

## Risk Factors Comparison 2025-03-14 to 2024-03-28 Form: 10-K

Legend: **New Text** ~~Removed Text~~ Unchanged Text **Moved Text** Section

less on our loans and price competition for deposits may result in a reduction of our deposit base of paying more on deposits.

~~Risks Related to Our Operations~~Our reliance on brokered deposits, military deposits and deposits from listing services could adversely affect our liquidity and operating results. Among other sources of funds, we rely on brokered deposits as well as military deposits and deposits obtained from listing services to provide funds with which to make loans and provide other liquidity needed. At December 31, 2023, brokered deposits, military deposits and deposits obtained through listing services totaled \$ 361.4 million, or 25.8 % of total deposits, of which brokered deposits represents \$ 311.2 million or 22.2 % of total deposits. Generally, these deposits may not be as stable as other types of deposits. In the future, these depositors may not replace their deposits with us as they mature, or we may have to pay a higher rate of interest to keep those deposits or to replace them with other deposits or sources of funds. Not being able to maintain or replace these deposits as they mature could affect our liquidity. ~~Paying higher deposit rates to maintain or replace these types of deposits could adversely affect our net interest margin and operating results.~~ We face a risk of non-compliance and enforcement action with the Bank Secrecy Act and other anti-money laundering statutes and regulations. The federal Bank Secrecy Act, the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (the “PATRIOT Act”) and other laws and regulations require financial institutions, among other duties, to institute and maintain effective anti-money laundering programs and file suspicious activity and currency transaction reports as appropriate. The federal Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, established by the U. S. Treasury Department to administer the Bank Secrecy Act, is authorized to impose significant civil money penalties for violations of those requirements and have engaged in coordinated enforcement efforts with the individual federal banking regulators, as well as the U. S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration and Internal Revenue Service. Federal and state bank regulators also are focused on compliance with Bank Secrecy Act and anti-money laundering regulations. If our policies, procedures and systems are deemed deficient or the policies, procedures and systems of the financial institutions that we may acquire in the future are deficient, we would be subject to liability, including fines and regulatory actions such as restrictions on our ability to pay dividends and inability to obtain regulatory approvals to proceed with certain aspects of our business plan, including acquisitions, which would negatively impact our business, financial condition and results of operations. Failure to maintain and implement adequate programs to combat money laundering and terrorist financing could also have serious reputational consequences for us. Because the nature of the financial services business involves a high volume of transactions, we face significant operational risks. We rely on the ability of our employees and systems to process a high number of transactions. Operational risk is the risk of loss resulting from our operations, including but not limited to, the risk of fraud by employees or third parties, the execution of unauthorized transactions by employees, errors relating to transaction processing and technology, breaches of our internal control systems and compliance requirements, and ineffective business continuation and disaster recovery policies and procedures. Insurance coverage may not be available for such losses, or where available, such losses may exceed insurance limits. This risk of loss also includes the potential legal actions that could arise as a result of an operational deficiency or as a result of non-compliance with applicable regulations, adverse business decisions or their implementation, and customer attrition due to potential negative publicity. A breakdown in our internal control systems, improper operation of our systems or improper employee actions could result in material financial loss to us, the imposition of regulatory action, and damage to our reputation.

~~23~~**Risks** ~~Related to Our Growth Strategy~~The building of market share through our branch office strategy, and our ability to achieve profitability on new branch offices, may increase our expenses and negatively affect our earnings. We believe there are branch expansion opportunities within our primary market area and adjacent markets, and will seek to grow our lending and deposit base by adding branches to our existing ten-branch network. There are considerable costs involved in opening branch offices, especially in light of the capabilities needed to compete in today’s environment. Moreover, new branch offices generally require a period of time to generate sufficient revenues to offset their costs, especially in areas in which we do not have an established presence. Accordingly, new branch offices could negatively impact our earnings and may do so for some period of time. Our investments in new branches, and the related personnel required to operate such branches, take time to earn returns and can be expected to negatively impact our earnings for the foreseeable future. The profitability of our expansion strategy will depend on whether the income that we generate from the new branch offices will offset the increased expenses resulting from establishing and operating these branch offices.

