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# Section 1: S-8 (INITIAL REGISTRATION STATEMENT FOR SECURITIES TO BE OFFERED TO EMPLOYEES)

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on  
May 1, 2018  
Registration No. 333-\_\_\_\_\_

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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20549

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FORM S-8  
REGISTRATION STATEMENT UNDER  
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

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**CONNECTONE BANCORP, INC.**  
(Exact name of Company as specified in its charter)

**New Jersey**  
(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation)

**52-1273725**  
(IRS Employer Identification No.)

**301 Sylvan Avenue**  
**Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey**  
(Address of principal executive offices)

**07632**  
(Zip Code)

**2017 EQUITY COMPENSATION PLAN**  
(Full title of the plan)

**Frank Sorrentino III**  
**ConnectOne Bancorp, Inc.**  
**301 Sylvan Avenue**  
**Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632**  
(Name and address of agent for service)

**(201) 816-8900**  
(Telephone number, including area code of agent for service)

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, a smaller reporting company or an emerging growth company. See definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer," "smaller reporting company," and "emerging growth company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer

Non-accelerated filer (do not check if a smaller reporting company)

Accelerated filer X

Smaller reporting company

Emerging growth company

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with

any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 7(a)(2)(B) of the Securities Act.

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**CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE**

Title of Securities to be Registered	Amount to be Registered	Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Share (2)	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price	Amount of Registration Fee
Common Stock, no par value per share and interests of participation in the Plan	750,000 (1)	\$26.80	\$20,100,000	\$2,502.45

(1) Maximum number of shares authorized for issuance pursuant to the Registrant's 2017 Stock Option Plan (the "Plan"). This Registration Statement also relates to such indeterminate number of additional shares of common stock of the Registrant as may be issuable as a result of stock splits, stock dividends or similar transactions, as described in the Plan.

(2) Estimated solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee and based upon the average of the high and low prices reported for the Registrant's stock as of April 30, 2018 in accordance with Rule 457(h)(1).

In addition, pursuant to Rule 416(c) under the Securities Act of 1933, this Registration Statement also covers an indeterminate amount of interests to be offered or sold to prevent dilution resulting from certain capital changes affecting the Registrant.

## PART II

### INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT

#### **Item 3. Incorporation of Documents by Reference.**

The Company is subject to the informational requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act") and, accordingly, files periodic reports and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"). Reports, proxy statements and other information concerning the Company filed with the SEC may be inspected and copies may be obtained (at prescribed rates) at the SEC's Public Reference Section 100 F Street, N.E., Room 1580 Washington, DC 20549. The Commission also maintains a Website that contains copies of such material. The address of the Commission's Website is <http://www.sec.gov>.

The following documents filed with the SEC are hereby incorporated by reference into this Registration Statement:

- (a) the Registrant's annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2017 filed under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 on March 6, 2018, which contains audited financial statements for the Registrant's latest fiscal year for which such statements have been filed;
- (b) the Registrant's current reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on January 11, 2018, January 16, 2018, January 17, 2018, January 25, 2018, March 13, 2018, March 28, 2018, April 13, 2018 and April 26, 2018; and
- (c) the description of the Registrant's common stock contained in the Registrant's Registration Statement on Form 8-A (File No. 000-11486) filed with the Commission on June 5, 1996 under Section 12(g) of the Exchange Act, including any amendments or reports filed for the purpose of updating such description.

In addition, all documents subsequently filed by the Company with the SEC pursuant to Sections 12, 13(a), 14 and 15(d) of the Exchange Act after the effective date of this Registration Statement, but prior to the filing of a post-effective amendment which indicates that all securities offered hereby have been sold or which deregisters all securities then remaining unsold, shall be deemed to be incorporated by reference in this Registration Statement and to be part hereof from the respective date of filing of such documents.

Any statement contained in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference shall be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this Registration Statement to the extent that a statement contained herein or in any other subsequently filed document which also is incorporated or is deemed to be incorporated by reference herein modified or superseded such statement. Any such statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this Registration Statement.

**Item 4. Description of Securities.**

Not applicable.

**Item 5. Interests of Named Experts and Counsel.**

Not applicable.

**Item 6. Indemnification of Directors and Officers.**

Subsection (2) of Section 3-5, Title 14A of the New Jersey Business Corporation Act empowers a corporation to indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, arbitrative or investigative (other than an action by or in the right of the corporation), by reason of the fact that he is or was a corporate agent (i.e., a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation or a person serving at the request of the corporation as a director, officer, trustee, employee or agent of another corporation or enterprise), against reasonable costs (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines, penalties and amounts paid in settlement incurred by him in connection with such action, suit or proceeding if he acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the corporation, and, with respect to any criminal proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful.

Subsection (3) of Section 3-5 empowers a corporation to indemnify a corporate agent against reasonable costs (including attorneys' fees) incurred by him in connection with any proceeding by or in the right of the corporation to procure a judgment in its favor which involves such corporate agent by reason of the fact that he is or was a corporate agent if he acted in good faith and in a manner reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the corporation, except that no indemnification may be made in respect of any claim, issue or matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged to be liable to the corporation unless and only to the extent that the Superior Court of New Jersey or the court in which such action or suit was brought shall determine that despite the adjudication of liability, such person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for such expenses which the court shall deem proper.

Subsection (4) of Section 3-5 provides that to the extent that a corporate agent has been successful in the defense of any action, suit or proceeding referred to in subsections (2) and (3) or in the defense of any claim, issue or matter therein, he shall be indemnified against expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred by him in connection therewith.

Subsection (5) of Section 3-5 provides that a corporation may indemnify a corporate agent in a specific case if it is determined that indemnification is proper because the corporate agent met the applicable standard of conduct, and such determination is made by any of the following: (a) the board of directors or a committee thereof, acting by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of disinterested directors; (b) independent legal counsel, if there is no quorum of disinterested directors or if the disinterested directors empowers counsel to make the determination; or (c) the shareholders.

