ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDING
BEFORE THE
SECURITIES COMMISSIONER OF MARYLAND

IN THE MATTER OF: *

Stanley G. Richards * Case No. 2025 - 0560

Respondent *

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FINAL ORDER

WHEREAS, the Securities Division of the Office of the Maryland Attorney General (the "Division"), pursuant to the authority granted in section 11-701 of the Maryland Securities Act (the "Act" or "Securities Act"), and the Corporations and Associations Article, Title 11, Annotated Code of Maryland (2025 Repl. Vol.), undertook an investigation into the activities of Stanley G. Richards ("Respondent"); and

WHEREAS, on the basis of that investigation the Maryland Securities Commissioner ("Commissioner") has determined that Respondent engaged in acts or practices constituting violations of sections 11-301, 11-302(a)(2) and (c), 11-306, 11-401(a), 11-401(b), and 11-501 of the Act; and

WHEREAS, on February 11, 2026, the Commissioner issued an Order to Show Cause ("Order"), which is incorporated by reference, requiring Respondent to show cause why Respondent should not be barred permanently from engaging in the securities and investment advisory business in Maryland, why an order to cease and desist from violations of the Act should not be entered against him, and why a statutory penalty of up to $5,000 per violation should not be entered against him; and

WHEREAS, the Order provided that the failure to file an answer, including a request for a hearing, within fifteen (15) days of service of the Order would result in the entry of a Final Order barring Respondent from engaging in the securities or investment advisory business in Maryland, ordering Respondent to permanently cease and desist from violations of the Act and imposing on Respondent a monetary penalty of up to $5,000 per violation of the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Order was emailed to Respondent with his consent to accept service at his email address on February 11, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Respondent confirmed receipt of said Order via email on February 11, 2026; and

WHEREAS, to date Respondent has failed to file an answer or a request for a hearing in response to the Order; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioner has determined that it is in the public interest to issue this Final Order; and

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to sections, 11-301(2) and (3), 11-302(a)(2) and (c), 11-306, 11-401(a), 11-401(b), 11-501, 11- 701.1 and 11-801 of the Act, the Commissioner finds and orders:

I. JURISDICTION

1. The Commissioner has jurisdiction in this proceeding pursuant to section 11-701.1 and 11-801 of the Act.

II. RESPONDENT

2. At all relevant times, Respondent was a resident of Maryland. At all relevant times, Respondent acted as a broker-dealer, agent, investment adviser or investment adviser representative in the State of Maryland on behalf of NovaTech Ltd. a/k/a NovaTechFx, NovaTech

Advisors, LLC, NovaPay, LLC, and Nova Trading OU ("NovaTech Entities"). Respondent has never been registered as a broker-dealer, agent, investment adviser, or investment adviser representative in the State of Maryland.

III. OTHER NON-PARTIES

3. At all relevant times, NovaTech Ltd. a/k/a NovaTechFx is and was a business entity registered in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with principal places of business in Beachmont, Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

4. At all relevant times, NovaTech Advisors, LLC is and was a Florida limited liability company with a principal place of business in Boca Raton, Florida.

5. At all relevant times, NovaPay, LLC is and was a Florida limited liability company with a principal place of business in Boca Raton, Florida.

6. At all relevant times, NovaTrading OU is and was an Estonian company with a principal place of business in Tallinn, Estonia.

7. At all relevant times, Eddy Petion was a co-founder, manager and Chief Operating Officer of the NovaTech Entities. Mr. Petion has never been registered as a broker-dealer, agent, investment adviser, or investment adviser representative in the State of Maryland.

8. At all relevant times, Cynthia Petion was a co-founder, manager and the Chief Executive Officer of the NovaTech Entities. Ms. Petion has never been registered as a broker-dealer, agent, investment adviser, or investment adviser representative in the State of Maryland.

9. Eddy and Cynthia Petion are collectively known as "the Petions."

10. The NovaTech Entities, through the Petions, operated the websites www.novatechfx.com and www.novatechfx.io.

III. FINDINGS OF FACTS

11. As early as 2019, NovaTech began offering and selling securities in the form of investment contracts in Maryland through general solicitations on its website, via virtual online conferencing, and via in-state, person-to-person recruitment. NovaTech referred to these investment contracts as "Packages."

12. NovaTech was not and is not currently registered as a broker-dealer to sell securities in the state of Maryland nor has it registered its securities or filed a claim of exemption or preemption from registration.

13. NovaTech promoted itself as a crypto asset and Forex trading platform. The purported purpose of the securities offerings was for NovaTech to use investor funds to engage in crypto and Forex trading, which in turn would generate returns for clients who invested in NovaTech Packages. NovaTech claimed to execute this trading activity using its percentage allocation management module (PAMM) accounts. According to NovaTech, clients could invest their funds in NovaTech's master trading accounts, which NovaTech would then pool with other client's funds to be managed and traded by NovaTech's "experienced traders and bots."

