as assuming management responsibilities. Our services do not relieve you of your responsibilities.

#### **CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Our services will be conducted on the basis that you acknowledge and understand your responsibility for (as and if applicable):

- assuming all management responsibilities; overseeing any services we provide by designating an individual, preferably from senior management, who possesses suitable skill, knowledge, or experience;
- evaluating the adequacy and results of services (including non-attest services) performed by us; and accepting responsibility for the results of such services; designing, implementing, and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial information that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, including monitoring ongoing activities;
- the selection and application of accounting principles and framework;
- the preparation and fair presentation of the financial information in conformity with the applicable accounting framework;
- making drafts of financial information or financial statements, all financial records, and related information available to us and for the accuracy and completeness of that information (including information from outside of the general and subsidiary ledgers);
- timely providing us with:
  1. access to all information of which you are aware or have in your possession, custody, or control that is relevant to the services for which we are engaged, including but not limited to items such as records, documentation, identification of all related parties and all related party relationships and transactions, and other matters;
  2. additional information that we may request;
- unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom we determine it necessary to perform our services;

- the design and implementation of programs and controls to prevent and detect fraud, and for informing us about all known or suspected fraud affecting you or your entity involving:
  1. management,
  2. employees who have significant roles in internal control, and
  3. others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial information or financial statements;
- informing us of your knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting you or your entity received in communications from employees, former employees, regulators, or others;
- identifying and ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- the safeguarding of assets, the proper recording of transactions in the book(s) of accounts; and the substantial completeness and accuracy of the financial records, and the full and accurate disclosure of all relevant facts to us.
- informing, in writing, the engagement partner (or individual leading the engagement) before entering into any substantive employment discussions with any CPA Firm or CRI Advisor personnel, to ensure our independence is not impaired under the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct, if applicable

You represent that the information you are supplying to us is accurate and complete to the best of your knowledge and that you have disclosed to us all relevant facts affecting our services.

#### **USE OF FOREIGN AFFILIATES AND THIRD-PARTY SERVICE PROVIDERS**

By executing this MSA, and for so long as it remains in effect, you consent to the use of international service providers, including disclosure of your confidential financial information, if applicable, to our service providers located outside the United States. We maintain internal policies, procedures, and safeguards to protect the confidentiality of your personal information. We also secure and require confidentiality agreements with these service providers to maintain the confidentiality of your information and take reasonable precautions to determine that they have appropriate procedures in place to prevent the unauthorized release of your confidential information to others. We remain responsible for the work provided by any such third-party service providers.

#### **RECORD RETENTION**

We retain records in accordance with our record retention policy. We do not keep any of your original records, so we will return those to you upon completion of the engagement. When records are returned to you, it is your responsibility to retain and protect the records for possible future use, including potential examination by governmental or regulatory agencies. You acknowledge and agree that upon the expiration of the applicable retention periods reflected within our record retention policy, available upon request, we are free to destroy our records related to the relevant or affected engagement(s).

#### **REQUEST FOR DISCLOSURE**

As part of the alternative practice structure both CPA Firm and CRI Advisors agree to comply with the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct, as applied to the alternative practice structure, and applicable federal, state and local rule with respect to confidentiality of client information. In the event that we are requested or required to disclose any confidential information by law, a subpoena or order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction, other governmental or regulatory authority, or professional standards

(each, an "Order") or are requested or required to disclose any of the confidential information by a non-governmental third party ("Third-Party Demand"), we shall, where legally permissible and reasonably practicable, give you reasonable notice of the Order or Third-Party Demand so that you may seek a protective order or other appropriate remedy at your sole expense, or waive our compliance with the applicable confidentiality provisions of this MSA. In the event you direct us not to make the disclosure, you agree to defend, reimburse, and hold us harmless from any costs or expenses incurred in defending the privilege, including, by way of illustration only, our attorney's fees, court costs, outside adviser's costs, out-of-pocket expenses of any kind, or penalties or fines imposed as a result of your asserting the privilege or your direction to us to assert the privilege or otherwise withhold production; provided, however, we retain the sole discretion, after consultation with our legal counsel, to determine whether or not, and to what extent, to comply with or otherwise address any Order or Third-Party Demand.

