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**UNITED STATES  
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**  
Washington, DC 20549

**FORM 8-K**

**CURRENT REPORT  
PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE  
SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

Date of Report (Date of earliest event reported): May 11, 2021

**HIGHWOODS PROPERTIES, INC.**  
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

**Maryland**  
(State or other jurisdiction  
of incorporation or organization)

**001-13100**  
(Commission  
File Number)

**56-1871668**  
(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification Number)

**HIGHWOODS REALTY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP**  
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

**North Carolina**  
(State or other jurisdiction  
of incorporation or organization)

**000-21731**  
(Commission  
File Number)

**56-1869557**  
(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification Number)

**3100 Smoketree Court, Suite 600**  
**Raleigh, NC 27604**  
(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip Code)

**919-872-4924**  
(Registrants' telephone number, including area code)

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrants under any of the following provisions:

- Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
- Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is an emerging growth company as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act of 1933 (§230.405 of this chapter) or Rule 12b-2 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (§240.12b-2 of this chapter).

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 13(a) of the Exchange Act.

**Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:**

Title of Each Class	Trading Symbol(s)	Name of Each Exchange on Which Registered
Common Stock, \$.01 par value, of Highwoods Properties, Inc.	HIW	New York Stock Exchange

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**Item 5.02. Departure of Directors or Certain Officers; Election of Directors; Appointment of Certain Officers; Compensatory Arrangements of Certain Officers.**

On May 11, 2021, the Company's stockholders approved our 2021 long-term equity incentive plan. The board believes that equity incentive compensation promotes our long-term success by aligning the interests of our directors, officers and employees with the interests of our stockholders. The equity incentive awards provide participants with an ownership interest in our company and a direct and demonstrable stake in our success to the extent of their position, responsibility, overall impact and contribution.

The plan authorizes the issuance of up to 3,000,000 shares of common stock, of which not more than 1,000,000 shares may be issued in the form of restricted stock or restricted stock unit awards. Under the plan, the compensation and governance committee may grant stock options, shares of restricted stock and restricted stock units. In any calendar year, no employee or officer may be granted stock options covering more than 300,000 shares. Stock options are not issuable to non-employee directors. In any calendar year, no more than 150,000 shares of restricted stock or restricted stock units can be issued to any officer or employee and no more than 5,000 shares of restricted stock or restricted stock units can be issued to any non-employee director.

Highlights of the plan include the following:

- The plan does not provide for liberal share recycling. Neither shares tendered by a participant to pay the exercise price of an award nor shares tendered or withheld for taxes will be available for future grants under the plan;
- Grants of stock options that are exercisable prior to the first anniversary of the grant date are prohibited;
- Repricing or payments to cancel "underwater" stock options are prohibited without stockholder approval;
- Grants of time-based restricted stock and restricted stock units to officers and employees with vesting periods shorter than three years are prohibited (provided that shares and units may vest pro rata on an annual basis beginning on the first anniversary of the grant date);
- Grants of all other types of restricted stock and restricted stock units with vesting periods shorter than one year are prohibited;
- The compensation and governance committee does not have the discretion to accelerate the vesting or exercisability of awards, except in the event of death, disability or involuntary termination of employment in connection with a change in control;
- Grants generally are not accelerated upon a change in control if they are assumed by the surviving entity (or its parent if the surviving entity has a parent) or replaced with a comparable award of substantially equal value granted by the surviving entity (or its parent if the surviving entity has a parent); and
- Grants are expressly subject to our incentive compensation recoupment policy.

A description of the material terms of the plan can be found in the section of the Definitive Proxy Statement on Schedule 14A filed by the Company on March 26, 2021 entitled "Proposal 4: Approval of Our 2021 Long-Term Equity Incentive Plan" and is incorporated by reference into this Current Report on Form 8-K.