Subsection (8) of Section 3-5 provides that the indemnification provisions in the law shall not exclude any other rights to indemnification that a director or officer may be entitled to under a provision of the certificate of incorporation, a by-law, an agreement, a vote of shareholders, or otherwise. That subsection explicitly permits indemnification for liabilities and expenses incurred in proceedings brought by or in the right of the corporation (derivative proceedings). The only limit on indemnification of directors and officers imposed by that subsection is that a corporation may not indemnify a director or officer if a judgment has established that the director's or officer's acts or omissions were a breach of his or her duty of loyalty, not in good faith, involved a knowing violation of the law, or resulted in receipt of an improper personal benefit.

Subsection (9) of Section 3-5 provides that a corporation is empowered to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of a director or officer against any expenses or liabilities incurred in any proceeding by reason of that person being or having been a director or officer, whether or not the corporation would have the power to indemnify that person against expenses and liabilities under other provisions of the law.

The Registrant's Restated Certificate of Incorporation contains the following provision regarding indemnification:

“Every person who is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation, or of any corporation which he served as such at the request of the corporation, shall be indemnified by the corporation to the fullest extent permitted by law against all expenses and liabilities reasonably incurred by or imposed upon him, in connection with any proceeding to which he may be made, or threatened to be made, a party, or in which he may become involved by reason of his being or having been a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation, or of such other corporation, whether or not he is a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation or such other corporation at the time that the expenses or liabilities are incurred.”

**Item 7. Exemption From Registration Claimed.**

Not applicable.

**Item 8. Exhibits.**

The following exhibits are filed with this Registration Statement.

Exhibit Number	Description of Exhibit
4.1	2017 Equity Compensation Plan
5	Opinion of Windels Marx Lane & Mittendorf, LLP
23(a)	Consent of Crowe Horwath LLP
23(b)	Consent of Windels Marx Lane & Mittendorf, LLP (included in the Opinion filed as Exhibit 5 hereto)

**Item 9. Undertakings.**

The registrant hereby undertakes:

(a)(1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this Registration Statement to:

(i) Include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act;

(ii) Reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the Registration Statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information in the Registration Statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20% change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the “Calculation of Registration Fee” table in the effective registration statement.

(iii) Include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the Registration Statement or any material change to such information in the Registration Statement; provided, however, that paragraphs (a)(1)(i) and (a)(1)(ii) do not apply because this Registration Statement is on Form S-8 and the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by the registrant pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act that are incorporated by reference to the Registration Statement.

(2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(b) The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes that, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each filing of the registrant's annual report pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Exchange Act that is incorporated by reference in the Registration Statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(c) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted to the directors, officers and controlling persons of the registrant pursuant to the foregoing provision, or otherwise, the registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit, or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and will be governed by final adjudication of such issue.

## SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the Registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-8 and has duly caused this registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the Borough of Englewood Cliffs, State of New Jersey, on the 1st day of May, 2018. Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this registration statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the date indicated.

### CONNECTONE BANCORP, INC.

<b>Signature &amp; Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>/s/ Frank Sorrentino III</i> Frank Sorrentino III Chairman & Chief Executive Officer (Principal Executive Officer)	May 1, 2018
<i>/s/ William S. Burns</i> William S. Burns Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer (Principal Financial and Accounting Officer)	May 1, 2018
<i>/s/ Frank Baier</i> Frank Baier Director	May 1, 2018
<i>/s/ Stephen Boswell</i> Stephen Boswell Director	May 1, 2018
<i>/s/ Frederick Fish</i> Frederick Fish Director	May 1, 2018
<i>/s/ Frank Huttle III</i> Frank Huttle III Director	May 1, 2018
<i>/s/ Michael Kempner</i> Michael Kempner Director	May 1, 2018
<i>/s/ Alexander Bol</i> Alexander Bol Director	May 1, 2018
<i>/s/ Nicholas Minoia</i> Nicholas Minoia Director	May 1, 2018
<i>/s/ Joseph Parisi Jr.</i> Joseph Parisi Jr. Director	May 1, 2018
<i>/s/ Harold Schechter</i> Harold Schechter	May 1, 2018



Director

*/s/ William Thompson*

William Thompson

Director

May 1, 2018

**EXHIBIT INDEX TO REGISTRATION  
STATEMENT ON FORM S-8  
OF CONNECTONE BANCORP. INC.**

Exhibit Number	Description of Exhibit
<a href="#">4.1</a>	<a href="#">2017 Equity Compensation Plan</a>
<a href="#">5</a>	<a href="#">Opinion of Windels Marx Lane &amp; Mittendorf, LLP</a>
<a href="#">23(a)</a>	<a href="#">Consent of Crowe Horwath LLP</a>
<a href="#">23(b)</a>	<a href="#">Consent of Windels Marx Lane &amp; Mittendorf, LLP (included in the Opinion filed as Exhibit 5 hereto)</a>

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[\(Back To Top\)](#)

## **Section 2: EX-4.1 (2017 EQUITY COMPENSATION PLAN)**

**Exhibit 4.1**

### **2017 EQUITY COMPENSATION PLAN**

#### **Section 1. Purpose**

The 2017 Equity Compensation Plan (the "Plan") is hereby established to foster and promote the long-term success of ConnectOne Bancorp, Inc. (the "Company"), the holding company of ConnectOne Bank (the "Bank"), and its shareholders by providing members of management, including employees and management officials, with an equity interest in the Company. The Plan will assist the Company in attracting and retaining the highest quality of experienced persons to serve as employees and Directors and in aligning the interests of such persons more closely with the interests of the Company's shareholders by encouraging such parties to maintain an equity interest in the Company.

#### **Section 2. Definitions**

Capitalized terms not specifically defined elsewhere herein shall have the following meaning:

"Act" means the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended from time to time, and any rules and regulations promulgated thereunder.

"Award" means the grant of Options, Restricted Stock, Performance Units or Deferred Stock hereunder.

"Board" means the Board of Directors of the Company.