## **DATA SECURITY**

In the interest of facilitating our services to you, we may send data over the Internet, securely store electronic data via computer software applications hosted remotely on the Internet or allow access to data through third-party vendors' secured portals or clouds. Electronic data that is confidential to you may be transmitted or stored using these methods. We may use third-party service providers to store or transmit this data, such as, but not limited to, providers of tax return preparation software. In using these data communication and storage methods, we employ measures designed to maintain data security. We use reasonable efforts to keep such communications and data access secure in accordance with our obligations under applicable laws and professional standards. We also require our third-party vendors to do the same.

You recognize and accept that we have no control over, and shall not be responsible for, the unauthorized interception or breach of any communications or data once it has been sent or has been subject to unauthorized access, notwithstanding all reasonable security measures employed by us or our third-party vendors. You consent to our use of these electronic devices and applications and submission of confidential client information to third-party service providers during this relationship.

To enhance our services to you, we will use a combination of remote access, secure file transfer, virtual private network, other collaborative virtual workspaces, or other online tools or environments. Access through any combination of these tools allows for on-demand and/or real-time collaboration across geographic boundaries and time zones and allows the parties hereto to share data, engagement information, knowledge, and deliverables in a protected environment. In order to use certain of these tools and in addition to execution of this MSA or any related Engagement Letter(s), you may be required to execute a separate client acknowledgement or agreement and agree to be bound by the terms, conditions, and limitations of such agreement. You agree that we have no responsibility for the activities of third-party vendors supplying these tools and agree to indemnify and hold us harmless with respect to any and all claims arising from or related to the operation of these tools. While we may back up your files to facilitate our services, you are solely responsible for the backup of your files and records. Therefore, we recommend that you also maintain your own backup files of these records. In the event you suffer a loss of any files or records due to accident, inadvertent mistake, or force majeure, copies of which you have provided to us pursuant to this MSA or any related Engagement Letter(s), we shall not be responsible or obligated to provide you a copy of any such file or record which we may retain in our possession.

## **DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

In the event of a dispute between the parties, which arises out of or relates to this MSA or any related Engagement Letter(s), the breach thereof or the services provided or to be provided hereunder or in the related Engagement Letter(s), if the dispute cannot be settled through negotiation, the parties agree that before initiating arbitration, litigation, or other dispute resolution procedure, they will first try, in good faith, to resolve the dispute through non-binding mediation. All parties agree that an alternative form of dispute resolution shall not be undertaken by either party until the expiration of fifteen (15) calendar days following notice being provided to the other party indicating that the dispute cannot be settled through mediation. The mediation will be administered by the American Arbitration Association under its Dispute Resolution Rules for Professional Accounting and Related Services Disputes. The costs of any mediation proceedings shall be shared equally by all parties.

### **LIMITATION OF LIABILITY**

EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN THIS MSA, WE SHALL NOT BE LIABLE FOR INCIDENTAL, CONSEQUENTIAL, EXEMPLARY, SPECIAL, PUNITIVE, OR ANCILLARY DAMAGES OF ANY KIND ALLEGED AS A RESULT OF ANY CAUSE OF ACTION ARISING FROM OR IN ANY WAY RELATED TO THIS MSA (WHICH INCLUDES, FOR CLARIFICATION, ALL RELEVANT AND AFFECTED ENGAGEMENT LETTER(S)), WHETHER FOR BREACH OF CONTRACT, TORT, OR OTHERWISE. UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED IN THIS MSA, THE PARTIES AGREE THAT OUR TOTAL CUMULATIVE LIABILITY (INCLUDING OUR EMPLOYEES, DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, OR AGENTS), SHALL NOT EXCEED THE AMOUNT OF FEES EARNED BY US RELATED TO THE RELEVANT SERVICE(S) (AS SPECIFIED IN THE AFFECTED ENGAGEMENT LETTER(S)) DURING THE TWELVE MONTHS PRECEDING THE EVENT GIVING RISE TO THE CLAIM, AS SUCH AMOUNT SHALL SERVE AS A REASONABLE PROSPECTIVE ESTIMATE OF ANY DAMAGES WHICH YOU MAY SUFFER THROUGH ANY BREACH BY US OF THE TERMS OF THIS MSA, AS SUCH DAMAGES MAY BE SPECULATIVE OR IMPOSSIBLE TO CALCULATE. IF THERE ARE UNPAID FEES OWED TO US, THIS CUMULATIVE LIABILITY WILL BE REDUCED BY THE VALUE OF THE UNPAID FEES WITH NO ADDITIONAL INTEREST OR CHARGES, AS WE RETAIN THE RIGHT TO OFFSET ANY SUMS CLAIMED AS DUE AND OWED BY YOU, BY ANY SUMS TO WHICH WE ARE LEGALLY ENTITLED. THIS LIMITATION SHALL APPLY WHETHER OR NOT FURTHER DAMAGES ARE FORESEEABLE, OR WHETHER EITHER PARTY (OR ITS EMPLOYEES, AGENTS, OFFICERS, OR DIRECTORS) HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES. CLIENT(S) AGREE TO DEFEND, INDEMNIFY, AND HOLD CRI HARMLESS AGAINST ALL CLAIMS OF ANY KIND ARISING FROM IMPROPER THIRD-PARTY DISCLOSURE OF CRI REPORTS OR WORK PRODUCT.

