**Town of Belgrade RFQ**

**1. Brief description of the investment management firm’s ownership, including identification of any affiliated companies, to include:**

**a. Year organized**

**Fundamentum, LLC** is one of three wholly owned investment advisers within the Stratos Wealth Holdings, LLC family of companies. The other two companies are Stratos Wealth Partners and Stratos Wealth Advisors. Stratos provides advisors and their clients with a more personalized concierge-level wealth management experience. Stratos was founded in 2008 by Jeffery Concepcion, who is the majority owner of the company, as well as President and CEO.

Established in 2011, Fundamentum Investment is the Stratos “In House – Low Fee” Investment Advisor that provides investment solutions and services to advisors and their clients. Fundamentum has entered into sub-advisory relationships with its two affiliated investment advisers pursuant to which Fundamentum provides portfolio management services to their clients. After spending over 25 years at Federated Hermes and the Public Employees Retirement System of Ohio, John Nichol was hired as the Chief Investment Officer at Fundamentum Investment in February 2021.

**b. Number of clients**

Fundamentum’s clients include 80 Financial Advisors, in which total over 3,200 accounts.

**c. Type of clientele (defined by industry and size of portfolio)**

Our Advisors’ clientele includes 95% retail investors, 2% Pension Trusts, 2% Corporations, and 1 % Foundations.

**d. Number of staff (investment-related staff only)**

Fundamentum Investment Management has 8 members apart of their investment staff as well as the advisor who would be potentially in charge of heading this account:

**Paul Serie: Financial Advisor**

Email: paul@seriewealth.com Phone: (917) 359-7213

Paul Serie has over 23 years working as an investment advisor assisting individuals and families manage their financial affairs.  His specialties include investment management, providing retirement income, estate planning and full-service financial management.  Paul holds Series 7, 63, and 66 licenses, held by LPL Financial, as well as life and health insurance designations. Prior to founding Serie Wealth Advisory, Paul worked at Citigroup and Bank of America Private Banks, Melkonian Capital Management Hedge Fund and most recently spent 12 years at TIAA-Cref leading a team of professionals responsible for over $1 billion dollars of client assets. **Paul also currently serves as President and Chairman of the Board of Mt Olivet Cemetery, located in Maspeth Queens with a rich history dating back to its founding in 1850**

**John Nichol, MBA, CFA: Chief Investment Officer**

Email: jnichol@fundamentuminvesting.com Phone: (440) 991-1158

Chief Investment Officer and Portfolio Manager with Fundamentum Investment Management. A senior investment executive with 27+ years of success integrating fundamental analysis, quantitative research, technical, and derivative management strategies to meet portfolio management objective, risk, and performance goals.

Prior to joining Fundamentum, John worked for Equity Bank Trust & Wealth Management, Federated Hermes, Inc., Public Employees Retirement System of Ohio, and the U.S. Department of Treasury – Office of Thrift Supervision. He has been in the investment industry since 1992, including 19 with Federated Hermes Inc. where he had been both a securities analyst, senior portfolio manager, and Growth & Income Group Head. He is a graduate of The Ohio State University with a bachelor’s degree in Finance and Economics and received his MBA from The Ohio State University in 1992. John holds the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation. John actively follows current events and has a passion for all types of history, ranging from Ancient to Modern times. John is a sports enthusiast and a gym “junkie” who loves to workout, bike, and row.

**Robert Armagno, CFA: Assistant Portfolio Manager**

Email: rarmagno@fundamentuminvesting.com Phone: 440-505-5702

Rob started his career with AXA Advisors in Cleveland, Ohio as a registered representative helping public school employees save for retirement and educated clients on the changes of their state pension. Most recently, Rob was a trading and operations manager at a registered broker-dealer in Cleveland where he served as back-office support for other RIAs, broker-dealers, and hedge funds. One of Rob’s main responsibilities for the broker-dealer was post-trade reconciliation for institutional clients with held-away accounts. He was also the firm’s options principal and was responsible for the supervision of option accounts.

Rob joined Fundamentum in October 2016 and is responsible for the daily management and oversight of the Investment Advisor’s managed accounts, models, and underlying positions. He prepares and supervises client account investment performance reports and compiles quarterly and annual performance reports. Rob is also responsible for the firm’s trading and compliance with industry performance standards.