"Change in Control" means any of the following:

- (i) a reorganization, merger, consolidation or sale of all or substantially all of the assets of the Company, or a similar transaction, in any case in which the holders of the voting stock of the Company prior to such transaction do not hold (in substantially the same proportion) a majority of the voting power of the resulting entity (or an entity that wholly owns the resulting entity);
  - (ii) individuals who constitute the Incumbent Board (as herein defined) of the Company cease for any reason to constitute a majority thereof; or
  - (iii) any person becomes the beneficial owner of securities representing 25% or more of the combined voting stock of the Company *other than* (1) the Participant or any group that includes the Participant or (2) an entity referred to in the parenthetical to clause (i) of this definition.
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For these purposes, "Incumbent Board" means the Board of Directors of the Company on the date hereof and any person who becomes a director subsequent to the date hereof whose election was approved by a voting of at least three-quarters of the directors comprising the Incumbent Board or whose nomination for election by members or stockholders was approved by the same nominating committee serving under an Incumbent Board. *However*, the Incumbent Board will not include anyone who becomes a member of the Board of Directors as a result of either (i) an actual or threatened election contest or proxy or consent solicitation on behalf of anyone other than the Board of the Directors, including as a result of any appointment, nomination or other agreement intended to avoid or settle a contest or solicitation, or (ii) agreement with any third party.

"Committee" means the Compensation Committee of the Board, or such successor committee of the Board undertaking the responsibilities currently exercised by the Compensation Committee. Each member of the Committee shall at all times qualify as a "Non-Employee Director" within the meaning of SEC Rule 16b-3(b)(3) and an "outside director" within the meaning of Regulation 1.162-27 under Code Section 162(m).

"Common Stock" or "Stock" means the common stock, no par value per share, of the Company.

"Company" means ConnectOne Bancorp, Inc. and any present or future subsidiary or parent corporations of ConnectOne Bancorp, Inc. (as defined in Section 424 of the Code) or any successor to such corporations.

"Deferred Stock" means a right, granted under this Plan, to receive Stock or other Awards or a combination thereof at the end of a specified deferral period.

"Disability" shall mean the Participant's inability for a period of three (3) consecutive months, or for six (6) months during any twelve (12) month period, to perform the requirements of the Participant's position with the Company due to physical or mental impairment; provided, however, with respect to a Participant who has been granted an Incentive Stock Option such term shall have the meaning set forth in Section 422 (c)(6) of the Code. For purposes of Restricted Stock Awards under Section 8, "Disability" shall be as defined in Section 8.3(a)(1). The determination of whether a Disability exists will be made by the Committee.

"Fair Market Value" means, with respect to shares of Common Stock, the fair market value as determined by the Committee in good faith and in a manner established by the Committee from time to time, taking into account such factors as the Committee shall deem relevant, including the book value of the Common Stock and, to the extent the Common Stock is traded on a national securities exchange, the Fair Market Value of the Common Stock shall be the closing price of the Common Stock on the date the Fair Market Value is determined.

"Incentive Stock Option" means an option to purchase shares of Common Stock granted to a Participant under the Plan which is intended to meet the requirements of Section 422 of the Code.

“Incumbent Board” means the Board of Directors of the Company on the date of stockholders approval of this Plan, provided that any person becoming a director subsequent to such date whose election was approved by a vote of at least three quarters of the directors comprising the Incumbent Board, or whose nomination for election by stockholders was approved by the same nominating committee serving under an Incumbent Board, shall be considered as though such individual were a member of the Incumbent Board.

"Management Official" means an employee of the Company, a non-employee member of the Board, a member of any advisory committee or any other service provider to the Company.

"Non-Qualified Stock Option" means an option to purchase shares of Common Stock granted to a Participant under the Plan which is not intended to be an Incentive Stock Option.

"Option" means an Incentive Stock Option or a Non-Qualified Stock Option granted hereunder.

"Participant" means a Management Official selected by the Committee to receive an Award under the Plan.

“Performance Cycle or Cycle” means the period selected by the Committee during which the performance of the Company is measured for the purpose of determining the extent to which an award of Performance Units has been earned. Applicable performance goals relating to each Performance Cycle shall be established not later than the earlier of (1) 90 days after the beginning of any performance period applicable to such Performance Units or (2) the time 25% of such performance period has elapsed.

“Performance Goals” means the objectives established by the Committee for a Performance Cycle, for the purpose of determining and measuring the extent to which Performance Units, which have been contingently awarded for such Cycle, have been earned. For purposes of qualifying Awards intended by the Committee to be exempt under Code Section 162(m) and regulations thereunder, the Committee may use one or more of the following as Performance Goals: (1) earnings or earnings growth; (2) earnings per share; (3) return on equity, assets, capital employed or investment; (4) revenues or revenue growth; (5) gross profit; (6) gross margin; (7) net income or net income per common share; (8) operating margin; (9) operating cash flow; (10) stock price appreciation and total shareholder return, (11) economic profit or value created, (12) interest expense, (13) strategic business criteria, (14) efficiency ratio, (15) growth in assets, loan and/or deposits, (16) net interest margin, (17) loan production volume, (18) asset quality, including net charge offs, levels of classified assets and non-performing loan levels, (19) interest rate risk sensitivity, (21) capital compliance, or any combination of any of the forgoing. Targeted level or levels of performance with respect to such business criteria may be established at such levels and in such terms as the Committee may determine, in its discretion, including in absolute terms, as a goal relative to performance in prior periods, or as a goal compared to the performance of one or more comparable companies or an index covering multiple companies. Performance Goals may be particular to a Participant, the Company, subsidiary or other business segment of the Company, or may be based on the performance of the Company as a whole.

“Performance Units or Units” means a fixed or variable dollar or Common Stock share denominated Unit contingently awarded under Section 9 of the Plan.

"Plan" means the 2017 Equity Compensation Plan.

“Restricted Stock Award” means a grant of shares of Common Stock pursuant to Section 8 hereof.

“SEC” means the Securities and Exchange Commission.

"Termination for Cause" means termination because of Participant's intentional failure to perform stated duties, personal dishonesty, willful violation of any law, rule regulation (other than traffic violations or similar offenses) or final cease and desist order issued by any regulatory agency having jurisdiction over the Participant or the Company.