### **GOVERNING LAW AND VENUE**

This MSA and any underlying Engagement Letter(s), including but not limited to, any act or omission of CRI pursuant to the MSA and/or any work by CRI shall be governed by the laws of the State of Alabama, without reference to any conflict of laws rules or principles. Any claim, civil action, or legal proceeding arising out of, or in any way relating to, this MSA or any underlying Engagement Letter(s), any act or omission of CRI pursuant to the MSA, and/or any other agreement(s) with CRI, must be brought in a state court having jurisdiction in Coffee County, Alabama, Enterprise Division, and each party irrevocably submits to the jurisdiction and venue of any such court in any such action or proceeding and agrees to waive any defenses or objections to venue and jurisdiction within Coffee County, Alabama, including forum non conveniens.

### **STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS**

The parties agree that there shall be a one-year statute of limitation (from the earlier of delivery of the service or termination of the MSA or Engagement Letter(s)) for the filing of any requests for arbitration, lawsuit, or proceeding related to this MSA. If such a claim is filed more than one year, or the minimum durational period having been determined as permissible by applicable statutory law or by a court of competent jurisdiction, subsequent to the delivery of the service or termination of the MSA or Engagement Letter(s), whichever occurs first in time, then it shall be precluded by this provision, regardless of whether or not the claim has accrued at that time.

## **TERMINATION**

The MSA shall continue in full force and effect until terminated in accordance with this section. We have the right and sole discretion to terminate and withdraw from this MSA immediately upon written notice to you for any reason including, but not limited to, if you do not provide us with requested information in a timely manner, refuse to cooperate with our reasonable requests, fail to timely pay, or misrepresent any facts. Withdrawal or termination of this MSA constitutes withdrawal and termination from any and all related Engagement Letter(s).

We also have the right and sole discretion to withdraw for any reason from any specific engagement covered by an Engagement Letter immediately upon written notice to you. Our withdrawal will release us from any obligation to complete the services covered by that Engagement Letter and will constitute completion of that engagement. You agree to compensate us for our time and out-of-pocket expenses through the date of any termination and withdrawal of this MSA or any Engagement Letter(s).

## **RELATIONSHIP AND DISCLOSURE BETWEEN AFFILIATES**

As indicated, CPA Firm and CRI Advisors operate as an alternative practice structure in accordance with the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct and applicable law, regulations and professional standards. CPA Firm provides attest services to its clients. CRI Advisors is not a licensed CPA firm and does not provide audit or attest services. CRI Advisors has a contractual arrangement with CPA Firm whereby CRI Advisors provides CPA Firm with professional and support personnel and other support services to allow CPA Firm to perform its professional services and performs all services in connection with our engagements for which licensure as a CPA firm is not required. From time to time, CRI Advisors may consult with CPA Firm in the provision of services pursuant to this MSA or an underlying Engagement Letter. In order to avoid duplication of efforts arising out of this arrangement, you consent to our sharing among and between CRI Advisors and CPA firm the information that we may obtain from you in the course of an engagement performed or services provided in any and all Engagement Letter(s).

You consent to CRI Advisors and CPA Firm sharing your Client information with one another and their respective subsidiaries and affiliates, in support of the services to be provided under an Engagement Letter. Unless you indicate otherwise, your acceptance of the terms of this MSA shall be understood by us as your consent to make disclosures among and between CPA Firm and CRI Advisors and their respective subsidiaries, affiliates, and employees of confidential information that we may obtain in the course of our engagement.