Rob earned a bachelor’s degree in Finance from John Carroll University in 2011. He currently resides in Westlake, Ohio and enjoys spending his free time with his wife, two kids, dog, and spare time on the golf course.

**Trevor Forbes: Investment Committee Member**

CEO and Head of Investments with Renaissance Investment Group. Trevor graduated from Leicester University, UK with a BSc (Hons) and trained as an investment analyst.

Trevor has served as Chief Investment Officer at Standard Life Wealth, ABN Amro, Julius Baer, Credit Suisse Private Bank, and Citibank Global Asset Management. He has investment experience across all global and domestic asset classes and has managed portfolios for Pension Funds, Government Agencies, Religious and secular Foundations as well as Private Wealth Management. Trevor is an affiliate member of the CFA Society of the United Kingdom.

**Francesco DiGenova: Investment Research Analyst**

Email: fdigenova@fundamentuminvesting.com Phone: (440) 505 5701

Francesco serves as the Investment Research Analyst at Fundamentum Investment Management. Prior to joining Fundamentum in 2021, Francesco worked at Fidus Partners, as an Investment Banking Analyst Intern. Francesco earned his degree from Wingate University in Charlotte with a Major in Finance and Minors in Accounting and Economics.

**Grace Jackson: Trading Specialist**

Email: gjackson@fundamentuminvesting.com Phone: 440-505-5606

Prior to joining Fundamentum Investment Management, Grace worked at Gratry & Company, LLC for 12 years as the Head Trader and Operations Account Manager. The company was a boutique money-management firm specializing in the management of international and global equity portfolios for both institutions and high net worth individuals. During her time there, she was responsible for all trading relationships between clients, custodians, overlay managers, and trading desks. She also conducted on-boarding of all client and platform relationships; and helped launch an exchange-traded mutual fund. While Grace was employed at Gratry & Company, LLC, the company grew its assets under management from $125 million to $850 million. Grace holds a bachelor’s degree in Finance from The University of Akron. She currently resides in the Westpark neighborhood of Cleveland, Ohio with her husband, daughter, and two dogs.

**Joe Waterman: Trader**

Email: jwaterman@fundamentuminvesting.com Phone: (440) 505-5691

Fixed Income Trader and Trading Specialist with Fundamentum. A Head Trader with a 20-year career as a market maker on the floor of the Chicago Board of Trade for Citigroup Derivatives Markets Inc. Specializing in Derivatives on Bonds, Equities, and Indexes.

Since joining the Fundamentum team, he is excited about integrating artificial intelligence and best execution practices into a rapidly growing fixed-income department.

He graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a degree in Finance. Currently, Joseph lives in Hudson, Ohio with his beautiful wife Jen and their two daughters, Mae, and Charlotte.

**Milan Markovic: Investment Research Analyst**

Email: mmarkovic@fundamentuminvesting.com Phone: (440) 505-5571

Milan joined Fundamentum in May of 2022 as an Investment Management Intern. He worked as an intern until May of 2023, when he graduated Cleveland State University with a Major in Finance. After graduation he joined Fundamentum full-time as an Investment Research Analyst.

**Petar Petrovic: Fundamentum Intern**

Email: ppetrovic@fundamentuminvesting.com

Petar joined Fundamentum in June of 2023 as an intern. He is in his final year at Cleveland State University pursuing a major in finance with a minor in economics. In his free time, he enjoys watching soccer and spending time with my family and friends.

**e. Assets under management**

Fundamentum Investment Management has $1.33 billion dollars under management as of 7/10/2023.

**f. Location of corporate headquarters**

Fundamentum Investment Management is headquartered in Beachwood, Ohio.

Paul Serie is located in Garden City, New York.

**g. Discussion of any past or present litigation or regulatory actions against your firm**

There are no past or present litigations, nor regulatory actions.

**2) The qualifications of your firm and its ability to provide investment services:**

**a. Qualifications of principals and professional staff (specify those individuals who will be directly responsible for the account)**

See attached Resumes for:

Financial Advisor – Paul Serie

Chief Investment Officer – John Nichol

Assistant Portfolio Manager – Robert Armagno

**b. Number of year(s) of experience in investment management**

**Paul Serie:** Owner and Advisor at Serie Wealth Advisory, with 23 years of investment advisory experience. Specialties include investment management, providing retirement income, estate planning and full-service financial management.