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**Item 5.07. Submission of Matters to a Vote of Security Holders.**

On May 11, 2021, the Company held its annual meeting of stockholders. The final vote of the matters presented for a vote at such meeting was as follows:

	<u>Matter</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstain/ Withheld</u>	<u>Broker Non-Votes</u>
(1)	Election of Directors:				3,441,156
	Charles A. Anderson	90,457,758		589,409	
	Gene H. Anderson	89,274,496		1,772,671	
	Thomas P. Anderson	90,125,274		921,893	
	Carlos E. Evans	88,858,178		2,188,989	
	David L. Gadis	90,461,319		585,848	
	David J. Hartzell	89,410,457		1,636,710	
	Sherry A. Kellett	88,795,257		2,251,910	
	Theodore J. Klinck	90,124,350		922,817	
	Anne H. Lloyd	89,776,951		1,270,216	
(2)	Ratification of appointment of Deloitte & Touche LLP as independent auditor for 2021	93,460,753	916,170	111,400	
(3)	Advisory vote on executive compensation	89,489,900	1,363,854	193,413	3,441,156
(4)	Approval of the 2021 long-term equity incentive plan	87,522,583	3,361,814	162,770	3,441,156

**Item 9.01. Financial Statements and Exhibits.**

(d) Exhibits

**No.   Description**

10   [2021 Long-Term Equity Incentive Plan](#)

104   Cover Page Interactive Data File (embedded within the Inline XBRL document)

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## SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, each of the registrants has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned thereunto duly authorized.

### **HIGHWOODS PROPERTIES, INC.**

By: \_\_\_\_\_ /s/ Jeffrey D. Miller

**Jeffrey D. Miller**

*Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary*

### **HIGHWOODS REALTY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP**

By: Highwoods Properties, Inc., its general partner

By: \_\_\_\_\_ /s/ Jeffrey D. Miller

**Jeffrey D. Miller**

*Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary*

Dated: May 11, 2021

**HIGHWOODS PROPERTIES, INC.  
2021 LONG-TERM EQUITY INCENTIVE PLAN**

**SECTION 1  
EFFECTIVE DATE AND PURPOSE**

1.1 Effective Date. This Plan shall become effective upon approval by the holders of a majority of the outstanding Shares at a duly authorized meeting of the Company's stockholders.

1.2 Purpose of the Plan. The Plan is designed to provide a means to attract, motivate and retain eligible Participants and to further the growth and financial success of the Company by aligning the interests of Participants through the ownership of Shares and other incentives with the interests of the Company's stockholders.

**SECTION 2  
DEFINITIONS**

The following words and phrases shall have the following meanings unless a different meaning is plainly required by the context:

2.1 "1934 Act" means the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. Reference to a specific section of the 1934 Act or regulation thereunder shall include such section or regulation, any valid regulation promulgated under such section, and any comparable provision of any future legislation or regulation amending, supplementing or superseding such section or regulation.

2.2 "Award" means, individually or collectively, a grant under the Plan of Nonqualified Stock Options, Incentive Stock Options, Restricted Stock or Restricted Stock Units.

2.3 "Award Agreement" means either (1) the written agreement setting forth the terms and provisions applicable to each Award granted under the Plan or (2) a statement issued by the Company to a Participant describing the terms and provisions of such Award.

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

2.5 "Code" means the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended from time to time.

2.6 "Committee" means the Compensation and Governance Committee of the Board of Directors.

2.7 "Company" means Highwoods Properties, Inc., a Maryland corporation, or any successor thereto.

2.8 "Employee Participant" means a Participant who is an officer or employee of the Company or a Subsidiary.

2.9 "Exercise Price" means the price at which a Share may be purchased by a Participant pursuant to the exercise of an Option.

2.10 “Fair Market Value” means, as of any given date, (i) the closing sales price of the Shares on any national securities exchange on which the Shares are listed; (ii) the closing sales price if the Shares are listed on The Nasdaq Stock Market or other over the counter market; or (iii) if there is no regular public trading market for such Shares, the fair market value of the Shares as determined by the Committee.

2.11 “Grant Date” means, with respect to an Award, the date such Award is granted to a Participant.

2.12 “Incentive Stock Option” means an Option to purchase Shares which is designated as an Incentive Stock Option and is intended to meet the requirements of section 422 of the Code.

