



PICO HOLDINGS, INC.

**CHARTER OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Audit Committee (the “Committee”) of the Board of Directors (the “Board”) of PICO Holdings, Inc. (the “Company”) has the responsibility and authority to oversee the accounting and financial reporting processes of the Company, the integrity of the financial reports and other financial information and the audits of the Company’s financial statements. The Committee shall also review the qualifications, independence and performance, and approve the terms of engagement, of the Company’s independent auditor and prepare any reports required of the Committee under rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”).

The Company shall provide appropriate funding, as determined by the Committee, to permit the Committee to perform its duties under this Charter, to compensate its advisors and to compensate any registered public accounting firm engaged for the purpose of rendering or issuing an audit report or related work or performing other audit, review or attest services for the Company. The Committee, at its discretion, has the authority to initiate investigations and hire legal, accounting or other outside advisors or experts to assist the Committee, as it deems necessary to fulfill its duties under this Charter. The Committee may also perform such other activities consistent with this Charter, the Company’s Bylaws and governing law, as the Committee or the Board deems necessary or appropriate.

II. ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The Committee shall comprise three or more directors selected by the Board, each of whom shall satisfy the independence and experience requirements of The Nasdaq Stock Market (“Nasdaq”) ; *provided* that one director who does not meet the independence criteria of Nasdaq, but is not a current employee or officer, or an immediate family member of an employee or officer, may be appointed to the Committee, subject to the approval of the Board pursuant to, and subject to the limitations under, the “exceptional and limited circumstances” exceptions as provided under the rules of Nasdaq. In addition, the Committee shall not include any member who:

- has participated in the preparation of the financial statements of the Company or any current subsidiary at any time during the past three years;

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- accepts any consulting, advisory, or other compensatory fee, directly or indirectly, from the Company, other than in his or her capacity as a member of the Committee, the Board, or any other committee of the Board; or
- is an affiliate of the Company or any subsidiary of the Company, other than a director who meets the independence requirements of Nasdaq.

Each member of the Committee must be able to read and understand fundamental financial statements, including a balance sheet, income statement and cash flow statement. In addition, at least one member shall have past employment experience in finance or accounting, professional certification in accounting, or other comparable experience or background resulting in the individual being financially sophisticated, which may include being or having been a chief executive, chief financial or other senior officer with financial oversight responsibilities.

Each member of the Committee shall be appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the Corporate Governance and Nominating Committee and shall serve until his or her successor is duly elected and qualified or until such member's earlier resignation, removal or death. Any member of the Committee may be removed or replaced by the Board on the recommendation of the Corporate Governance and Nominating Committee. The Board may appoint one member of the Committee as Chair. If a Chair is not elected by the full Board, the members of the Committee may designate a Chair by majority vote of the full Committee membership. The Chair shall be responsible for leadership of the Committee, including preparing and setting the agenda for each Committee meeting, presiding at all regular Committee meetings, and reporting to the Board. The Chair will also maintain regular liaison with the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, and the lead independent audit partner.

III. MEETINGS

The Committee shall meet as often as it determines, but not less frequently than quarterly. A majority of the members shall represent a quorum of the Committee. Formal action to be taken by the Committee shall be by unanimous written consent or by the affirmative vote of at least a majority of the members present (in person or by telephone conference call) at a meeting at which a quorum is present. The Committee may form and delegate authority to subcommittees, or to one or more members of the Committee, when appropriate. The Committee shall meet with management and the independent auditor in separate executive sessions as appropriate. The Committee shall meet with the independent auditor and management on a quarterly basis to review the Company's financial statements and financial reports. The Committee shall maintain written minutes of its meetings, which minutes will be filed with the minutes of the meetings of the Board.

IV. COMMITTEE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee shall have the following authority and responsibilities, subject to such modification and additional authority as the Board may approve from time to time:

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A. Oversight of the Company's Independent Auditor

1. Be directly and solely responsible for the appointment, compensation, retention and oversight of any independent auditor (including resolution of disagreements between management and the independent auditor regarding financial reporting) engaged by the Company for the purpose of preparing or issuing an audit report or related work, with each such auditor reporting directly to the Committee. Approve as necessary the termination of the engagement of the independent auditor.

