

AGREEMENT FOR COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE TAX APPEALS

59-25

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THIS AGREEMENT made and entered into on this 28th day of January, 2025 by and between the **TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE**, a municipal corporation of the State of New Jersey, located at Town Hall, 66 Main Street, West Orange, County of Essex and State of New Jersey, hereinafter called the "TOWNSHIP," party of the first part, and **BLAU & BLAU**, Attorneys at Law of the State of New Jersey, located at 223 Mountain Avenue, Springfield, New Jersey 07081, hereinafter referred to as "COUNSEL," party of the second part.

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WITNESSETH THAT:

WHEREAS, the Governing Body of the Township has determined that it is in the best interests of the Township to retain the services of Special Counsel to represent the Township in connection with commercial real estate tax appeals on a flat fee basis;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises, terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. The Township hereby retains the services of Blau & Blau, as Special Counsel to assist the Township in connection with commercial real estate tax appeals for the period January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025 at a flat rate of \$6,000 per month for the first forty (40) cases filed in 2025 and each additional case at a rate of \$1,500 per case. There will be an hourly rate of \$150 per hour for trials, including pre-trial preparation and post-trial work.

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2. COUNSEL will not seek reimbursement for its routine costs and expenses such as postage, copying, mileage, meals, parking, or delivery of documents.

3. COUNSEL may seek reimbursement for extraordinary expenses such as the cost of deposing adverse witnesses, transcripts or hiring experts. Counsel will not incur any such expenses without the approval of the Township Attorney.

4. COUNSEL'S responsibilities shall include all pre-trial preparation, discovery and trial, to the extent necessary, for all commercial real estate tax appeals pending or commenced in the Tax Court of New Jersey against the Township. Counsel's responsibilities do not include preparation or appearance for matters pending or commenced at the County Board of Taxation.

5. COUNSEL shall coordinate all efforts with the Tax Assessor and keep the Tax Assessor and Township Attorney fully apprised concerning all matters.

6. Prosecution of Appeals for the Township (Reverse Appeals).

COUNSEL shall have the right to file tax appeals for the Township on a contingent fee basis of one-third of the money obtained for the Township from cases filed during the term of the contract. COUNSEL will be responsible for all costs associated with filing the affirmative appeals including but not limited to:

- A) Filing fees;
- B) Appraisal fees;
- C) Copying, postage, delivery services, preparation of trial exhibits, etc.

It is contemplated that COUNSEL will recommend appeals on properties and will not be obligated to file an appeal unless it believes the property is substantially under-assessed. It is contemplated that COUNSEL will recommend settlement of the Affirmative Appeals from time to time as COUNSEL may deem appropriate. In the event that the Township refuses to accept COUNSEL's recommendation to settle a matter, the Township shall be responsible for payment of the contingent fee based upon the recommendation and reimbursement of COUNSEL's actual out of pocket expenses related to that Affirmative Appeal.

7. COUNSEL recognizes that any and all approval for engagement of services must come from the Governing Body of the Township, and that no services, work or any efforts

relative to the contract shall be commenced until the Governing Body passes a duly authorized Resolution accompanied by a Certificate of Funds.

8. COUNSEL is hereby placed on notice that the Billing Guidelines of the Township shall apply to this agreement for professional services. COUNSEL is further noticed that no Department Head, individual member of the Governing Body, or any agent, servant or employee of the Township possesses any lawful authority to: (a) engage the rendition of services or the performance of work; (b) authorize the continuation of services or work beyond the amount specifically approved in the Resolution and Certificate of Funds; or to (c) represent that future funds will be available as compensation for current services. Any such acts shall be deemed ultra vires and beyond the scope of any authority that individual may possess. No bills, statement or vouchers for any amount exceeding that originally approved will be honored or paid by the Township, irrespective of whether such services were actually performed.

9. During the term of this agreement, COUNSEL shall maintain professional liability malpractice insurance coverage with an insurance company licensed and authorized to do business in the State of New Jersey with coverage not less than \$1,000,000. COUNSEL shall provide the Township Attorney and Municipal Clerk with proof of a valid certificate of insurance listing the TOWNSHIP as a certificate holder. To the extent that this insurance coverage is scheduled to lapse at any time before the end of the contract, COUNSEL shall provide proof of renewal or new insurance coverage no later than thirty (30) days before the termination of the current coverage.

10. The provisions of this agreement are subject to the limitations of provisions of the New Jersey Tort Claim Act, N.J.S.A. 59:2-1 *et seq.*, and the New Jersey Contractual Liability Act, N.J.S.A. 59:13-1 *et seq.*

11. This agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of New Jersey without regard to principles of conflict of laws. All contract claims under this agreement shall be subject to and governed by the provisions of the New Jersey Contractual Liability Act (N.J.S.A. 59:13-1 *et seq.*

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

ATTEST:

KAREN J. CARNEVALE, R.M.C

By:_____
SUSAN McCARTNEY, MAYOR

BLAU & BLAU

WITNESS:

By:_____
CHARLES E. BLAU, ESQ.
For the Firm