2.13 “Non-Employee Participant” means a Participant who is not an Employee Participant.

2.14 “Nonqualified Stock Option” means an Option to purchase Shares which is not designated or intended to be an Incentive Stock Option.

2.15 “Option” means an Incentive Stock Option or a Nonqualified Stock Option.

2.16 “Participant” means an officer, employee or director of the Company or a Subsidiary who has an outstanding Award under the Plan.

2.17 “Performance Goals” shall mean any or all of the following: revenue, earnings, earnings per share, stock price, costs, return on equity, asset management, asset quality, asset growth, budget achievement, net operating income (NOI), average occupancy, year-end occupancy, funds from operations (FFO), cash available for distribution (CAD), total shareholder return on an absolute and/or a peer comparable basis (TSR), leverage ratios, return on assets, revenue growth, capital expenditures, customer satisfaction survey results, property operating expenses savings, design, development, permitting or other progress on designated properties, third party fee generation, leasing goals, or goals relating to acquisitions or divestitures, lease retention, liability management or credit management. Performance Goals need not be the same with respect to all Participants and may be established separately for the Company as a whole, on a per share basis, or for its various properties, groups, divisions or subsidiaries, and may be based on performance in comparison to performance by unrelated businesses specified by the Committee, in comparison to any prior period or in comparison to budget. All calculations and financial accounting matters relevant to this Plan shall be determined in accordance with GAAP, except as otherwise directed by the Committee.

2.18 “Period of Restriction” means the period during which Restricted Stock or Restricted Stock Units awarded hereunder is subject to a substantial risk of forfeiture. As provided in Section 7, such restrictions may be based on the passage of time, the achievement of Performance Goals or the occurrence of other events as determined by the Committee.

2.19 “Plan” means the Highwoods Properties, Inc. 2021 Long-Term Equity Incentive Plan, as set forth in this instrument and as hereafter amended from time to time.

2.20 “Restricted Stock” means an Award granted to a Participant with the terms ascribed to such term in Section 7.

2.21 “Restricted Stock Unit” means an Award granted to a Participant with the terms ascribed to such term in Section 7.

2.22 “Shares” means the shares of common stock, \$0.01 par value, of the Company.

2.23 “Subsidiary” means any corporation, partnership, joint venture, limited liability company, or other entity (other than the Company) in an unbroken chain of entities beginning with the Company if, at the time of the granting of an Award, each of the entities other than the last entity in the unbroken chain owns more than fifty percent (50%) of the total combined voting power in one of the other entities in such chain.

### **SECTION 3 ELIGIBILITY**

3.1 Participants. Awards may be granted in the discretion of the Committee to officers, employees and directors of the Company and its Subsidiaries.

3.2 Non-Uniformity. Awards granted hereunder need not be uniform among eligible Participants and may reflect distinctions based on title, compensation, responsibility or any other factor the Committee deems appropriate.

### **SECTION 4 ADMINISTRATION**

4.1 The Committee. The Plan will be administered by the Committee, which, to the extent deemed necessary or appropriate by the Board, will consist of two or more persons who satisfy the requirements for a “non-employee director” under Rule 16b-3 promulgated under the 1934 Act and/or the requirements for an “independent director” under the corporate governance standards of the New York Stock Exchange; provided, however, that actions by the Committee shall be valid even if one or more members of the Committee fail to satisfy such requirements. The members of the Committee shall be appointed from time to time by, and shall serve at the pleasure of, the Board of Directors. In the absence of such appointment, the Board of Directors shall serve as the Committee and shall have all of the responsibilities, duties, and authority of the Committee set forth herein.

4.2 Authority of the Committee. The Committee shall have the exclusive authority to administer and construe the Plan in accordance with its provisions. The Committee’s authority shall include, without limitation, the power to (a) determine persons eligible for Awards, (b) prescribe the terms and conditions of the Awards, (c) interpret the Plan and the Awards, (d) adopt rules for the administration, interpretation and application of the Plan as are consistent therewith and (e) interpret, amend or revoke any such rules. The Committee, in its sole discretion and on such terms and conditions as it may provide, may delegate all or any part of its authority and powers under the Plan to one or more officers of the Company to the extent permitted by law.

