

EMPIRE

COMPANY LIMITED

AUDIT COMMITTEE MANDATE

The Audit Committee (the “Committee”) is responsible to the Board of Directors (the “Board”) for the policies and practices relating to integrity of financial and regulatory reporting as well as internal controls to achieve the objectives of safeguarding of corporate assets, reliability of information and compliance with policies and laws. The Committee is also responsible for oversight of the enterprise risk management framework and process.

The Committee charges management with developing and implementing procedures to:

- Ensure internal controls are appropriately designed, implemented and monitored including reviewing and discussing any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of internal controls and any fraud, whether or not material, that involves management or other employees who have a significant role in the Company’s internal controls over financial reporting
- Ensure financial reporting and disclosure of required information is complete, accurate and timely as required by applicable legislation and regulation.

COMPOSITION

The Committee shall be composed of three or more independent directors, appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the Corporate Governance & Social Responsibility Committee, in accordance with the independence standards established by the Board, and all applicable corporate and securities laws, rules and regulations.

All members of the Committee shall be financially literate as defined by applicable legislation. Financially literate shall mean the ability to read and understand a set of financial statements that present a breadth and level of complexity of accounting issues that are generally comparable to the breadth and complexity of the issues that can reasonably be expected to be raised by the Company’s financial statements.

A member of the Board who is not financially literate may be appointed to the Committee provided that the member becomes financially literate within three months following their appointment, subject to the Company’s Board determining that this appointment will not materially adversely affect the ability of the Committee to act independently and to satisfy the other requirements of this mandate.

If a Committee member ceases to be independent for reasons outside the member’s reasonable control, the member shall tender their resignation to the Chair of the Corporate Governance & Social Responsibility Committee, within three months of the occurrence of the event which caused the member to not be independent.

The members of the Committee are appointed or reappointed annually by the Board, with such appointments to take effect immediately following the Annual General Meeting of Shareholders of the Company. Each member of the Committee shall continue to be a member thereof until their successor is appointed, unless they resign or are removed by the Board, or cease to be a director of the Company. The Board, upon recommendation of the Corporate Governance & Social Responsibility Committee, may fill vacancies of members of the Committee for the remainder of the current term of appointment.

The Board shall appoint a Chair from among the members of the Committee to preside at its meetings. The Chair must be independent. If the Chair of the Committee loses their independent status, that person shall cease to be Chair immediately and be replaced as Chair by an existing member of the Committee with the Corporate Governance & Social Responsibility Committee being asked to replace this member within three months. In the absence of the Chair, one of the other members of the Committee present shall be chosen by the Committee to preside at the meeting.

AUTHORITY

The Committee has the authority to:

- Conduct or authorize an investigation into any matters within the scope of its mandate or responsibility;
- At the Company's expense, as determined by the Committee, engage independent legal, accounting or financial advisors and such other advisors as it deems necessary to advise the Committee or assist in carrying out its duties or to assist in the conduct of an investigation;
- Communicate and meet without management involvement, the internal auditors, external auditor or outside counsel as necessary; and
- Call a meeting of the Board to consider any matter of concern to the Committee. The Committee shall have direct access to all books, records, facilities and personnel of the Company including to the external and/or internal auditor as it determines this to be advisable. All employees are to cooperate as required by Committee members in matters related to Committee business.

MEETINGS

The Committee shall meet quarterly or more frequently as circumstances dictate.

Meetings of the Committee may be called by:

- The Chair;
- Any member of the Committee;
- Management; or
- The external auditor.

The time and place of meetings of the Committee and the procedure at such meetings shall be determined from time to time by the members thereof provided that:

1. a quorum shall be a majority of the members, present in person or by telephone or other telecommunication device that permits all persons participating in the meeting to speak and hear each other; and
2. notice of the time and place of every meeting shall be given in writing, electronic or other facsimile communication to each member of the Committee at least 24 hours prior to the time fixed for such meeting, provided, however, that a member may in any manner waive a notice of a meeting. Attendance of a member at a meeting is a waiver of notice of that meeting, except where a member attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business on the grounds that the meeting is not lawfully called.

The external auditor shall be invited to attend and be heard at every regular quarterly Committee meeting and have the opportunity to discuss matters with the Committee without the presence of management at such meetings. The Committee will meet in camera with the external auditor at each regular quarterly Committee meeting. The external auditor may also be invited to attend and be heard at other Committee meetings.

There shall be an in-camera session at each quarterly scheduled Committee meeting without management, with in-camera sessions at other Committee meetings as required by any member of the Committee. The Committee shall appoint a Secretary who need not be a director. The minutes of the Committee shall be recorded and maintained by the Secretary.

All Committee members are expected to attend each meeting. The Chair of the Committee shall report the business of the meeting at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Administration:

1. The Committee annually reviews its mandate and recommends any changes to the Corporate Governance & Social Responsibility Committee.
2. The Committee annually completes a self-assessment survey and reviews the Committee's financial literacy and independence.

External Auditor:

3. As required by the Board, the external auditor reports directly to the Committee.
4. The Committee must recommend to the Board;
 - a) the external auditor to be nominated for purposes of preparing or issuing an auditor's report or performing other audit, review or attest services for Empire; and
 - b) the compensation of the external auditor.
5. The Committee is directly responsible for overseeing the work of the external auditor engaged for the purpose of preparing or issuing the Auditor's Report or performing other audit, review or attest services for Empire, including establishing and monitoring audit quality indicators, the resolution of disagreements between management and the external auditor regarding financial reporting.