14. NovaTech specifically targeted prospective investors with little to no experience trading in the crypto and Forex markets, telling prospective investors that NovaTech's "fully automated" investment products allow investors to "earn without having to trade" and that "no experience is needed."

15. The Packages were publicly available to investors through NovaTech's website and in Maryland by face-to-face and online offerings and sales by Maryland-based NovaTech senior representatives, including Respondent.

16. In addition to its purported trading activities, NovaTech claimed to generate additional revenue through the operation of Bitcoin ATMs by an affiliated entity, Smart Bit, Inc. NovaTech told prospective investors that the profits from its Bitcoin ATM business would be included in the distributions it made to clients who purchased NovaTech Packages.

17. Hundreds of thousands of NovaTech clients across the country and internationally were defrauded out of hundreds of millions of dollars, including approximately three thousand (3,000) Maryland residents who were defrauded out of an estimated $110,000,000 by enticing clients to invest in NovaTech by citing past, and promising future, high returns on their investments which were completely false and not supported by any link to actual market performance.

18. NovaTech also falsely informed clients they could withdraw their money at any time, when in reality all withdrawals were controlled by the Petions and ultimately, when new deposits slowed beyond the ability to cover withdrawals, no withdrawals were permitted.

19. However, Respondent still made recommendations and rendered investment advice to prospective clients and ultimately offered and sold the NovaTech security to 148 clients, some of whom offered and sold to other prospective clients who invested an estimated $37,000,000 into NovaTech. NovaTech was an illegal pyramid scheme.

20. During NovaTech videos, virtual calls, and on social media, Respondent offered and sold the NovaTech security to prospective clients by highlighting the claimed high returns, the benefits of compound interest and advantages of reinvesting profits in NovaTech. He often cited his level of success at NovaTech and on July 27, 2022, Respondent posted on his social media feed that only after one year with NovaTech, he had "personally sponsored 107 individuals, with a total of 3206 on my team – group volume of over $13.8 million – and I'm just getting started."

21. Respondent used the materials and information from the NovaTech websites, www.novatechfx.io and www.novatechfx.com, which advertised NovaTech as a "Forex & Crypto Trading Platform" that promised "weekly payouts," to conduct in-person and online offering and selling sessions targeting prospective clients.

22. Respondent enticed clients to open accounts with NovaTech, and investors were told they could convert monies into cryptocurrency and invest any amount of cryptocurrency for "trading." Respondent further enticed clients by telling them that NovaTech would waive monthly service fees for investors with over $25,000.

23. After opening their accounts, clients' monies were directed through NovaTech's website to a payment processor located in Lithuania and Estonia. The crypto assets were held in NovaTech's crypto "wallets." The Petions maintained full control of the NovaTech accounts held with the payment processor and determined the methods by which clients' crypto assets were received from and returned, if at all, to clients.

24. The Petions determined how much, if any, clients' monies were traded on the NovaTech trading platform.

25. Respondent informed clients that on each Friday, NovaTech posted the return on investments from weekly trading profits from the prior week. In reality, these numbers were completely false and not supported by any link to actual market performance.

26. Respondent informed clients that they could also receive referral bonuses for recruiting new clients and were given ceremonial titles that reflected the amount of money they convinced prospective clients to invest in NovaTech. Titles included Platinum Associate for $25,000 in sales and 2-Star Ambassador for $100,000,000 in sales.

27. Respondent held the title of Senior Director for offering and selling a group volume of no less than $25,000,000. NovaTech defined group volume as the amount of crypto assets invested by a promoter's subordinate clients and included the alleged trading profits and commissions reinvested by a promoter's subordinate clients. Respondent's wife and son held titles of Director and Junior Director respectively for selling no less than $10,000,000 and $5,000,000, respectively.

28. Respondent used various social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, virtual online meetings, in-person meetings, and other means to promote NovaTech. Respondent used slide decks created by the Petions describing the structure of the NovaTech investment in virtual online meetings and face-to-face recruitment meetings. The same information was available for viewing on the NovaTech investor portal and the NovaTech website.

29. Respondent falsely promoted NovaTech as being properly "registered" or "a registered hedge fund" and "licensed" to trade cryptocurrency in the United States.

30. Respondent held routinely scheduled online calls to promote NovaTech, updated clients on the continuing success of NovaTech, falsely telling existing and prospective clients that NovaTech was generating profits from trading of approximately 2-4% per week, and falsely assuring clients that they could withdraw their initial investment and profits at any time.