4.3 Decisions Binding. All determinations and decisions made by the Committee and any of its delegates pursuant to Section 4.2 shall be final, conclusive and binding on all persons, and shall be given the maximum deference permitted by law.

### **SECTION 5 SHARES SUBJECT TO THE PLAN**

5.1 Number of Shares. Subject to adjustment as provided in Section 5.3, the total number of Shares available for grant under the Plan shall not exceed 3,000,000 Shares. No more than 1,000,000 Shares may be granted as Restricted Stock and Restricted Stock Units.

5.2 Lapsed Awards, etc. Shares related to Awards that are forfeited, terminated or expire unexercised shall be available for grant under the Plan. Shares that are tendered by a Participant to the Company in connection with the exercise of an Award, surrendered or withheld from issuance in connection with a Participant's payment of tax withholding liability, settled in cash in lieu of Shares, or settled in such other manner so that a portion or all of the Shares included in an Award are not issued to a Participant, shall not be available for grant under the Plan.

5.3 Adjustments in Awards and Authorized Shares. In the event of a stock dividend or stock split, the number of Shares subject to outstanding Awards and the numerical limits of Sections 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1 shall automatically be adjusted to prevent the dilution or diminution of such Awards, except to the extent directed otherwise by the Committee. In the event of a merger, reorganization, consolidation, recapitalization, separation, liquidation, combination, or other similar change in the corporate structure of the Company affecting the Shares, the Committee shall adjust the number and class of Shares which may be delivered under the Plan, the number, class and price of Shares subject to outstanding Awards, and the numerical limits of Sections 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1 in such manner as the Committee shall determine to be advisable or appropriate to prevent the dilution or diminution of such Awards. Any such numerical limitations shall be subject to adjustment under this Section only to the extent such adjustment will not affect the ability to grant or the qualification of Incentive Stock Options under the Plan. In addition, the Committee is authorized to make adjustments to the terms and conditions of, and the criteria included in, Awards in recognition of unusual or nonrecurring events affecting the Company, or in response to changes in applicable laws, regulations, or accounting principles. The determination of the Committee as to the foregoing adjustments, if any, shall be conclusive and binding on all Participants.

5.4 Repurchase Option. To the extent consistent with the requirements of section 409A of the Code, the Committee may include in the terms of any Award Agreement that the Company shall have the option to repurchase Shares of any Participant acquired pursuant to the Award granted under the Plan upon a Participant's termination of employment. The terms of such repurchase right shall be set forth in the Award Agreement.

5.5 Restrictions on Share Transferability. The Committee may impose such restrictions on any Award of Shares or Shares acquired pursuant to the exercise of an Award as it may deem advisable or appropriate, including, but not limited to, restrictions related to applicable Federal securities laws, the requirements of any national securities exchange or system upon which Shares are then listed or traded, and any blue sky or state securities laws.

## **SECTION 6 STOCK OPTIONS**

6.1 Grant of Options. Subject to the terms and provisions of the Plan, Options may be granted to Employee Participants at any time and from time to time as determined by the Committee. The Committee shall determine the number of Shares subject to each Option. The Committee may grant Incentive Stock Options, Nonqualified Stock Options, or any combination thereof. Up to 3,000,000 Shares may be issued as Incentive Stock Options under the Plan. The maximum aggregate number of Shares that may be granted in the form of Options in any one calendar year to an individual Employee Participant shall be 300,000.

6.2 Award Agreement. Each Option shall be evidenced by an Award Agreement that shall specify the Exercise Price, the expiration date of the Option, the number of Shares to which the Option pertains, any conditions on exercise of the Option and such other terms and conditions as the Committee shall determine, including terms regarding forfeiture of Awards or continued exercisability of Awards in



the event of termination of employment by the Participant. The Award Agreement shall also specify whether the Option is intended to be an Incentive Stock Option or a Nonqualified Stock Option.