You consent to the transfer by CPA Firm of all Client files, work papers and work product, for services other than attest services, if any, which includes confidential client information to CRI Advisors. Please let us know immediately if you have any objection to such transfer of your files.

You consent to us using your financial, tax, and personal information to send to you by any medium: firm newsletters, surveys, press releases, invitations to our seminars, information regarding related services from affiliated companies and/or portfolio companies, and any other communication sent to some or all of our clients. You also consent to us sharing your financial, tax, and personal or confidential information with our affiliated companies and/or portfolio companies. This consent is not conditioned upon our providing services to you.

#### **CORPORATE TRANSPARENCY ACT/BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP INFORMATION REPORTING**

Assisting you with your compliance with the Corporate Transparency Act ("CTA"), including beneficial ownership information ("BOI") reporting, is not within the scope of this MSA. You have sole responsibility for your compliance with the CTA, including its BOI reporting requirements and the collection of relevant ownership information. We shall have no liability resulting from your failure to comply with CTA. Information regarding the BOI reporting requirements can be found at <https://www.fincen.gov/boi>. Consider consulting with legal counsel if you have questions regarding the applicability of the CTA's reporting requirements and issues surrounding the collection of relevant ownership information.

#### **SEVERABILITY**

If any provision of this MSA or any underlying Engagement Letter(s) is found by any court to be void or otherwise unenforceable, the remainder of this MSA and any underlying Engagement Letter(s) will remain valid and enforceable as though such void or unenforceable provision were absent upon the date of its execution.

#### **COUNTERPARTS**

This MSA may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument and shall become a binding agreement when one or more of the counterparts have been signed by each of the parties and delivered to the other party. Signatures provided by facsimile or electronically shall be valid and binding. If we do not receive signed client acknowledgement(s)/authorization from you within ninety (90) days from the date hereof and you continue to interact with us related to your engagement(s) in or after that timeframe, then your continued interaction will signify and represent your agreement.

#### **MODIFICATION**

This MSA may be amended, modified, or supplemented only by written agreement executed by all parties. In the event of a conflict between the terms of this MSA and any Engagement Letter(s), the terms of this MSA shall supersede, unless the applicable Engagement Letter(s) specifically states otherwise and references this MSA.

#### **LATE FEES AND INTEREST**

Client agrees to pay all services, fees, and costs of any underlying engagement, and payment is due upon receipt of our invoice. We reserve the right, in our sole discretion, to impose late fees or interest on any balance that is past due. Failure to make timely payments may, upon notice, result in our termination of this MSA and any Engagement Letter(s).

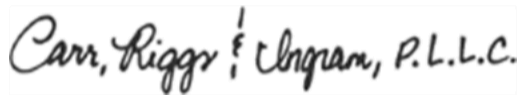
**ENTIRE AGREEMENT**

This Agreement, including all Engagement Letter(s) and all attachments, schedules, and exhibits hereto or thereto, all of which are incorporated herein by reference, constitutes the full and complete agreement between the parties, including all predecessors of CRI, concerning the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior and contemporaneous understandings and writings with respect thereto. No additional terms contained in any purchase order, order acknowledgement, confirmation, delivery acknowledgement, similar document, other correspondence, or written or oral communication between the parties will be valid and such additional or conflicting terms are deemed rejected by the parties.

**CLIENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT(S)**

If you acknowledge and agree with the terms of our agreement as described in this MSA, please indicate by executing.

Very truly yours,



CARR, RIGGS & INGRAM, P.L.L.C.



CRI ADVISORS, PLLC

***Signature***

*Bonnie Swain*

*Town of Southern Shores*

<signature>

<sign date>

Authorized Signer on behalf of Town of Southern Shores



To Management and Those Charged with Governance  
of Town of Southern Shores

This Engagement Letter and its attachments, if any, are governed by the Master Services Agreement 2.0 ("MSA") between Carr, Riggs & Ingram, P.L.L.C. ("CPA Firm", "we", "us", or "our") and the Client; the terms of which are hereby incorporated into this Engagement Letter by reference. By executing this Engagement Letter, the parties agree to and intend to be bound by the terms of the MSA.