### **Section 3. Administration**

(a) The Plan shall be administered by the Committee. Among other things, the Committee shall have authority, subject to the terms of the Plan, to grant Awards, to determine the type of Award granted, to determine the individuals to whom and the time or times at which Awards may be granted, to determine whether Options are to be Incentive Options or Non-Qualified Stock Options (subject to the requirements of the Code, which provide that only employees may receive Incentive Options), to determine the terms and conditions of any Award granted hereunder, including whether to impose a vesting period more stringent than the minimum set forth in Section 12(a), and if the Award is an Option, the exercise price thereof, subject to the requirements of this Plan.

(b) Subject to the other provisions of the Plan, the Committee shall have authority to adopt, amend, alter and repeal such administrative rules, guidelines and practices governing the operation of the Plan as it shall from time to time consider advisable, to interpret the provisions of the Plan and any Award and to decide all disputes arising in connection with the Plan. The Committee may correct any defect or supply any omission or reconcile any inconsistency in the Plan or in any grant agreement in the manner and to the extent it shall deem appropriate to carry the Plan into effect, in its sole and absolute discretion. The Committee's decision and interpretations shall be final and binding. Any action of the Committee with respect to the administration of the Plan shall be taken pursuant to a majority vote or by the unanimous written consent of its members.

(c) The Committee may employ such legal counsel, consultants and agents as it may deem desirable for the administration of the Plan and may rely upon any opinion received from any such counsel or consultant and any computation received from any such consultant or agent.

#### **Section 4. Eligibility and Participation**

Management Officials of the Company shall be eligible to participate in the Plan. The Participants under the Plan shall be selected from time to time by the Committee, in its sole discretion, from among those eligible, and the Committee shall determine in its sole discretion the numbers of shares to be covered by the Award or Awards granted to each Participant. Options intended to qualify as Incentive Stock Options shall be granted only to persons who are eligible to receive such options under Section 422 of the Code; i.e., employees of the Company.

#### **Section 5. Shares of Stock Available for Awards**

(a) The maximum number of shares of Common Stock or equivalents which may be issued under the Plan is 750,000, subject to the adjustments as provided in this Section 5 and Section 11, to the extent applicable. If an Award granted under this Plan expires or terminates before exercise or is forfeited for any reason, without a payment in the form of Common Stock being granted to the Participant, the shares of Common Stock subject to such Award, to the extent of such expiration, termination or forfeiture, shall again be available for subsequent Award grant under the Plan. Shares withheld pursuant to Section 12(g) in connection with tax obligations shall not be available for subsequent Awards under the Plan.

(b) In the event that any stock dividend, stock split, reverse stock split or combination, extraordinary cash dividend, creation of a class of equity securities, recapitalization, reclassification, reorganization, merger, consolidation, split-up, spin-off, combination, exchange of shares, warrants or rights offering to purchase Common Stock at a price substantially below Fair Market Value, or other similar transaction affects the Common Stock such that an adjustment is required in order to preserve the benefits or potential benefits intended to be granted or made available under the Plan to Participants, the Committee shall proportionately and appropriately adjust equitably any or all of (i) the maximum number and kind of shares of Common Stock in respect of which Awards may be granted under the Plan to Participants, (ii) the number and kind of shares of Common Stock subject to outstanding Options held by Participants, and (iii) the exercise price with respect to any Options held by Participants, without changing the aggregate purchase price as to which such Options remain exercisable, and if considered appropriate, the Committee may make provision for a cash payment with respect to any outstanding Options held by a Participant, provided that no adjustment shall be made pursuant to this Section if such adjustment would cause the Plan to fail to comply with Section 422 of the Code with regard to any Incentive Stock Options granted hereunder or fail to comply with the requirements of Rule 16b-3 under the Act or any successor or replacement regulation. No fractional Shares shall be issued on account of any such adjustment.

(c) Any adjustments under this Section will be made by the Committee, whose determination as to what adjustments, will be made and the extent thereof will be final, binding and conclusive.

## **Section 6. Non-Qualified Stock Options**

### **6.1 Grant of Non-Qualified Stock Options.**

Subject to the provisions hereof, the Committee may, from time to time, grant Non-Qualified Stock Options to Participants upon such terms and conditions as the Committee may determine, and may grant Non-Qualified Stock Options in exchange for and upon surrender of previously granted Options under this Plan. Non-Qualified Stock Options granted under this Plan are subject to the following terms and conditions:

(a) Price. The purchase price per share of Common Stock deliverable upon the exercise of each Non-Qualified Stock Option shall be determined by the Committee on the date the option is granted. The purchase price shall not be less than one hundred percent (100%) of the Fair Market Value of the Common Stock on the date of grant. Shares may be purchased only upon full payment of the purchase price.

(b) Terms of Options. The term during which each Non-Qualified Stock Option may be exercised shall be determined by the Committee, but in no event shall a Non-Qualified Stock Option be exercisable in whole or in part more than ten (10) years from the date of grant.

(c) Termination of Service. Except as provided herein, unless otherwise determined by the Committee, upon the termination of the service of a Participant who is not an employee for any reason other than Disability, death or Termination for Cause, the Participant's Non-Qualified Stock Options shall be exercisable only as to those shares which were immediately exercisable by the participant at the date of termination and only for one (1) year from the date of such termination. In the event of death or termination of service of a Participant who is not an employee as a result of Disability of the Participant, all Non-Qualified Stock Options held by the Participant, whether or not exercisable at such time, shall be exercisable by the Participant or his legal representatives, or beneficiaries of the Participant for one (1) year from the date of such termination. Upon the termination of the service of a Participant who is a common law employee of the Company for any reason other than Disability, death or Termination for Cause, the Participant's Non-Qualified Stock Options shall be exercised only as to those shares which were immediately exercisable by the Participant at the date of termination and only for a period of three (3) months following termination. In the event of death or termination of service of a Participant who is a common law employee of the Company as a result of Disability of any such Participant, all Non-Qualified Stock Options held by such Participant, whether or not exercisable at such time, shall be exercisable by the Participant or his legal representatives or beneficiaries of the Participant for one (1) year or such longer period as is determined by the Committee following the date of the Participant's death or termination of service due to Disability, provided that in no event shall the period extend beyond the expiration of the Non-Qualified Stock Option term. Notwithstanding any other provisions set forth herein to the contrary nor any provision contained in any agreement relating to the award of an option, in the event of a Termination for Cause, all of the Participant's Non-Qualified Stock Options shall immediately expire upon such Termination for Cause and shall not be exercisable, regardless of whether such Non-Qualified Stock Options were vested.