**John Nichol**: Chief Investment Officer and Portfolio Manager with Fundamentum Investment Management. A senior investment executive with 27+ years of success integrating fundamental analysis, quantitative research, technical, and derivative management strategies to meet portfolio management objective, risk, and performance goals.

**Robert Armagno:** Portfolio Manager with Fundamentum Investment Management. Rob has 12+ combined years of experience with trading, research/analysis, and portfolio management where he utilizes these skills to help create and manage several investment strategies in addition to helping clients meet their investment goals.

**c. Discussion of investment philosophy**

Fundamentum’s investment philosophy is centered on the concept of *“risk-adjusted”* returns. We value wealth creation, but wealth protection is paramount. Fundamentum strives for investments with upside market participation with downside protection by looking for companies with strong, consistent, repeatable performance and processes where a company’s profitability (cashflow) is king and management’s capital allocation discipline is key. Related to mutual fund/ETF selection, Fundamentum has developed a quantitative process to score managers around our general investment philosophy of providing institutional quality portfolios and risk-adjusted returns. The qualitative process includes interviewing management teams, understanding their philosophy, process, and people, and ultimately if the fund fits within our strategies.

Our goal is to seek *high-quality investment solutions* by offering disciplined investment strategies tailored to align with a client’s unique risk tolerances, income goals, and financial objectives.

**d. Discussion of your customer service philosophy**

Fundamentum offers extensive and personalized services to its advisors, facilitating direct communication between clients and advisors. This arrangement grants advisors complete access to Fundamentum's resources. By leveraging this collaboration, advisors and Fundamentum's investment team collaboratively arrive at informed decisions that prioritize the best interests of the clients.

**3) Brief description of the firm’s investment services provided to governmental entities.**

John Nichol, Fundamentum’s current Chief Investment Officer, was employed for over 8 years at the Public Employees Retirement System of Ohio where he managed, formulated, designed, and implemented strategies for ‘large cap’ equity portfolio with assets over $5.5 billion. In addition, he presented investment findings and reports to the PERS of Ohio Board including periodic performance reviews and risk mandates. He developed, back-tested, and established quantitative screening and alpha ranking techniques to augment the investment process complex-wide and developed/established a quantitative screening process to aid analysts’ selection process and improve performance. Finally, he conducted investment reviews of PERS of Ohio’s policies and objectives and helped develop/present capital markets reports to Board members, pensioners, and stakeholders. Fundamentum and Stratos Wealth Partners have successfully overseen and managed multiple portfolios on behalf of esteemed institutions such as federal credit unions, cemetery organizations, charitable foundations, and university foundations.

**4) A description of the firm’s investment process, including research, governance, and portfolio management.**

Research includes:

Goldman Sachs Asset Management - Capital Market, Sell-side Research Firm

Cowen and Company - Capital Market, Sell-side Research Firm

J.P. Morgan Asset Management - Capital Market, Sell-side Research Firm

Wolfe Research - Capital Market, Sell-side Research Firm

BCA Research Capital Market, Sell-side Research Firm

Renaissance Investment Group - Registered Investment Advisor – Wealth Management Firm

NDR Investment Research - Quantitative Investment Research Company

RenMac Research - Macroeconomic Research Company

BeSpoke Investment Group - Market Analysis Company

Capital Economics - Macro Economics Research Company

Pantheon Macroeconomics - Economic Research Consultancy

Bloomberg L.P. - Financial Software Data Company

FactSet Research Systems - Financial Software Data Company

Morningstar Direct - Investment Analysis Platform

MSCI ESG Research - ESG Analysis Company

Riskalyze - Financial Investment Risk Company

Kwanti - Portfolio Analytics Company

BondIT - Fixed Income Portfolio Analysis Company

Other Sources (Portfolio Analytics, Factor Attribution, Best Practices): Fidelity Investments, Charles Schwab, PIMCO Investments, Vanguard Group, Dimensional Funds, WisdomTree Investments, BlackRock, Putnam Investments, and Northern Trust

Fundamentum believes in risk-adjusted, investment returns. We do not seek asset classes or securities with high returns with no consideration of risk or downside loss potential. We do seek upside participation but always with an eye to downside protection. Our process at Fundamentum looks for favorable Risk vs Reward ratios that are greater than “1” and preferably greater than “3 to 1”. We are benchmark-aware, but loss focused. We review all potential investment returns versus the market, industry, and company-specific risks. Therefore, the process favors highly liquid, low-volatile securities that have strong credit/balance sheet characteristics and favorable earnings/cash flow profiles.