31. The statements made by Respondent were materially false and misleading. NovaTech was not licensed by any regulatory entity in the United States, including Maryland, or abroad and did not generate profits from trading that were sufficient to support the profit claims or ability to make the payouts promised by Respondent. He knew, or should have known, that NovaTech's structure and claims were completely false.

32. At no time did Respondent disclose the risks associated with the NovaTech securities, including that the NovaTech securities described above could lose value, were unsecured, would not be paid, and were unregistered. Conversely, Respondent falsely stated that clients could get their money back at any time, and cited false gains that did not correspond to actual market performance or gains and losses of the NovaTech securities

33. Investors worldwide deposited between six hundred million dollars and one billion dollars' worth of cryptocurrency with NovaTech beginning as early as 2019 through 2023; however, less than $26 million was ever actually traded on NovaTech's trading platform.

34. In 2022, securities regulators in the United States and Canada issued cease and desist orders against NovaTech for selling and promoting unregistered securities and for committing fraud. Notwithstanding these orders and the warning signs that NovaTech was on the verge of collapse, Respondent continued to buy time with clients by assuring them via YouTube video updates that clients were still able to access the money in their accounts, which was true until February 2023 and with varying amounts of success by clients depending on how much cryptocurrency they were trying to withdraw.

35. Beginning in February 2023, NovaTech suspended all withdrawals from clients' accounts and failed to return monies invested, leaving tens of thousands of clients worldwide with extraordinary losses totaling millions of dollars, including those to whom Respondent offered and sold the NovaTech security.

36. The Petions transferred tens of millions of dollars' worth of cryptocurrency out of NovaTech, and Respondent was paid between 1% to 5% for offering and selling the NovaTech security to clients he recruited and a lesser percentage for clients sold to by Respondent's subordinate clients.

IV. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Commissioner concludes that:

37. Respondent violated section 11-501 of the Act by offering and selling unregistered investment contract securities.

38. Respondent transacted business as an unregistered broker-dealer or agent, in violation of section 11-401(a) of the Act.

39. Respondent transacted business as an investment adviser or as an investment adviser representative, in violation of section 11-401(b) of the Act.

40. Respondent, in connection with the offer or sale of securities, made untrue statements of material fact or omitted to state material facts and engaged in a course of business that operated or would operate as a fraud or deceit on a person in violation of sections 11-301(2), and (3) of the Act.

41. Respondent engaged in an act, practice, and course or business which operated as a fraud or deceit on the other person and received consideration from another person for advising the other person as to the value of securities or their purchase or sale while acting as an investment adviser or representative under sections 11-101(i) and (j) of the Act in violation of sections 11-302(a)(2) and (c) of the Act.

42. Respondent failed to disclose material facts in the offer and sale of securities while engaged in the business of effecting transactions in securities to prospective clients in violation of section 11-306 of the Act.

V. SANCTIONS

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

a. Respondent shall permanently cease and desist from violating sections 11-301, 11-

302(a)(1) – (2) and (c), 11-306, 11-401(a), 11-401(b), 11-501 of the Act.

b. Respondent is permanently barred from engaging in the securities or investment advisory business in Maryland for or on behalf of any others, or from acting as principal or consultant in any entity so engaged, including engaging in the offer and sale of any securities whether registered, exempted or preempted from registration.

c. Respondent is assessed a civil monetary penalty pursuant to section 11-702 of the Act in the amount of $5,920,000.00 for the violations set forth in this Final Order. Payment of the civil monetary penalty shall be by certified check payable to the Office of the Attorney General. However, this penalty shall be reduced dollar for dollar by the amount of restitution made by Respondents to the investors that invested in or through the investment program(s) offered or operated by them if, within thirty (30) days of the date of this Final Order, or Respondents enter into an agreement with the Commissioner to make restitution to investors. Any payment of restitution under such a plan shall be by certified check payable to the Office of the Attorney General and then distributed by the Office of the Attorney General in a manner within its discretion. If no agreement for restitution is reached within thirty (30) days of the date of this Final Order, the civil monetary penalty imposed under this Final Order shall be immediately due and payable. If the Division forwards this matter for collection to the Central Collections Department of Maryland, the 17% collection fee assessed by Central Collections shall be in addition to, and not offset, the balance of the civil monetary penalty owed to the Division.

d. Respondent shall comply fully with the Act and the regulations promulgated thereunder.

VI. JURISDICTION RETAINED

43. Jurisdiction shall be retained by the Commissioner for such further orders and

directions as may be necessary or appropriate for the construction or enforcement of this Final Order.

VII. APPEAL RIGHTS

44. Respondent may appeal this Final Order to the appropriate Circuit Court of the State of Maryland within 30 days from the date this Final Order is mailed by the Securities Division.

SO ORDERED:

Commissioner's Signature on File
w/Original Documents

March 4, 2026

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Melanie Senter Lubin
Maryland Securities Commissioner