(d) Transferability. Except as provided for hereunder, no Option granted under the Plan shall be assignable or transferable by a Participant, and any attempted disposition thereof shall be null and void and of no effect. Nothing contained herein shall be deemed to prevent transfers by will or by the applicable laws of descent and distribution.

## **Section 7. Incentive Stock Options**

### **7.1 Grant of Incentive Stock Options**

The Committee may, from time to time, grant Incentive Stock Options to Management Officials who are employees of the Company. Incentive Stock Options granted pursuant to the Plan shall be subject to the following terms and conditions:

(a) Price. The purchase price per share of Common Stock deliverable upon the exercise of each Incentive Stock Option shall be not less than one hundred percent (100%) of the Fair Market Value of the Common Stock on the date of grant or the par value of the Common Stock, whichever is higher. However, if a Participant owns stock possessing more than ten percent (10%) of the total combined voting power of all classes of Common Stock, the purchase price per share of Common Stock deliverable upon the exercise of each Incentive Stock Option shall not be less than one hundred ten percent (110%) of the Fair Market Value of the Common Stock on the date of grant or the par value of the Common Stock, whichever is greater. Shares may be purchased only upon payment of the full purchase price.

(b) Amounts of Options. Incentive Stock Options may be granted to any Management Official who is an employee of the Company in such amounts as determined by the Committee. In the case of an option intended to qualify as an Incentive Stock Option, the aggregate Fair Market Value (determined as of the time the option first becomes exercisable) of the Common Stock with respect to which Incentive Stock Options granted are exercisable for the first time by the Participant during any calendar year shall not exceed \$100,000. The provisions of this Section 7.1(b) shall be construed and applied in accordance with Section 422(d) of the Code and the regulations, if any, promulgated thereunder. To the extent an award is in excess of such limit, it shall be deemed a Non-Qualified Stock Option. The Committee shall have discretion to redesignate options granted as Incentive Stock Options as Non-Qualified Options.



(c) Terms of Options. The term during which each Incentive Stock Option may be exercised shall be determined by the Committee, but in no event shall an Incentive Stock Option be exercisable in whole or in part more than ten (10) years from the date of grant. If at the time an Incentive Stock Option is granted to an employee, the employee owns Common Stock representing more than ten percent (10%) of the total combined voting power of the Company (or, under Section 422(d) of the Code, is deemed to own Common Stock representing more than ten percent (10%) of the total combined voting power of all such classes of Common Stock, by reason of the ownership of such classes of Common Stock, directly or indirectly, by or for any brother, sister, spouse, ancestor or lineal descendent of such employee, or by or for any corporation, partnership, estate or trust of which such employee is a shareholder, partner or beneficiary), the Incentive Stock Option granted to such employee shall not be exercisable after the expiration of five (5) years from the date of grant.

(d) Termination of Service. Except as provided in Section 7.1(e) hereof, upon the termination of a Participant's service for any reason other than Disability, death or Termination for Cause, the Participant's Incentive Stock Options which are then exercisable at the date of termination may only be exercised by the Participant for a period of three (3) months following termination. Notwithstanding any provisions set forth herein nor contained in any Agreement relating to an award of an Option, in the event of Termination for Cause all rights under the Participant's Incentive Stock Options shall expire immediately upon termination, and such Incentive Stock Options shall not be exercisable.

Unless otherwise determined by the Committee, in the event of death or termination of service as a result of Disability of any Participant, all Incentive Stock Options held by such Participant, whether or not exercisable at such time, shall be exercisable by the Participant or the Participant's legal representatives or beneficiaries of the Participant for one (1) year following the date of the participant's death or termination of employment as a result of Disability. In no event shall the exercise period extend beyond the expiration of the Incentive Stock Option term.

(e) Transferability. No Incentive Option granted under the Plan shall be assignable or transferable by a Participant, except pursuant to the laws of descent and distribution, and any attempted distribution shall be null and void and of no effect.

(f) Compliance with Code. The options granted under this Section 7 of the Plan are intended to qualify as incentive stock options within the meaning of Section 422 of the Code, but the Company makes no warranty as to the qualification of any option as an incentive stock option within the meaning of Section 422 of the Code. A Participant shall notify the Committee in writing in the event that he disposes of Common Stock acquired upon exercise of an Incentive Stock Option within the two-year period following the date the Incentive Stock Option was granted or within the one-year period following the date he received Common Stock upon the exercise of an Incentive Stock Option and shall comply with any other requirements imposed by the Company in order to enable the Company to secure the related income tax deduction to which it will be entitled in such event under the Code.

## Section 8. Restricted Stock

### 8.1 Grant of Restricted Stock Awards

(a) Grants. The Committee may grant Restricted Stock Awards entitling recipients to acquire shares of Common Stock, subject to the right of the Company to require forfeiture of such shares from the Participant in the event that conditions specified by the Committee in the applicable Restricted Stock Award are not satisfied prior to the end of the applicable restriction period or periods established by the Committee for such Restricted Award. During the restricted period, shares constituting a Restricted Stock Award may not be transferred, although a Participant shall be entitled to exercise other indicia of ownership, including the right to vote such shares and receive any dividends declared on such shares.

(b) Terms and Conditions. Subject to Section 8.2, the Committee shall determine the terms and conditions of any such Restricted Stock Award, including the conditions for forfeiture.