6.3 Exercise Price. The Exercise Price for each Option shall be determined by the Committee and shall be provided in each Award Agreement; provided, however, the Exercise Price for each Option may not be less than one hundred percent (100%) of the Fair Market Value of a Share on the Grant Date. In the case of an Incentive Stock Option, the Exercise Price shall be not less than one hundred ten percent (110%) of the Fair Market Value of a Share if the Participant (together with persons whose stock ownership is attributed to the Participant pursuant to section 424(d) of the Code) owns on the Grant Date stock possessing more than 10% of the total combined voting power of all classes of stock of the Company or any of its Subsidiaries.

6.4 Expiration of Options. Except as provided in Section 6.7(c) regarding Incentive Stock Options, each Option shall terminate upon the earliest to occur of (i) the date(s) for termination of the Option set forth in the Award Agreement or (ii) the expiration of ten (10) years from the Grant Date. Subject to such limits, the Committee shall provide in each Award Agreement when each Option expires and becomes unexercisable. The Committee may not, after an Option is granted, extend the maximum term of the Option.

6.5 Exercisability of Options. Options granted under the Plan shall be exercisable at such times and be subject to such restrictions and conditions as the Committee shall determine; provided, however that no Option shall be exercisable prior to the first anniversary of the Grant Date. After an Option is granted, the Committee may (a) accelerate exercisability or waive any condition constituting a substantial risk of forfeiture applicable to the Option, but only in the event of death, disability or involuntary termination of employment of the Participant (as determined by the Administrator) in connection with or on or after a Change in Control, and/or (b) waive any condition constituting a substantial risk of forfeiture applicable to the Option, but only in the event of a retirement.

6.6 Payment. Options shall be exercised by a Participant's delivery of a written notice of exercise to the Secretary of the Company (or its designee), setting forth the number of Shares with respect to which the Option is to be exercised, accompanied by full payment for the Shares. Upon the exercise of an Option, the Exercise Price shall be payable to the Company in full in cash or its equivalent. The Committee may also permit exercise (a) by tendering previously acquired Shares having an aggregate Fair Market Value at the time of exercise equal to the total Exercise Price, or (b) by any other means which the Committee determines to provide legal consideration for the Shares, and to be consistent with the purposes of the Plan. As soon as practicable after receipt of a written notification of exercise and full payment for the Shares purchased, the Company shall deliver to the Participant, Share certificates (which may be in book entry form) representing such Shares. Until the issuance of the stock certificates, no right to vote or receive dividends or any other rights as a shareholder shall exist with respect to the Shares as to which the Option has been exercised. No adjustment will be made for a dividend or other rights for which a record date is established prior to the date the certificates are issued.

6.7 Certain Additional Provisions for Incentive Stock Options.

(a) Exercisability. The aggregate Fair Market Value (determined on the Grant Date(s)) of the Shares with respect to which Incentive Stock Options are exercisable for the first time by any Participant during any calendar year (under all plans of the Company and its Subsidiaries) shall not exceed \$100,000.

(b) Company and Subsidiaries Only. Incentive Stock Options may be granted only to Participants who are employees of the Company or a subsidiary corporation (within the meaning of section 424(f) of the Code) on the Grant Date.

(c) Expiration. No Incentive Stock Option may be exercised after the expiration of ten (10) years from the Grant Date.

6.8 Restriction on Transfer. Except as otherwise determined by the Committee and set forth in the Award Agreement, no Option may be transferred, gifted, bequeathed, pledged, assigned, or otherwise alienated or hypothecated, voluntarily or involuntarily, except that the Committee may permit a transfer, upon the Participant's death, to beneficiaries designated by the Participant as provided in Section 11.4.

6.9 Repricing of Options. Except as provided in Section 5.3, without the approval of stockholders (a) the Committee may not reduce, adjust or amend the exercise price of an outstanding Option whether through amendment, cancellation, replacement grant or any other means and (b) no payment may be made to cancel an outstanding Option if on the date of such amendment, cancellation, replacement grant or payment the exercise price of such Option exceeds Fair Market Value.