"Carr, Riggs & Ingram" and "CRI" are the brand names under which CPA Firm and CRI Advisors, PLLC ("CRI Advisors" or "Advisors") provide professional services. Carr, Riggs & Ingram, P.L.L.C., Carr, Riggs & Ingram Capital, LLC and their respective subsidiaries operate as an alternative practice structure in accordance with the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct and applicable law, regulations and professional standards. CPA Firm is a licensed independent CPA firm that provides attest services, as well as additional ancillary services, to its clients. CRI Advisors provides tax and business consulting services to its clients. CRI Advisors and its subsidiaries are not licensed CPA firms and will not provide any attest services. The entities falling under the Carr, Riggs & Ingram or CRI brand are independently owned and are not responsible or liable for the services and/or products provided, or engaged to be provided, by any other entity under the Carr, Riggs & Ingram or CRI brand. Our use of the term "CRI," and terms of similar import, denote the alternative practice structure conducted by CPA Firm, CRI Advisors, their subsidiaries and affiliates, as appropriate.

This Engagement Letter confirms and specifies the terms of our engagement and clarifies the nature and extent of the services we will provide for Town of Southern Shores ("Client", "Entity", "you", or "your") as of and for the year ended June 30, 2025 (the "Selected Period(s)"). Except as otherwise expressly set forth herein, this Engagement Letter only governs attest services, provided to you by CPA Firm. Except as otherwise expressly set forth herein, any non-attest services, including any non-attest services provided by CRI Advisors or any other entities within the Carr, Riggs & Ingram alternative practice structure, will be governed by (a) separate Engagement Letter(s) between such entity and the Client.

In connection with the alternative practice structure, CRI Advisors maintains custody of client files for CPA Firm and CRI Advisors. By executing this engagement letter, you hereby consent to the transfer to CRI Advisors of all your client files, work papers and work product. Unless you indicate otherwise, your acceptance of the terms of this engagement shall be understood by us as your consent to transfer such files and records.

## SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

We will audit the financial statements and the disclosures, which collectively comprise the basic financial statement(s) of the Entity for the Selected Period(s) ended for the following: governmental activities, each major fund, aggregate remaining fund information and the related disclosures to the financial statements, otherwise known as the notes to the financial statements (collectively, the "Financial Statements").

The Financial Statements are prepared in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America ("GAAP") (the "Selected Basis").

We will perform an audit engagement with respect to the Financial Statements of the Entity. As and if applicable and indicated in the following paragraphs, we will also perform the appropriate procedures related to either supplementary information ("Supplementary Information") and/or required supplementary information ("RSI").

The objectives of our audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Financial Statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion about whether your Financial Statements are fairly presented, in all material respects, in conformity with the Selected Basis and report on the fairness of the Supplementary Information referred to below when considered in relation to the Financial Statements as a whole. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America ("GAAS") and the standards for financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States ("GAGAS") will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment of a reasonable user made based on the Financial Statements. The objectives also include reporting on:

- Internal control over financial reporting and compliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and award agreements, noncompliance with which could have a material effect on the Financial Statements in accordance with GAGAS.

The Selected Basis provides for certain RSI, such as management's discussion and analysis ("MD&A"), to supplement Entity's Financial Statements. Such information, although not a part of the Financial Statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board ("GASB") who considers it to be an essential part of the financial reporting for placing the Financial Statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. As part of our engagement, we will apply certain limited procedures to the Entity's RSI in accordance with GAAS. These limited procedures will consist of inquires of management regarding methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the Financial Statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the Financial Statements. We will not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance. This RSI is required by the Selected Basis and will be subjected to certain limited procedures, but will not be audited: MD&A,

## Required Pension Supplementary Information, and Required Other Postemployment Benefit Supplementary Information.

We have also been engaged to report on Supplementary Information other than RSI that accompanies the Entity's Financial Statements. We will subject the following Supplementary Information to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the Financial Statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the Financial Statements or to the Financial Statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with GAAS, and we will provide an opinion on it in relation to the Financial Statements as a whole in a separate written report accompanying our auditor's report on the Financial Statements or in a report combined with our auditor's report on the Financial Statements: Budgetary Comparison Schedules, Non major fund schedules, and the following other schedules.