(c) Stock Certificates. The Company may cause shares issued as part of a Restricted Stock Award to be issued in either book entry form or certificated form. Shares issued in book entry form will be maintained in an account at the Company's transfer agent, and only released to a Participant upon satisfaction of any required restrictions. Any stock certificates issued in respect of a Restricted Stock Award shall be registered in the name of the Participant and, unless otherwise determined by the Committee, deposited by the Participant, together with a stock power endorsed in blank, with the Company (or its designee). At the expiration of the applicable restriction periods, the Company (or such designee) shall deliver the certificates no longer subject to such restrictions to the Participant or if the Participant has died, to the beneficiary designated, in a manner determined by the Committee, by a Participant to receive amounts due or exercise rights of the Participant in the event of the Participant's death (the "Designated Beneficiary"). In the absence of an effective designation by a Participant, Designated Beneficiary shall mean the Participant's estate.

### 8.2 Distribution of Restricted Stock Awards

(a) Restricted Stock Awards shall not be distributed and the restrictions pertaining to such award shall not expire earlier than –

- (1) upon the completion or satisfaction of the conditions specified by the Committee in the Award;
- (2) a Participant's separation from service;
- (3) the date a Participant becomes disabled (as defined in Section 8.3(b));

(4) upon the death of a Participant;

(5) a change in the ownership or effective control of the Company, or in the ownership of a substantial portion of the assets of the Company, as described in Section 11(c) or, if in conflict therewith, to the extent necessary, by the Secretary of Treasury under regulations issued under Code section 409A; or

(6) upon the occurrence of an unforeseeable emergency.

(b) A payment of a Participant's vested interest in a Restricted Stock Award may, in the discretion of the Committee, be made in the event of a Participant's Disability, upon the occurrence of a Change-in-Control or Unforeseeable Emergency (as defined below). Payments in settlement of a Participant's vested interest in a Restricted Stock Award shall be made as soon as practicable after such occurrence or after the Participant otherwise vests in such award. For the purposes of section 409A of the Code, the entitlement to a series of installment payments will be treated as the entitlement to a single payment.

(c) Other provisions of the Plan notwithstanding, if, upon the written application of a Participant, the Committee determines that the Participant has an unforeseeable emergency (as defined in Section 8.3(b)), the Committee may, in its sole discretion, direct the payment to the Participant of all or a portion of the balance of his or her vested interest in a Restricted Stock Award in a lump sum payment, provided that any such withdrawal shall be limited by the Committee to the amount reasonably necessary to meet the emergency, including amounts needed to pay any income taxes or penalties reasonably anticipated to result from the payment. No payment may be made to the extent that such emergency is or may be relieved through reimbursement or compensation from insurance or otherwise, by liquidation of the Participant's assets or to the extent the liquidation of such assets would not cause severe financial hardship.

### 8.3 Definitions for Restricted Stock Awards

(a) For purposes of this Section 8, the following definitions shall apply-

(1) "Disability" shall mean (i) the inability of a Participant to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than twelve (12) months, or (ii) if the Participant is, by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which can be expected to result in death or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than twelve (12) months, receiving income replacement benefits for a period of not less than three (3) months under an accident and health plan covering employees of the Company.

(2) “Unforeseeable Emergency” shall mean a severe financial hardship to the Participant resulting from an illness or accident of the Participant, the Participant’s spouse, or a dependent (as defined in Code section 152(a)) of the Participant, loss of the Participant’s property due to casualty, or other similar extraordinary and unforeseeable circumstances arising as a result of events beyond the control of the Participant.

## **Section 9. Performance Units**

### **9.1 Authority of Committee**

Subject to the provisions of the Plan, the Committee shall have sole and complete authority to determine (i) the Participants who shall receive Performance Units and the number of Units awarded for each Performance Cycle; (ii) the duration of each Performance Cycle; and (iii) the value of or valuation methodology for each Performance Unit. Performance Units may be denominated in fixed or variable dollar amounts, or may be made equal to one or more shares of Common Stock. There may be more than one Performance Cycle in existence at any one time, and the duration of such Performance Cycles may differ, as determined by the Committee.

### **9.2 Performance Goals**

The Committee shall establish Performance Goals for each Cycle on the basis of such criteria and to accomplish such objectives as the Committee may from time to time select. During any Cycle, the Committee may adjust the Performance Goals for such Cycle as it deems equitable in recognition of unusual or non-recurring events affecting the Corporation or changes in applicable tax laws or accounting principles; provided however, that no such adjustment shall be made with respect to Awards intended by the Committee to qualify as exempt under Code Section 162 (m) if such adjustment would result in the loss of such exemption.

### **9.3 Terms and Conditions**

The Committee shall determine the number of Performance Units that have been earned on the basis of the Company's performance in relation to the established Performance Goals. Performance Units may not be sold, assigned, transferred, pledged or otherwise encumbered, except as herein provided, during the Performance Cycle. Payment for Performance Units shall be in cash or shares of Common Stock, in such proportions as the Committee shall determine.

### **9.4 Termination**

A Participant must be a Management Official at the end of a Performance Cycle to be entitled to payment of Performance Units in respect of such Cycle; provided, however, that in the event a Participant ceases to be a Management Official with the Committee’s consent before the end of such Cycle, or upon the occurrence of a Participant's death or Disability prior to the end of such Cycle, the Committee, in its discretion and after taking into consideration the performance of such Participant and the performance of the Company during the Cycle, may authorize payment to such Participant (or the Participant's legal representative) of all or a portion of the Performance Units deemed by the Committee to have been earned by the Participant through the date of termination.

## **Section 10. Deferred Stock**

### 10.1 Awards of Deferred Stock.

The Committee is authorized to grant Deferred Stock to Participants, subject to the following terms and conditions:

### 10.2 Awards and Restrictions.

Issuance of Stock will occur upon expiration of the deferral period, which shall not be less than as set forth in Section 12(a), specified for an Award of Deferred Stock by the Committee at the time of award (or, if permitted by the Committee, as elected by the Participant). In addition, Deferred Stock shall be subject to such restrictions, risk of forfeiture and other terms, if any, as the Committee may impose, which restrictions may lapse at the expiration of the deferral period or at earlier or later specified times, separately or in combination, in installments or otherwise, and under such other circumstances as the Committee may determine at the date of grant or thereafter. Deferred Stock may be satisfied by delivery of Stock, other Awards, or a combination thereof, as determined by the Committee at the date of grant or thereafter.