6.10 Voting Rights. A Participant shall have no voting rights with respect to any Options granted hereunder.

## **SECTION 7 RESTRICTED STOCK AND RESTRICTED STOCK UNITS**

7.1 Grant of Restricted Stock/Units. Subject to the terms and provisions of the Plan, the Committee, at any time and from time to time, may grant Shares of Restricted Stock and/or Restricted Stock Units to Participants in such amounts as the Committee shall determine. The Committee shall determine the number of Shares to be granted to each Participant. Restricted Stock Units shall be similar to Restricted Stock except that no Shares are actually awarded to the Participant on the date of grant. No more than 150,000 shares of Restricted Stock and/or Restricted Stock Units may be granted to any individual Employee Participant in any one calendar year. No more than 5,000 shares of Restricted Stock and/or Restricted Stock Units may be granted to any individual Non-Employee Participant in any one calendar year.

7.2 Restricted Stock Agreement. Each Award of Restricted Stock and/or Restricted Stock Units shall be evidenced by an Award Agreement that shall specify the Period of Restriction, the number of Shares of Restricted Stock (or the number of Restricted Stock Units) granted, and such other terms and conditions as the Committee shall determine, including terms regarding forfeiture of Awards in the event of termination of employment by the Participant.

7.3 Transferability. Except as otherwise determined by the Committee and set forth in the Award Agreement, Shares of Restricted Stock and/or Restricted Stock Units may not be sold, transferred, gifted, bequeathed, pledged, assigned, or otherwise alienated or hypothecated, voluntarily or involuntarily, until the end of the applicable Period of Restriction. The Committee may include a legend on the certificates representing Restricted Stock to give appropriate notice of such restrictions.

7.4 Other Restrictions. The Committee may impose such other restrictions on Shares of Restricted Stock or Restricted Stock Units as it may deem advisable or appropriate in accordance with this Section 7.4.

(a) General Restrictions. The Committee may set restrictions based upon (i) the achievement of specific Performance Goals, (ii) other performance objectives (Company-wide, divisional or individual), (iii) applicable Federal or state securities laws, (iv) time-based restrictions, or (v) any other basis determined by the Committee. Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, (y) with respect to Shares of Restricted Stock or Restricted Stock Units granted to all Participants other than director Participants subject solely to restrictions as described in subsection (iv) above, the minimum Period of Restriction shall be three years (provided that such Shares may vest pro rata on an annual basis during such Period of Restriction beginning on the first anniversary of the Grant Date) and (z) with respect to all other Shares of Restricted Stock or Restricted Stock Units, the minimum Period of Restriction shall be one year.

(b) Retention of Certificates. To the extent deemed appropriate by the Committee, the Company may retain the certificates representing Shares of Restricted Stock in the Company's possession until such time as all conditions and restrictions applicable to such Shares have been satisfied or lapse.

7.5 Removal of Restrictions. After an Award of Restricted Stock or Restricted Stock Units is granted, the Committee may (a) accelerate the time at which any restrictions shall lapse and waive any condition constituting a substantial risk of forfeiture, but only in the event of death, disability or involuntary termination of employment of the Participant (as determined by the Administrator) in connection with or on or after a Change in Control, and/or (b) waive any condition constituting a substantial risk of forfeiture, but only in the event of a retirement. After the end of the Period of Restriction, the Shares shall be freely transferable by the Participant, subject to any other restrictions on transfer which may apply to such Shares. Restricted Stock Units shall be paid, no later than March 15 of the year following the year in which the Period of Restriction ends, in cash, Shares, or a combination of cash and Shares as the Committee, in its sole discretion, shall determine, as set forth in the Award Agreement.

7.6 Voting Rights. Except as otherwise determined by the Committee and set forth in the Award Agreement, Participants holding Shares of Restricted Stock granted hereunder shall have voting rights during the Period of Restriction. A Participant shall have no voting rights with respect to any Restricted Stock Units granted hereunder.

7.7 Dividends and Other Distributions. Except as otherwise determined by the Committee and set forth in the Award Agreement, Participants holding Shares of Restricted Stock or Restricted Stock Units shall be entitled to receive all dividends and other distributions paid with respect to the underlying Shares or dividend equivalents during the Period of Restriction.