### **OUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

We will conduct our audit in accordance with GAAS and GAGAS. We will include tests of your accounting records and other procedures we consider necessary to enable us to express such an opinion. As part of an audit in accordance with GAAS and GAGAS, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We will evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management. We will also evaluate the overall presentation of the Financial Statements and determine whether the Financial Statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation. We will plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Financial Statements are free of material misstatement, whether from (1) errors, (2) fraudulent financial reporting, (3) misappropriation of assets, or (4) violations of laws or governmental regulations that are attributable to the Entity or to acts by management or employees acting on behalf of the Entity. Because the determination of waste and abuse is subjective, GAGAS do not expect auditors to perform specific procedures to detect waste or abuse in financial audits nor do they expect auditors to provide reasonable assurance of detecting waste or abuse.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, combined with the inherent limitations of internal control, and because we will not perform a detailed examination of all transactions, there is an unavoidable risk that some material misstatements or may not be detected by us, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with GAAS and GAGAS. In addition, an audit is not designed to detect immaterial misstatements or violations of laws or governmental regulations that do not have a direct and material effect on the Financial Statements. However, we will inform the appropriate level of management of any material errors, fraudulent financial reporting, or misappropriation of assets that come to our attention. We will also inform the appropriate level of management of any violations of laws or governmental regulations that come to our attention, unless clearly inconsequential. Our responsibility as auditors is limited to the period covered by our audit and does not extend to any later periods for which we are not engaged as auditors.

We will obtain an understanding of the Entity and its environment, including the system of internal control, sufficient to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the Financial Statements, whether due to error or fraud, and to design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks and obtain evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinions. Tests of controls

may be performed to test the effectiveness of certain controls that we consider relevant to preventing and detecting errors and fraud that are material to the Financial Statements and to preventing and detecting misstatements resulting from illegal acts and other noncompliance matters that have a direct and material effect on the Financial Statements. Our tests, if performed, will be less in scope than would be necessary to render an opinion on internal control and, accordingly, no opinion will be expressed in our report on internal control issued pursuant to GAGAS. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentation, or the override of internal control.

An audit is not designed to provide assurance on internal control or to identify significant deficiencies or material weaknesses internal control. Accordingly, we will express no such opinion. However, during the audit, we will communicate to you and those charged with governance internal control related matters that are required to be communicated under professional standards.

We have identified the following significant risks of material misstatement as part of our audit planning: management override of controls and improper revenue recognition due to fraud.

We will also conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

#### **AUDIT PROCEDURES - COMPLIANCE**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Financial Statements are free of material misstatement, we will perform tests of the Entity's compliance with the provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and agreements. However, the objective of our audit will not be to provide an opinion on overall compliance and we will not express such an opinion in our report on compliance issued pursuant to GAGAS.

Our audit does not relieve you of your responsibilities.

#### **OTHER SERVICES**

For any non-attest services provided by CRI, you agree to assume all management responsibilities for these non-attest services and any other non-attest services we provide; oversee the services by designating an individual with suitable skill, knowledge, or experience; evaluate the adequacy and results of the services; and accept responsibility for them.

The non-attest services, if any, are limited to those previously defined in this letter, or as identified in a separate Engagement Letter. We, in our sole professional judgment, reserve the right to refuse to perform any procedure or take any action that could be construed as assuming management responsibilities.

#### **CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

In addition to your responsibilities identified in the MSA, our engagement will be conducted on the basis that you acknowledge and understand your responsibility for:

- designing, implementing, establishing and maintaining effective internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of Financial Statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and for evaluating and monitoring ongoing activities to help ensure that appropriate goals and objectives are met
- following laws and regulations
- ensuring that management and financial information is reliable and properly reported
- implementing systems designed to achieve compliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements
- the selection and application of accounting principles; for the preparation and fair presentation of the Financial Statements and all accompanying information in conformity with the Selected Basis, and for compliance with applicable laws and regulations rules, and the provisions of contracts and grant agreements
- the preparation and fair presentation of the Financial Statements in conformity with the Selected Basis
- making drafts of Financial Statements, all financial records, and related information available to us and for the accuracy and completeness of that information (including information from outside of the general and subsidiary ledgers)
- evaluation of whether there are any conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern within one year after the date that the financial statements are available to be issued
- providing us with (1) access to all information of which you are aware that is relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the Financial Statements, such as records, documentation, identification of all related parties and all related-party relationships and transactions, and other matters; (2) additional information that we may request for the purpose of the audit; and (3) unrestricted access to persons within the Entity from whom we determine it necessary to obtain audit evidence (4) if applicable, you will provide us with the final version of all documents comprising the annual report which includes other information, prior to the date of our auditor's report. If the final version of these documents are not available prior to the date of our auditor's report, they will be provided as soon as practical and the Entity will not issue the annual report prior to providing them to the auditor
- required written representations from you about the Financial Statements and related matters, at the conclusion of our audit
- required written representations that (1) you are responsible for presentation of the Supplementary Information in accordance with GAAP; (2) you believe the Supplementary Information, including its form and content, is fairly presented in accordance with GAAP; (3) the methods of measurement or presentation have not changed from those used in the prior period (or, if they have changed, the reasons for such changes); and (4) you have disclosed to us any