**5) A description of the firm’s trust and trustee capabilities.**

Stratos Wealth Partners is a financial advisory firm that provides a range of wealth management services, including trust and trustee capabilities. Here at Fundamentum, we have the ability to open and manage trust accounts.

**6) Description of how the firm would make its services available to the Town’s Board of Selectpersons and its Budget Committee.**

Fundamentum, along with financial advisor Paul Serie, will engage in discussions with the board of directors of the account regarding investment risks and recommendations. They will collaborate on investment trading and recommendations. Additionally, the financial advisors and investment team will arrange quarterly meetings to review investment performance and explore market opportunities.

**7) Investment results (past performance) achieved by the firm. Suggested benchmarks/indexes against which performance measurement will be made.**

Fundamentum offers a diverse range of over 20 strategies, each with its own performance track record. These performance metrics are made publicly available on their website and are updated on a monthly basis. This allows investors and interested parties to access the latest information regarding the performance of each strategy.

Furthermore, it's worth noting that Fundamentum adheres to Fundamentum follows GIPS, or Global Investment Performance Standards for performance reporting and has been independently verified since its inception through December 2021.

**8) A description of Investment Strategies employed for longer term assets and intermediate cash management accounts in accordance with Title 30-A, Chapter 223, subchapter III-A.**

N/A

**9) Samples of monthly and quarterly statements. Describe customization capabilities that would help the Town and describe your firm’s ability to assist in pooling sub-accounts.**

Fundamentum has the capability to tailor its services to accommodate the specific requirements of the account's board of directors. They can provide customized solutions to meet the unique needs and preferences expressed by the board, ensuring that their investment strategies and approach align with the board's objectives.

See attached in our email with an example of one of our monthly factsheets regarding our Tactical Moderate Portfolio:

See attached in our email with an example of a sample client review we are able to provide:

**10) Provide details concerning the firm’s management fee proposal and state the commission rates in brokerage transactions.**

Management fee will be discussed and agreed with advisor and client.

**11) Provide a list with contact information of three or more public-entity client references.**

For compliance reasons we can’t disclose the name of the advisors or the name of our clients.

Ohio xxxxxxxxxx – AUM: $5-10M – Contact: Dan xxxxxx (440) 505- xxx

Twelve xxxxxxxxx- AUM: $5-10M – Contact: Johnny xxxxx (830) 609-xxxx

The Armstrong xxxxx– AUM: $5-10M – Contact: Will xxxx (724) 655-xxxx

Texas xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx - AUM: $5-10M – Contact: Johnny xxxxx (830) 609-xxxx

Overlook xxxxxxx- AUM: Under $5M – Contact: Jan xxxxxxx (571) 800-xxxxx

**12) Insurance:**

**a. Provide a listing of applicable insurance coverage maintained with relevant coverage limits.**

**See Part B below.**

**b. Provide the name of your primary insurance carrier and their related AM Best rating.**

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**13) Provide any other information that would be of assistance to the Board of Selectpersons and the Budget Committee in evaluating the firm’s responses and its qualifications to serve as the Town’s Investment Fund Manager.**

Fundamentum and the financial advisor are committed to regularly reviewing the account and conducting frequent meetings. We are open to reviewing the performance of the portfolio and discussing market updates on a quarterly or annual basis. This allows us to ensure that the fund remains aligned with our investment objectives and provides opportunities for portfolio adjustments as needed.

Fundamentum and the Advisor have working knowledge and experience managing certain investment partitions (ie: General Fund, Perpetual Care, Permanent Maintenance) and various restrictions that sometimes are required by state regulations with respect to cemeteries.