7.8 Return of Restricted Stock to Company. On the date set forth in the applicable Award Agreement, the Restricted Stock for which restrictions shall not have lapsed will revert to the Company and thereafter be available for grant under the Plan.

## **SECTION 8 AMENDMENT, TERMINATION, AND DURATION**

8.1 Amendment, Suspension, or Termination. The Board, in its sole discretion, may amend or terminate the Plan, or any part thereof, at any time and for any reason; provided, however, that if and to the extent required by law or to maintain the Plan's compliance with the Code, the rules of any national securities exchange (if applicable), or any other applicable law, any such amendment shall be subject to stockholder approval; and further provided, that no amendment shall permit the repricing, replacing or regranting of an Option either in connection with the cancellation of such Option or by amending an

Award Agreement to lower the exercise price of such Option. The amendment, suspension or termination of the Plan shall not, without the consent of the Participant, alter or impair any rights or obligations under any Award theretofore granted to such Participant. No Award may be granted during any period of suspension or after termination of the Plan.

8.2 Duration of the Plan. The Plan shall become effective in accordance with Section 1.1, and subject to Section 8.1 shall remain in effect until the calendar day immediately preceding the tenth anniversary of the effective date of the Plan.

## **SECTION 9 TAX WITHHOLDING**

9.1 Withholding Requirements. Prior to the delivery of any Shares or cash pursuant to an Award (or the exercise thereof), the Company shall have the power and the right to deduct or withhold from any amounts due to the Participant from the Company, or require a Participant to remit to the Company, an amount sufficient to satisfy Federal, state and local taxes (including the Participant's FICA obligation) required to be withheld with respect to such Award (or the exercise thereof).

9.2 Withholding Arrangements. The Committee, pursuant to such procedures as it may specify from time to time, may permit a Participant to satisfy such tax withholding obligation, in whole or in part, by (a) electing to have the Company withhold otherwise deliverable Shares, or (b) delivering to the Company Shares then owned by the Participant having a Fair Market Value equal to the amount required to be withheld. The amount of the withholding requirement shall be deemed to include any amount that the Committee agrees may be withheld at the time any such election is made, not to exceed the amount determined by using the maximum federal, state or local marginal income tax rates applicable to the Participant with respect to the Award on the date that the amount of tax to be withheld is to be determined. The Fair Market Value of the Shares to be withheld or delivered shall be determined as of the date that the taxes are required to be withheld.

## **SECTION 10 CHANGE IN CONTROL**

10.1 Change in Control. Except with respect to Restricted Stock Unit Awards or any other Award that constitutes "deferred compensation" within the meaning of section 409A of the Code, an Award Agreement may provide or be amended by the Committee to provide that, unless an outstanding Award will be assumed by the surviving entity (or its parent if the surviving entity has a parent) or replaced with a comparable award of substantially equal value granted by the surviving entity (or its parent if the surviving entity has a parent), Awards granted under the Plan that are outstanding and not then exercisable or are subject to restrictions at the time of a Change in Control shall become immediately exercisable, and all restrictions shall be removed, as of such Change in Control, and shall remain as such for the remaining life of the Award as provided herein and within the provisions of the related Award Agreements or that Awards may terminate upon a Change in Control. For purposes of the Plan, a Change in Control means any of the following:

(a) the acquisition (other than from the Company) in one or more transactions by any person (as such term is used in Section 13(d) of the 1934 Act) of the beneficial ownership (within the meaning of Rule 13d-3 under the 1934 Act) of 40% or more of (A) the then outstanding Shares or (B) the combined voting power of the then outstanding securities of the Company entitled to vote generally in the election of directors (the "Company Voting Stock");

(b) the closing of a sale or other conveyance of all or substantially all of the assets of the Company; or

(c) the effective time of any merger, share exchange, consolidation, or other business combination involving the Company if immediately after such transaction persons who hold a majority of the outstanding voting securities entitled to vote generally in the election of directors of the surviving entity (or the entity owning 100% of such surviving entity) are not persons who, immediately prior to such transaction, held the Company Voting Stock.