significant assumptions or interpretations underlying the measurement or presentation of the Supplementary Information.

- required written representations from you about compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements; and other responsibilities required by GAAS and GAGAS, at the conclusion of our audit
- adjusting the Financial Statements to correct material misstatements and confirming to us in the management representation letter that the effects of any uncorrected misstatements aggregated by us during the current engagement and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the Financial Statements taken as a whole
- the design and implementation of programs and controls to prevent and detect fraud, and for informing us about all known or suspected fraud affecting the Entity involving (1) management, (2) employees who have significant roles in internal control, and (3) others where the fraud could have a material effect on the Financial Statements
- informing us of your knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the government received in communications from employees, former employees, grantors, regulators, or others. In addition, you are responsible for identifying and ensuring that the government complies with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, agreements, and grants
- identifying and ensuring that the government complies with applicable contracts, agreements, and grants
- taking timely and appropriate steps to remedy fraud and noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, or contracts or grant agreements that we report
- preparation of the Supplementary Information, as applicable, in conformity with the Selected Basis. You agree to include our report on the Supplementary Information in any document that contains, and indicates that we have reported on, the Supplementary Information and to include the audited Financial Statements with any presentation of the Supplementary Information that includes our report thereon
- if publishing Financial Statements on your website, you understand that websites are a means of distributing information and, therefore, we are not required to read the information contained in those sites or to consider the consistency of other information on the website with the original document
- disclosing the date through which subsequent events have been evaluated and whether that date is the date the Financial Statements were issued or were available to be issued
- informing, in writing, the engagement partner before entering into any substantive employment discussions with any CPA Firm or CRI Advisors personnel, to ensure our independence is not impaired under the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct
- informing us on a timely basis of the name of any single investor in you that owns 20% or more of your equity at any point in time

- informing us on a timely basis of any investments held by you which constitutes 20% or more of the equity/capital of the investee entity at any point in time
- establishing and maintaining a process for tracking the status of audit findings and recommendations
- identifying and providing report copies of previous financial audits, attestation engagements, performance audits or other studies related to the objectives discussed in the Scope and Objectives section of this letter. This responsibility includes relaying to us corrective actions taken to address significant findings and recommendations resulting from those audits, attestation engagements, performance audits, or other studies
- providing management's views on our current findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as your planned corrective actions, for the report, and for the timing and format for providing that information

## **ENGAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION**

Madonna Stafford, CPA is the engagement partner and is responsible for supervising the engagement and signing the report(s) or authorizing another individual to sign it (them).

We understand that your employees will prepare all confirmations and schedules we request and will locate any documents selected by us for testing. A request list of information we expect to need for our audit will be provided to you. Your prompt attention to and timely return of the requested items will significantly contribute to the efficiency of our audit process.

We will provide copies of our reports to the Entity; however, management is responsible for distribution of the reports and the Financial Statements. Unless restricted by law or regulation, or containing privileged and confidential information, copies of our reports are to be made available for public inspection.

The audit documentation for this engagement will be retained for a minimum of five years after the report release date. If we are aware that a federal awarding agency or auditee is contesting an audit finding, we will contact the party(ies) contesting the audit finding for guidance prior to destroying the audit documentation.

In accordance with certain regulations, we, as your auditors, are required to make the following commitments:

- The documentation for this engagement is the property of CRI and constitutes confidential information. However, we may be requested to make certain documentation available to regulators, federal or state agencies, governmental agencies, etc. ("regulators" or "agencies") pursuant to authority given to it by law or regulation. If requested, access to such documentation will be provided under the supervision of CPA Firm personnel. Furthermore, upon request, we may provide copies of selected documentation to these regulators or agencies. These regulators or agencies may intend, or decide, to distribute the copies or information contained therein to others.