2. Periodically review and discuss with the independent auditor (i) the matters required to be discussed by Statement on Auditing Standards No. 61, as amended, (PCAOB AU 380) and (ii) any formal written statements received from the independent auditor consistent with and in satisfaction of Independence Standards Board Standard No. 1, as amended, (PCAOB Rule 3526) including without limitation, descriptions of (x) all relationships between the independent auditor and the Company, (y) any disclosed relationships or services that may impact the independent auditor's objectivity and independence and (z) whether any of the Company's senior finance personnel were recently employed by the independent auditor.

3. Obtain and review annually a report from the independent auditor describing (i) the independent auditor's internal quality-control procedures, (ii) any material issues raised by the most recent internal quality-control review or peer reviews or by any inquiry or investigation by governmental or professional authorities within the preceding five years respecting one or more independent audits carried out by the firm, and any steps taken to deal with such issues, and (iii) all relationships between the independent auditor and the Company.

4. Evaluate annually the qualifications, performance and independence of the independent auditor, including a review of whether the independent auditor's quality-control procedures are adequate and a review and evaluation of the lead partner of the independent auditor, taking into account the opinions of management, and report to the Board on its conclusions, together with any recommendations for additional action.

5. Consult with the independent auditor regarding the rotation of the lead audit partner having primary responsibility for the audit and the audit partner responsible for reviewing the audit every five years, consider issues related to the timing of such rotation and the transition to new lead and reviewing partners, and report to the Board on its conclusions.

6. Approve in advance the engagement of the independent auditor for all audit services and non-audit services, based on independence, qualifications and, if applicable, performance, and approve the fees and other terms of any such engagement; provided, however, that (i) the Committee may establish pre-approval policies and procedures for any engagement to render such services, provided that such policies and procedures (x) are detailed as to particular services, (y) do not involve delegation to management of the Committee's responsibilities hereunder and (z) provide that, at its next scheduled meeting, the Committee is informed as to each such service for which the independent auditor is engaged pursuant to such policies and procedures, and (ii) the Committee may delegate to one or more members of the Committee the

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authority to grant pre-approvals for such services, provided that the decisions of such member(s) to grant any such pre-approval shall be presented to the Committee at its next scheduled meeting.

7. Meet with the independent auditor prior to the audit to discuss the planning and staffing of the audit.

8. Review policies for the hiring of employees or former employees of the independent auditor who participated in any capacity in the audit of the Company, taking into account the impact of such policies on auditor independence.

9. Regularly review with the independent auditor any significant difficulties encountered during the course of the audit, any restrictions on the scope of work or access to required information and any significant disagreement among management and the independent auditor in connection with the preparation of the financial statements. Review with the independent auditor any accounting adjustments that were noted or proposed by the independent auditor but that were “passed” (as immaterial or otherwise), any material communications between the audit team and the independent auditor’s national office respecting auditing or accounting issues presented by the engagement, any “management” or “internal control” letter or schedule of unadjusted differences issued, or proposed to be issued, by the independent auditor to the Company, or any other material written communication provided by the independent auditor to the Company’s management.

10. Review with the independent auditor the critical accounting policies and practices used by the Company, all alternative treatments of financial information within generally accepted accounting principles (“GAAP”) that the independent auditor has discussed with management, the ramifications of the use of such alternative disclosures and treatments and the treatment preferred by the independent auditor.

B. *Review of Financial Reporting, Policies and Processes*

1. Review and discuss with management and the independent auditor the Company’s annual audited financial statements and any certification, report, opinion or review rendered by the independent auditor, which shall include but not be limited to a consideration of the quality of the Company’s accounting principles as applied in its financial reporting, including review of estimates, reserves and accruals, judgmental areas and audit adjustments whether or not recorded. Based on these reviews and discussions, the Committee shall recommend to the Board whether the audited financial statements should be included in the Company’s annual report on Form 10-K.

2. Review and discuss with management and the independent auditor the Company’s quarterly financial information, including but not limited to the Company’s disclosure under “Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations”, prior to the Company’s filing of Form 10-Q.

3. Review and discuss with management all press releases containing the initial disclosure of information regarding the Company’s financial results and any other

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information provided to securities analysts and rating agencies, including any non-GAAP financial information.