**Risks Related to Our Payment of Dividends**Our dividend policy may change without notice and any payment of dividends in the future is subject to the discretion of our Board of Directors. The holders of our common stock will receive cash dividends if and when declared by our Board of Directors out of legally available funds. The Company has historically paid a quarterly cash dividend to stockholders. During the 24year ended December 31, 2024, the Company increased the quarterly cash dividends to \$ 0.10 per share on March 21, 2024 and \$ 0.15 per share on September 19, 2024 from \$ 0.06 per share prior to 2024. Although we have a history of paying cash dividends, we have no obligation to continue paying dividends. Any future determination relating to our dividend policy will be made at the discretion of our board of directors and will depend on a number of factors, including our future earnings, capital requirements and alternative uses for capital, financial condition, future prospects, regulatory restrictions, and other factors that our board of directors may deem relevant. Our principal business operations are conducted through our subsidiary, the Bank, and the ability of the Bank to pay dividends to us will continue to be subject to, and limited by, certain legal and regulatory restrictions. Further, any lenders making loans to us may impose financial covenants that may be more

**restrictive with respect to dividend payments than the regulatory requirements**. Risks Related to Our Business and Industry Generally Changes in interest rates may hurt our profits and asset values and our strategies for managing interest rate risk may not be effective. We are subject to significant interest rate risk as a financial institution. Our interest-bearing liabilities reprice or mature more quickly than our interest-earning assets. Changes in the general level of interest rates can affect our net interest income by affecting the difference between the weighted-average yield earned on our interest-earning assets and the weighted-average rate paid on our interest-bearing liabilities, or interest rate spread, and the average life of our interest-earning assets and interest-bearing liabilities. Changes in interest rates also can affect: (1) our ability to originate loans; (2) the value of our interest-earning assets and our ability to realize gains from the sale of such assets; (3) our ability to obtain and retain deposits in competition with other available investment alternatives; and (4) the ability of our borrowers to repay their loans, particularly adjustable or variable rate loans. Interest rates are highly sensitive to many factors, including government monetary policies, domestic and international economic and political conditions and other factors beyond our control. Ineffective liquidity management could adversely affect our financial results and condition. Effective liquidity management is essential for the operation of our business. We require sufficient liquidity to meet customer loan requests, customer deposit maturities / withdrawals, payments on our debt obligations as they come due and other cash commitments under both normal operating conditions and other unpredictable circumstances causing industry or general financial market stress. Our access to funding sources in amounts adequate to finance our activities on terms that are acceptable to us could be impaired by factors that affect us specifically or the financial services industry or economy generally. Factors that could detrimentally impact our access to liquidity sources include a downturn in the geographic markets in which our loans and operations are concentrated or difficult credit markets. Our access to deposits may also be affected by the liquidity needs of our depositors. In particular, a majority of our liabilities are checking accounts and other liquid deposits, which are payable on demand or upon several days' notice, while by comparison, a substantial majority of our assets are loans, which cannot be called or sold in the same time frame. Although we have historically been able to replace maturing deposits and advances as necessary, we might not be able to replace such funds in the future, especially if a large number of our depositors seek to withdraw their accounts, regardless of the reason. A failure to maintain adequate liquidity could materially and adversely affect our business, results of operations or financial condition. Financial challenges at other banking institutions could lead to depositor concerns that spread within the banking industry causing disruptive and destabilizing deposit outflows. In March 2023, Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank experienced large deposit outflows coupled with insufficient liquidity to meet withdrawal demands, resulting in the institutions being placed into FDIC receivership. Additionally, in May 2023, First Republic Bank experienced similar circumstances which resulted in the institution ~~24~~ **being** placed in FDIC receivership. In the aftermath of these events, there has been substantial market disruption and concerns that diminished depositor confidence could spread across the banking industry, leading to deposit outflows that could destabilize other institutions. To strengthen public confidence in the banking system, the FDIC took action to protect funds held in uninsured deposit accounts at Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank following the placement of those institutions into receivership. However, the FDIC has not committed to protecting uninsured deposits in other ~~institutions~~ **25 institutions** that experience outsized withdrawal demands. ~~To further bolster the banking system, the Federal Reserve Board created a new Bank Term Funding Program to provide an additional source of liquidity.~~ At December 31, ~~2023~~ **2024**, we had uninsured deposits totaling \$ ~~344-346~~ **8-9** million and \$ ~~102-115~~ **7-0** million in available liquidity, including \$ ~~68-78~~ **7-3** million in cash, as well as \$ ~~865-834~~ **1-7** million in borrowing capacity at the FRBNY which was sufficient to cover our uninsured deposits ~~as of December 31, 2024~~. Notwithstanding our significant liquidity, large deposit outflows could adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations and could result in the closure of the Bank. Furthermore, the recent bank failures may result in strengthening of capital and liquidity rules which, if the revised rules apply to us, could adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations. Economic, social and political conditions or civil unrest in the United States may affect the markets in which we operate, our customers, our ability to provide customer service, and could have a material adverse impact on our business, results of operations, or financial condition. Our business may be adversely affected by instability, disruption or destruction in the markets in which we operate, regardless of cause, including war, terrorism, riot, civil insurrection or social unrest, and natural or man-made disasters, including storm or other events beyond our control, such as pandemics and civil unrest. Such events can increase levels of political and economic unpredictability, result in property damage and business closures within in our markets and increase the volatility of the financial markets. Any of these effects could have a material and adverse impact on our business and results of operations. These events also pose significant risks to our personnel and to physical facilities, transportation and operations, which could adversely affect our financial results. Increasing scrutiny and evolving expectations from customers, regulators, investors, and other stakeholders with respect to our environmental, social and governance practices may impose additional costs on us or expose us to new or additional risks. Companies are facing increasing scrutiny from customers, regulators, investors, and other stakeholders related to their environmental, social and governance ("ESG") practices and disclosure. Investor advocacy groups, investment funds and influential investors are also increasingly focused on these practices, especially as they relate to **, among other things,** the environment, health and safety ~~-diversity-~~, labor conditions and human rights. Increased ESG related compliance costs could result in increases to our overall operational costs. Failure to adapt to or comply with regulatory requirements or investor or stakeholder expectations and standards could negatively impact our reputation, ability to do business with certain partners, and our stock price. New government regulations could also result in new or more stringent forms of ESG oversight and expanding mandatory and voluntary reporting, diligence, and disclosure. We depend on our management team to implement our business strategy and execute successful operations and we could be harmed by the loss of their services. We depend upon the services of the members of our senior management team who direct our strategy and operations. Our executive officers and lending personnel possess expertise in our markets and key business relationships, and the loss of any one of them could be difficult to replace. Our loss of one or more of these persons, or our inability to hire additional qualified personnel, could impact our ability