### 10.2 Forfeiture.

Except as otherwise determined by the Committee, upon termination of employment or service during the applicable deferral period or portion thereof to which forfeiture conditions apply (as provided in the Award document evidencing the Deferred Stock), all Deferred Stock that is at that time subject to such forfeiture conditions shall be forfeited; provided that the Committee may provide, by rule or regulation or in any Award document, or may determine in any individual case, that restrictions or forfeiture conditions relating to Deferred Stock will lapse in whole or in part, including in the event of terminations resulting from specified causes. Deferred Stock subject to a risk of forfeiture may be called "restricted stock units" or otherwise designated by the Committee.

### 10.3 Dividend Accruals.

Cash or stock dividends on the specified number of shares of Stock covered by an Award of Deferred Stock shall be deferred with respect to such Deferred Stock, either as a cash deferral or as additional shares of Restricted Stock, if related to a stock dividend, until the end of the deferral period applicable to the Deferred Stock on which the dividend was paid.

## **Section 11. Extension**

The Committee may, in its sole discretion, extend the dates during which all or any particular Option or Options granted under the Plan may be exercised; provided, however, that no such extension shall be permitted if it would cause Non-Qualified Stock Options or Incentive Stock Options issued under the Plan to fail to comply with Section 409A or 422 of the Code. An election to defer the lapse of restrictions on a Restricted Stock Award shall not take effect until at least twelve (12) months after the date on which the election is made and in the event that an election to defer the lapse of restrictions is made other than in the event of death, disability or the occurrence of an unforeseeable emergency, payment of such award must be deferred for a period of not less than five (5) years from the date that restrictions would have otherwise lapsed. Nothing contained in this provision, or elsewhere in this Plan, shall be construed to provide the Committee with authority to change the exercise price of any Award, other than in connection with any adjustment provided for under Section 5(b) hereof, or such changes as may be approved by the Company's shareholders.

## **Section 12. General Provisions Applicable to Awards**

(a) Each Award under the Plan shall be evidenced by a writing delivered to the Participant specifying the terms and conditions thereof and containing such other terms and conditions not inconsistent with the provisions of the Plan as the Committee considers necessary or advisable to achieve the purposes of the Plan or comply with applicable tax and regulatory laws and accounting principles. Notwithstanding the foregoing, each Award shall be subject to a vesting requirement (or, in the case of Deferred Stock, a deferral period) of not less than one year.

(b) Each Award may be granted alone, in addition to or in relation to any other Award. The terms of each Award need not be identical, and the Committee need not treat Participants uniformly. Except as otherwise provided by the Plan or a particular Award, any determination with respect to an Award may be made by the Committee at the time of grant or at any time thereafter.

(c) In the event of a consolidation, reorganization, merger or sale of all or substantially all of the assets of the Company, in each case in which outstanding shares of Common Stock are exchanged for securities, cash or other property of any other corporation or business entity or in the event of a liquidation of the Company, the Committee will provide for any one or more of the following actions, as to outstanding Awards: (i) provide that such Awards shall be assumed, or equivalent Awards shall be substituted, by the acquiring or succeeding corporation (or an affiliate thereof), provided that any options substituted for Incentive Stock Options shall meet the requirements of Section 424(a) of the Code, (ii) upon written notice to the Participants, provide that all unexercised Options will terminate immediately prior to the consummation of such transaction unless exercised (to the extent then exercisable) by the Participant within a specified period following the date of such notice, (iii) in the event of a merger under the terms of which holders of the Common Stock of the Company will receive upon consummation thereof a cash payment for each share surrendered in the merger (the "Merger Price"), make or provide for a cash payment to the Participants equal to the difference between (A) the Merger Price times the number of shares of Common Stock subject to outstanding Options (to the extent then exercisable at prices not in excess of the Merger Price) and (B) the aggregate exercise price of all such outstanding Options in exchange for the termination of such Options, or (iv) provide that all or any outstanding Awards shall become exercisable in full, or that the restrictions on such Awards shall lapse, immediately prior to such event.

(d) For purposes of the Plan, the following events shall not be deemed a termination of service of a Participant:

(i) a transfer to the employment of the Company from a subsidiary or from the Company to a subsidiary, or from one subsidiary to another, or

(ii) an approved leave of absence for military service or sickness, or for any other purpose approved by the Company, if the Participant's right to reemployment is guaranteed either by a statute or by contract or under the policy pursuant to which the leave of absence was granted or if the Committee otherwise so provides in writing.

(e) The Committee may at any time, and from time to time, amend, modify or terminate the Plan or any outstanding Award held by a Participant, including substituting therefore another Award of the same or a different type or changing the date of exercise or realization, provided that the Participant's consent to each action shall be required unless the Committee determines that the action, taking into account any related action, would not materially and adversely affect the Participant, and further provided that no amendment increasing the number of shares subject to the Plan or decreasing the exercise price for any Option provided for under the Plan may be effectuated without the approval of the shareholders of the Company; provided, however, that no such amendment or modification will be effective if such amendment or modification would cause the Plan to fail to comply with the requirements of Rule 16b-3 under the Act or any successor or replacement regulation. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Committee shall not reprice, adjust or amend the exercise price of any Award previously awarded to any Participant, directly or indirectly, whether through amendment, cancellation and replacement grant, or any other means, nor shall the Committee have any authority to take such action with respect to any Award if any such amendment would cause the Award to fail to comply with or be exempt from Section 409A

(f) The Committee may, in its sole discretion, terminate the Plan (in whole or in part) with respect to one or more Participants and distribute to such affected Participants their vested interest in any Restricted Stock award in a lump sum as soon as reasonably practicable following such termination, but if, and only if, (i) all nonqualified defined contribution deferred compensation plans maintained by the Company and its Affiliates are terminated, (ii) no payments other than payments that would be payable under the terms of the Plan if the termination had not occurred are made within twelve (12) months of the termination of the Plan, (iii) all payments of the vested interest in Restricted Stock awards are made within twenty-four (24) months of the termination of the Plan, and (iv) the Company acknowledges to the Participants that it will not adopt any new nonqualified defined contribution deferred compensation plans at any time within five (5) years following the date of the termination of the Plan.