- We will file a copy of our most recent peer review report with any applicable regulators or agencies.
- As appropriate, we may meet with those charged with governance before the audit report(s) are filed with any required regulators or agencies.

The information that we obtain in auditing is confidential, as required by the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct. Therefore, your acceptance of this Engagement Letter will serve as your advance consent to our compliance with above commitments.

## **REPORTING**

As part of our engagement, we will issue a written report upon completion of our audit of the Entity's Financial Statements. Our report will be addressed to management, those charged with governance, or both, as appropriate, of the Entity. Circumstances may arise in which our report may differ from its expected form and content based on the results of our audit. Depending on the nature of these circumstances, it may be necessary for us to modify our opinion, add a separate section, or add an emphasis-of-matter or other-matter paragraph to our auditor's report, or if necessary, withdraw from this engagement. If our opinion is other than unmodified, we will discuss the reasons with you in advance.

We will also provide a report (that does not include an opinion) on internal control related to the Financial Statements and compliance with the provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a material effect on the Financial Statements as required by GAGAS. The report on internal control and on compliance and other matters will state: (1) that the purpose of the report is solely to describe the scope of testing of internal control and compliance, and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control on compliance, and (2) that the report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with GAGAS in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. The report(s) will also state that the report is not suitable for any other purpose. If during our audit we become aware that the Entity is subject to an audit requirement that is not encompassed in the terms of this engagement, we will communicate to management and those charged with governance that an audit in accordance with GAAS and the standards for financial audits contained in GAGAS may not satisfy the relevant legal, regulatory, or contractual requirements.

## **TERMINATION**

If for any reason, we are unable to complete the audit or are unable to form or have not formed an opinion, we may decline to express an opinion or withdraw from this engagement.

We reserve the right and sole discretion to withdraw for any reason from this engagement immediately upon written notice to you. Our withdrawal will release us from any obligation to complete the services covered by this Engagement Letter and will constitute completion of this engagement.

Our engagement with you will terminate upon the earlier of our delivery of your report or withdrawal. In either case, you agree to compensate us for our services, fees, and costs to the date of withdrawal.

## **CORPORATE TRANSPARENCY ACT/BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP INFORMATION REPORTING**

Assisting you with your compliance with the Corporate Transparency Act (“CTA”), including beneficial ownership information (“BOI”) reporting, is not within the scope of this engagement. You have sole responsibility for your compliance with the CTA, including its BOI reporting requirements and the collection of relevant ownership information. We shall have no liability resulting from your failure to comply with CTA. Information regarding the BOI reporting requirements can be found at <https://www.fincen.gov/boi>. Consider consulting with legal counsel if you have questions regarding the applicability of the CTA’s reporting requirements and issues surrounding the collection of relevant ownership information.

### **OUR FEES**

Our fees for these services will be as defined in our Local Government Commission contract with Town of Southern Shores for the year July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

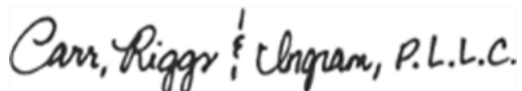
We will also charge you for applicable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of our engagement, including, but not limited to: technology costs, travel expenses (meals, lodging, transportation, etc.), third party technical resources, administrative costs (courier services, report preparation, copying), and any other direct engagement expenses. We may also charge a fee for applications, subscriptions, hosting, or technology we utilize in providing services to you.

The fee estimate is based on anticipated cooperation from your personnel and the assumption that unexpected circumstances (such as, but not limited to, difficulty or delays in obtaining requisite responses to necessary or required procedures, significant changes to promulgated standards, time incurred for financial statement adjustment(s) and the related procedures required, or significant changes to your organization or its internal control structure) will not be encountered during the engagement. If significant additional time is necessary, we will keep you informed of any problems we encounter and our fees will be adjusted accordingly. Our invoices for these fees will be rendered each month as work progresses and are payable on presentation.

### **CLIENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT(S)**

If you acknowledge and agree with the terms of our agreement as described in this Engagement Letter, please indicate by executing.

Very truly yours,



CARR, RIGGS & INGRAM, P.L.L.C.

**Signature**

*Bonnie Swain*

*Town of Southern Shores*

<signature>

<sign date>

Authorized Signer(s)