10.2 Other Awards. An Award Agreement with respect to a Restricted Stock Unit Award or any other Award that constitutes “deferred compensation” within the meaning of section 409A of the Code may provide that the Award shall vest upon a “change in control” as defined in section 409A of the Code.

## **SECTION 11 MISCELLANEOUS**

11.1 Deferrals. To the extent consistent with the requirements of section 409A of the Code, the Committee may provide in an Award Agreement or another document that a Participant is permitted to defer receipt of the payment of cash or the delivery of Shares that would otherwise be due to such Participant under an Award. Any such deferral shall be subject to such rules and procedures as shall be determined by the Committee.

11.2 No Effect on Employment or Service. Nothing in the Plan shall interfere with or limit in any way the right of the Company or any Subsidiary to terminate any Participant’s employment or service at any time, with or without cause. Employment with the Company or any Subsidiary is on an at-will basis only, unless otherwise provided by an applicable employment or service agreement between the Participant and the Company or any Subsidiary, as the case may be.

11.3 Successors. All obligations of the Company under the Plan, with respect to Awards granted hereunder, shall be binding on any successor to the Company, whether the existence of such successor is the result of a direct or indirect purchase, merger, consolidation or otherwise, of all or substantially all of the business or assets of the Company.

11.4 Beneficiary Designations. If permitted by the Committee, a Participant under the Plan may name a beneficiary or beneficiaries to whom any vested but unpaid Award shall be paid in the event of the Participant’s death. Each such designation shall revoke all prior designations by the Participant and shall be effective only if given in a form and manner acceptable to the Committee. In the absence of any such designation, any vested benefits remaining unpaid at the Participant’s death shall be paid to the Participant’s estate and, subject to the terms of the Plan and of the applicable Award Agreement, any unexercised vested Award may be exercised by the administrator, executor or the personal representative of the Participant’s estate.

11.5 No Rights as Stockholder. Except to the limited extent provided in Sections 7.6 and 7.7, no Participant (nor any beneficiary thereof) shall have any of the rights or privileges of a stockholder of the Company with respect to any Shares issuable pursuant to an Award (or the exercise thereof), unless and until certificates representing such Shares shall have been issued, recorded on the records of the Company or its transfer agents or registrars, and delivered to the Participant (or his or her beneficiary).

11.6 Uncertificated Shares. To the extent that the Plan provides for issuance of certificates to reflect the transfer of Shares, the transfer of such Shares may be effected on a noncertificated basis, to the extent not prohibited by applicable law or the rules of any stock exchange.

11.7 Fractional Shares. No fractional Shares shall be issued or delivered pursuant to the Plan or any Award. The Committee shall determine whether cash, or Awards, or other property shall be issued or paid in lieu of fractional Shares or whether such fractional Shares or any rights thereto shall be forfeited or otherwise eliminated.

11.8 Severability. In the event any provision of the Plan shall be held illegal or invalid for any reason, the illegality or invalidity shall not affect the remaining parts of the Plan, and the Plan shall be construed and enforced as if the illegal or invalid provision had not been included.

11.9 Requirements of Law. The grant of Awards and the issuance of Shares under the Plan shall be subject to all applicable laws, rules and regulations, and to such approvals by any governmental agencies or national securities exchanges as may be required from time to time.

11.10 Securities Law Compliance. To the extent any provision of the Plan, Award Agreement or action by the Committee fails to comply with any applicable federal or state securities law, it shall be deemed null and void, to the extent permitted by law and deemed advisable or appropriate by the Committee.

11.11 Governing Law. The Plan and all Award Agreements shall be construed in accordance with and governed by the laws of the State of North Carolina.

11.12 Captions. Captions are provided herein for convenience of reference only, and shall not serve as a basis for interpretation or construction of the Plan.

11.13 Recoupment. Each Award granted under this Plan and any payment with respect to any Award is subject to the Company's Incentive Compensation Recoupment Policy, as adopted on July 22, 2010, or as amended from time to time.