6. The Committee must pre-approve all non-audit services to be provided to Empire or its subsidiary entities by Empire's external auditor. The Committee has established a policy for certain pre-approvals and has delegated to the Chair of the Committee the authority to pre-approve the non-audit services, with such pre-approval presented to the Committee at the next scheduled Committee meeting following such pre-approval.

Without limiting the foregoing, de minimis non-audit services may be performed by Empire's external auditor without prior approval of the Committee if:

- a) the aggregate amount of all these non-audit services that were not pre-approved is reasonably expected to constitute no more than \$100,000 of the total audit fees paid by Empire and its subsidiaries to Empire's external auditor during the fiscal year in which the services are provided;
- b) Empire or subsidiaries of Empire, as the case may be, did not recognize the services as non-audit services at the time of the engagement; and
- c) the services are promptly brought to the attention of the Committee of Empire and approved, prior to the completion of the audit, by the Committee or by the Chair of the Committee, who has been granted authority to pre-approve non-audit engagements.

The Committee has instructed management that, to obtain pre-approval, management must detail the work to be performed by the external auditor and obtain the assurance from the external auditor that the proposed work does not impair their independence.

7. The Committee reviews with the external auditor and management all major accounting policies and practices adopted, any proposed changes in major accounting policies, the presentation and impact of significant risks and uncertainties and key estimates and judgments of management that may be material to financial reporting. The Committee shall also review any significant changes to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) or its application.
8. The Committee must review and approve Empire's hiring policies regarding partners, employees and former partners and employees of the present and former external auditor of Empire.
9. The Committee ensures through enquiry that the external auditor is in good standing with the Canadian Public Accountability Board (CPAB) and that the lead partner and other partners fulfil the rotation requirements. The Committee also reviews that the relationship with the external auditor and Empire management is independent with consideration to the requirements set out by the Canadian Securities Administrators and CPA Canada.
10. The Committee receives from the external auditor an outline of the annual audit scope, plan, resources, reliance on management and progress reports against that plan.
11. The Committee reviews the Auditor Report with the external auditor:
 - a) significant findings during the year and management's response thereto;
 - b) any difficulties encountered in the course of their audits, including any restrictions to the scope of their work or access to required information; and
 - c) any changes required to the planned scope of their audit or quarterly reviews.

Risk Management:

12. The Committee annually reviews the adequacy and quality of the insurance coverage maintained by the Company.
13. The Committee periodically reviews the Enterprise Risk Management framework for the Company and assesses the adequacy and completeness of the process for identifying and assessing the key risks facing the Company.
14. The Committee ensures that primary oversight responsibility for each of the key risks identified in the Enterprise Risk Management framework is assigned to the Board or one of its committees.
15. The Committee reviews the governance of significant business process change and information technology projects.
16. The Committee reviews the Company's privacy and data security risk exposure and measures taken to protect the security and integrity of its management information systems and customer data.
17. The Committee reviews the work plan and progress on implementation of major information technology system changes and receives updates on the information system infrastructure.
18. The Committee periodically reviews Environmental Compliance and Litigation reports from management.
19. The Committee periodically reviews the Company's major financial risk exposures (including foreign exchange and interest rate) and management's initiatives to control such exposures, including the use of financial derivatives and hedging activities.
20. The Committee reviews the status of compliance with laws and regulations and the scope and status of systems designed to ensure compliance therewith, and receives reports from management, legal counsel and other third parties as determined by the Committee on such matters, as well as major legislative and regulatory developments which could impact the Company's contingent liabilities and risks.

Financial Management and Reporting:

21. The Committee reviews and recommends to the Board approval of Empire's interim and annual financial statements, Management's Discussion and Analysis, and quarterly financial and material news releases prior to public disclosure of this information.
22. The Committee reviews and recommends to the Board approval of the Empire dividends.
23. The Committee reviews and recommends to the Board approval of share buy backs and normal course issuer bids.
24. The Committee reviews the disclosures that are financial in nature contained in the Annual Report and Annual Information Form.
25. The Committee reviews the applicable metrics and information contained in the Company's Sustainable Business Report in order to provide proper measurement and disclosure oversight.

26. The Committee ensures that adequate disclosure procedures are in place for the review of Empire's public disclosure of financial information extracted or derived from Empire's financial statements, and must periodically assess the adequacy of those disclosure procedures.
27. The Committee reviews the disclosure controls and procedures and internal controls on financial reporting, including any significant deficiencies or material non-compliance with such controls and procedures.
28. The Committee reviews the Corporate Disclosure Policy and the Disclosure Committee Mandate.
29. The Committee reviews all findings of regulatory agency examinations concerning financial matters of the Company and will make recommendations to the Board to address these matters.
30. The Committee establishes procedures for:
 - a) the receipt, retention and treatment of complaints received by Empire regarding accounting, internal accounting controls, or auditing matters; and
 - b) the confidential, anonymous submission by employees of Empire of concerns regarding questionable accounting or auditing matters.
31. The Committee reviews the status and adequacy of the Company's efforts to ensure its businesses are conducted and its facilities are operated in an ethical, legally compliant and socially responsible way, and recommends to the Board, for approval, policy changes and program initiatives considered advisable.

Internal Audit:

32. The Committee annually reviews and approves the Internal Audit Charter and Annual Plan.
33. The Committee receives quarterly reports from, and meets in camera with, the Vice President, Internal Audit.
34. The Committee receives quarterly reports from the Vice President, Internal Audit on Ethics Line reporting matters administered by Internal Audit.
35. The Committee ensures that the Internal Audit function is independent of management and has sufficient resources to carry out its mandate.
36. The Committee approves the appointment, replacement or termination of the Vice President, Internal Audit.