4. Periodically meet separately with management and with the independent auditor.

5. Review with management and the independent auditor any significant judgments made in management's preparation of the financial statements and the view of each as to appropriateness of such judgments.

6. Review with management its assessment of the effectiveness and adequacy of the Company's internal control over financial reporting ("Internal Controls"), review annually with the independent auditor its opinion and report on the effectiveness of the Company's Internal Controls, and consider with management and the independent auditor whether any changes to the Internal Controls are appropriate in light of management's assessment or the independent auditor's report.

7. To the extent that it deems appropriate, review with management its evaluation of the Company's procedures and controls designed to assure that information required to be disclosed in the Company's periodic reports is recorded, processed, summarized and reported in such reports within the time periods specified by the SEC for the filing of such reports ("Disclosure Controls"), and consider whether any changes are appropriate in light of management's evaluation of the effectiveness of such Disclosure Controls.

8. Review and discuss with management and the independent auditor any material off-balance sheet transactions or structures and their effect on the Company's financial results and operations, as well as the disclosure regarding such transactions and structures in the Company's public filings.

9. Review with management and the independent auditor the effect of regulatory and accounting initiatives on the financial statements. Review any major issues regarding accounting principles and financial statement presentations, including any significant changes in selection of an application of accounting principles. Consider and approve, if appropriate, changes to the Company's auditing and accounting principles and practices as suggested by the independent auditor or management.

10. Review any analyses prepared by management and/or the independent auditor setting forth significant financial reporting issues and judgments made in connection with the preparation of the financial statements, including the effects of alternative GAAP methods on the financial statements.

11. Review any special audit steps adopted in light of any material control deficiencies. Review with the independent auditor and management the extent to which changes or improvements in financial or accounting practices, as approved by the Committee, have been implemented.

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C. Risk Management, Related Party Transactions, Legal Compliance and Ethics

1. Review with the chief executive and chief financial officer of the Company any report on significant deficiencies in the design or operation of the Internal Controls that could adversely affect the Company's ability to record, process, summarize or report financial data, any material weaknesses in the Internal Controls identified to the auditors, and any fraud, whether or not material, that involves management or other employees who have a significant role in the Internal Controls.

2. Review and approve any related-party transactions involving the Company in accord with written procedures adopted by the Board, after reviewing each such transaction for potential conflicts of interests and other improprieties.

3. Establish and maintain procedures for the receipt, retention and treatment of complaints received by the Company regarding accounting, internal accounting controls or auditing matters, and the confidential, anonymous submission by employees of the Company of concerns regarding questionable accounting or auditing matters. Adopt, as necessary, appropriate remedial measures or actions with respect to such complaints or concerns.

4. In consultation with the Corporate Governance and Nominating Committee, consider and present to the Board for adoption a Code of Conduct for all employees and directors, which meets the requirements of Item 406 of the SEC's Regulation S-K, and provide for and review prompt disclosure to the public of any change in, or waiver of, such Code of Conduct. Review such Code of Conduct periodically and recommend such changes to such Code of Conduct as the Committee shall deem appropriate, and adopt procedures for monitoring and enforcing compliance with such Code of Conduct.

5. As requested by the Board, review and investigate conduct alleged by the Board to be in violation of the Company's Code of Conduct, and adopt as necessary or appropriate, remedial, disciplinary, or other measures with respect to such conduct.

6. Discuss with management and the independent auditor any correspondence with regulators or governmental agencies that raise material issues regarding the Company's financial statements or accounting policies.

7. Discuss with management the Company's major financial risk exposures and the steps management has taken to monitor and control such exposures.

8. Prepare the report required by the rules of the SEC to be included in the Company's annual proxy statement and review and approve the Company's annual proxy statement before it is filed with the SEC.

9. Provide input into any succession planning process for the Chief Financial Officer.

10. Regularly report to the Board on the Committee's activities, recommendations and conclusions.

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D. *Annual Review*

The Committee shall review on at least an annual basis the scope of responsibilities of the Committee, including the adequacy of this Charter, and the Committee's performance of its duties. Any proposed changes to this Charter or the scope of responsibilities of the Committee shall be referred to the Board of appropriate action.