to implement our business strategy and could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and our ability to compete in our markets. We are a community bank and our ability to maintain our reputation is critical to the success of our business. The failure to do so may adversely affect our performance. We are a community bank and our reputation is one of the most valuable assets of our business. A key component of our business strategy is to rely on our reputation for customer service and knowledge of local markets to expand our presence by capturing new business opportunities from existing and prospective customers in our market area and contiguous areas. As such, we strive to conduct our business in an honorable manner that enhances our ~~25reputation~~ **reputation**. This is done, in part, by recruiting, hiring and retaining employees who share our core values of being an integral part of the communities we serve, delivering superior service to our customers and caring about our customers and communities. If our reputation is negatively affected by the actions of our employees, by our inability to conduct our operations in a manner that is appealing to current or prospective customers or otherwise, our business and operating results may be materially adversely affected. ~~We~~ **26We** are dependent on our information technology and telecommunications systems and third- party service providers; systems failures, interruptions and cybersecurity breaches could have a material adverse effect on us. Our business is dependent on the successful and uninterrupted functioning of our information technology and telecommunications systems and third- party service providers. The failure of these systems, or the termination of a third- party software license or service agreement on which any of these systems is based, could interrupt our operations. Because our information technology and telecommunications systems interface with and depend on third- party systems, we could experience service denials if demand for such services exceeds capacity or such third- party systems fail or experience interruptions. If significant, sustained or repeated, a system failure or service denial could compromise our ability to operate effectively, damage our reputation, result in a loss of customer business, and / or subject us to additional regulatory scrutiny and possible financial liability, any of which could have a material adverse effect on us. Our third- party service providers may be vulnerable to unauthorized access, computer viruses, phishing schemes and other security breaches. We likely will expend additional resources to protect against the threat of such security breaches and computer viruses, or to alleviate problems caused by such security breaches or viruses. To the extent that the activities of our third- party service providers or the activities of our customers involve the storage and transmission of confidential information, security breaches and viruses could expose us to claims, regulatory scrutiny, litigation costs and other possible liabilities. Security breaches and cybersecurity threats could compromise our information and expose us to liability, which would cause our business and reputation to suffer. In the ordinary course of our business, we collect and store sensitive data, including our proprietary business information and that of our customers, suppliers and business partners, as well as personally identifiable information about our customers and employees. The secure processing, maintenance and transmission of this information is critical to our operations and business strategy. We, our customers, and other financial institutions with which we interact, are subject to ongoing, continuous attempts to penetrate key systems by individual hackers, organized criminals, and in some cases, state- sponsored organizations. While we have established policies and procedures to prevent or limit the impact of cyber- attacks, there can be no assurance that such events will not occur or will be adequately addressed if they do. In addition, we also outsource certain cybersecurity functions, such as penetration testing, to third party service providers, and the failure of these service providers to adequately perform such functions could increase our exposure to security breaches and cybersecurity threats. Despite our security measures, our information technology and infrastructure may be vulnerable to attacks by hackers or breached due to employee error, malfeasance or other malicious code and cyber- attacks that could have an impact on information security. Any such breach or attacks could compromise our networks and the information stored there could be accessed, publicly disclosed, lost or stolen. Any such unauthorized access, disclosure or other loss of information could result in legal claims or proceedings, liability under laws that protect the privacy of personal information, and regulatory penalties; disrupt our operations and the services we provide to customers; damage our reputation; and cause a loss of confidence in our products and services, all of which could adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations. We must keep pace with technological change to remain competitive. Financial products and services have become increasingly technology- driven. Our ability to meet the needs of our customers competitively, and in a cost- efficient manner, is dependent on the ability to keep pace with technological advances and to invest in new technology as it becomes available, as well as related essential personnel. In addition, technology has lowered barriers to entry into the financial services market and made it possible for financial technology companies and other non- bank entities to offer financial products and services traditionally provided by banks. The ~~26ability~~ **ability** to keep pace with technological change is important, and the failure to do so, due to cost, proficiency or otherwise, could have a material adverse impact on our business and therefore on our financial condition and results of operations. ~~Acts~~ **27Acts** of terrorism and other external events could impact our business. Financial institutions have been, and continue to be, targets of terrorist threats aimed at compromising operating and communication systems. Such events could cause significant damage, impact the stability of our facilities and result in additional expenses, impair the ability of our borrowers to repay their loans, reduce the value of collateral securing repayment of our loans, and result in the loss of revenue. The occurrence of any such event could have a material adverse effect on our business, operations and financial condition. Regulation of the financial services industry is intense, and we may be adversely affected by changes in laws and regulations. The Bank is subject to extensive regulation, supervision and examination by the FDIC and the New York State Department of Financial Services. In addition, the Company is subject to extensive regulation, supervision and examination by the Federal Reserve Board ~~and the New York State Department of Financial Services~~. Such regulation, supervision and examination govern the activities in which we may engage, and are intended primarily for the protection of the deposit insurance fund and the Bank' s depositors and not for the protection of our stockholders. Federal and state regulatory agencies have the ability to take supervisory actions against financial institutions that have experienced increased loan losses and exhibit underwriting or other compliance weaknesses. These actions include the entering into of formal or informal written agreements and cease and desist orders that may place certain limitations on their operations. If we were to become subject to a regulatory action, such action could negatively impact our ability to