(g) Tax Withholding

(i) *In General.* The Company shall have the right to deduct from any and all Awards made under the Plan, or to require the Participant, through payroll withholding, cash payment or otherwise, to make adequate provision for, the federal, state, local and foreign taxes, if any, required by law to be withheld by the Company with respect to an Award or the shares acquired pursuant thereto. The Company shall have no obligation to deliver shares of Stock, to release shares of Stock from an escrow, or to make any payment in cash under the Plan until the Company's tax withholding obligations have been satisfied by the Participant.

(ii) *Withholding in Shares.* The Company shall have the right, but not the obligation, to deduct from the shares of Stock issuable to a Participant upon the exercise or settlement of an Award, or to accept from the Participant the tender of, a number of whole shares of Stock having a Fair Market Value, as determined by the Company, equal to all or any part of the tax withholding obligations of the Company. The Fair Market Value of any shares of Stock withheld or tendered to satisfy any such tax withholding obligations shall not exceed the amount determined by the applicable minimum statutory withholding rates.

**Section 13 Miscellaneous**

(a) No person shall have any claim or right to be granted an Award, and the grant of an Award shall not be construed as giving a Participant the right to continued employment or service on the Company's Board. The Company expressly reserves the right at any time to dismiss a Participant free from any liability or claim under the Plan, except as expressly provided in the applicable Award.

(b) Nothing contained in the Plan shall prevent the Company from adopting other or additional compensation arrangements.

(c) Subject to the provisions of the applicable Award, no Participant shall have any rights as a shareholder (including, without limitation, any rights to receive dividends, or non-cash distributions with respect to such shares) with respect to any shares of Common Stock to be distributed under the Plan until he or she becomes the holder thereof.



(d) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary expressed in this Plan, any provisions hereof that vary from or conflict with any applicable Federal or State securities laws (including any regulations promulgated thereunder) shall be deemed to be modified to conform to and comply with such laws.

(e) No member of the Committee shall be liable for any action or determination taken or granted in good faith with respect to this Plan nor shall any member of the Committee be liable for any agreement issued pursuant to this Plan or any grants under it. Each member of the Committee shall be indemnified by the Company against any losses incurred in such administration of the Plan, unless his action constitutes serious and willful misconduct.

(f) Awards may not be granted under the Plan more than ten (10) years after approval of the Plan by the Company's shareholders, but then outstanding Awards may extend beyond such date.

(h) To the extent that State laws shall not have been preempted by any laws of the United States, the Plan shall be construed, regulated, interpreted and administered according to the other laws of the State of New Jersey.

(i) A Participant in the Plan shall have no right to receive payment (in any form) with respect to his or her restricted Stock award until legal and contractual obligations of the Company relating to establishment of the Plan and the making of such payments shall have been complied with in full. In addition, the Company shall impose such restrictions on stock delivered to a Participant hereunder and any other interest constituting a security as it may deem advisable in order to comply with the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, the requirements of any stock exchange or automated quotation system upon which the stock is then listed or quoted, any applicable state securities laws, any provision of the Company's certificate of incorporation or bylaws, or any other law, regulation, or binding contract to which the Company is a party.

-16-

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[\(Back To Top\)](#)

## **Section 3: EX-5 (OPINION OF WINDELS MARX LANE & MITTENDORF, LLP)**

**EXHIBIT 5**

May 1, 2018

ConnectOne Bancorp, Inc.  
301 Sylvan Avenue  
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632

Re: ConnectOne Bancorp, Inc.  
Registration Statement on Form S-8

Dear Sirs:

We have acted as counsel for ConnectOne Bancorp, Inc., a New Jersey corporation (the "Company"), in connection with the Registration Statement on Form S-8 being filed by the Company with the Securities and Exchange Commission pursuant to the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, relating to an aggregate of 750,000 shares of Common Stock, no par value per share, of the Company (the "Shares") to be issued by the Company pursuant to the Company's 2017 Equity Compensation Plan to employees, officers, directors, consultants and advisors of the Company, the form of which is attached as an exhibit to the Registration Statement (the "Plan").

In so acting, we have examined, and relied as to matters of fact upon, the originals, or copies certified or otherwise identified to our satisfaction, of the Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Company, the form of Agreements, and such other certificates, records instruments and documents, and have made such other and further investigations, as we have deemed necessary or appropriate to enable us to express the opinion set forth below. In such examination, we have assumed the genuineness of all signatures, the legal capacity of natural persons, the authenticity of all documents submitted to us as originals, the conformity to original documents of all documents submitted to us as certified or photostatic copies, and the authenticity of the originals of such latter documents.

Based upon the foregoing, we are of the opinion that upon issuance and delivery by the Company of the Shares pursuant to the Plan, and, if applicable, the payment of the exercise price of any options awarded thereunder and in accordance with the terms of the Plan, in cash or other consideration under Section 14A:7-7 of the New Jersey Business Corporation Act (the "Act"), the Shares issued will be legally issued, fully paid and non-assessable.

The issuance of the Shares is subject to the continuing effectiveness of the Registration Statement and the qualification, or exemption from registration, of such Shares under certain state securities laws.

We hereby consent to the filing of this opinion as an exhibit to the Registration Statement. In giving the foregoing consent, we do not admit that we are in the category of persons whose consent is required under Section 7 of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission promulgated thereunder.

Very truly yours,

/s/ WINDELS MARX LANE & MITTENDORF, LLP

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[\(Back To Top\)](#)

## **Section 4: EX-23.(A) (CONSENT OF CROWE HORWATH LLP)**

Exhibit 23(a)

### **CONSENT OF INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM**

We consent to the incorporation by reference in this Registration Statement on Form S-8 of ConnectOne Bancorp, Inc. of our report dated March 6, 2018 relating to the consolidated financial statements appearing in the Annual Report on Form 10-K of ConnectOne Bancorp, Inc. for the year ended December 31, 2017.

/s/ Crowe Horwath LLP

New York, New York

May 1, 2018

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[\(Back To Top\)](#)