execute our business plan, and result in operational restrictions, as well as our ability to grow, pay dividends, repurchase stock or engage in mergers and acquisitions. See “Item 1: Business — Regulation and Supervision — Bank Regulation — Capital Requirements” for a discussion of regulatory capital requirements. We are an emerging growth company, and any decision on our part to comply only with certain reduced reporting and disclosure requirements applicable to emerging growth companies could make our common stock less attractive to investors. The Company is an emerging growth company and, for so long as it continues to be an emerging growth company, the Company may choose to take advantage of exemptions from various reporting requirements applicable to other public companies but not to “emerging growth companies,” including, but not limited to, reduced disclosure obligations regarding executive compensation in its periodic reports and proxy statements, and exemptions from the requirements of holding a non-binding advisory vote on executive compensation and stockholder approval of any golden parachute payments not previously approved. As an emerging growth company, the Company also is not subject to Section 404 (b) of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, which would require that its independent auditors review and attest as to the effectiveness of its internal control over financial reporting. We have also elected to use the extended transition period to delay adoption of new or revised accounting pronouncements applicable to public companies until such pronouncements are made applicable to private companies. Accordingly, our financial statements may not be comparable to the financial statements of public companies that comply with such new or revised accounting standards. Investors may find our common stock less attractive if we choose to rely on these exemptions. If some investors find our common stock less attractive as a result of any choices to reduce future disclosure, there may be a less active trading market for our common stock and the price of our common stock may be more volatile. ITEM 1B. UNRESOLVED STAFF COMMENTS None. ITEM 1C.

CYBERSECURITY Our information security program is managed by a dedicated Chief Information Officer, whose team is responsible for leading enterprise-wide cybersecurity strategy, policy, standards, architecture, and processes. The Chief **27 Information Officer provides periodic reports to our Board of Directors, as well as our Chief Executive Officer and other members of our senior management as appropriate. These reports include updates on the Company’s cyber risks and threats, the status of projects to strengthen our information security systems, assessments of the information security program, and the emerging threat landscape. Our program is regularly evaluated by internal and external experts with**