

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Before the
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
Release No. 99764 / March 19, 2024

SECURITIES ACT OF 1933
Release No. 11278 / March 19, 2024

ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING ENFORCEMENT
Release No. 4494 / March 19, 2024

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDING
File No. 3-21896

In the Matter of

IMRAN PAREKH,

Respondent.

**ORDER INSTITUTING PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS
PURSUANT TO RULE 102(e) OF THE
COMMISSION’S RULES OF PRACTICE,
MAKING FINDINGS, AND IMPOSING
REMEDIAL SANCTIONS**

I.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) deems it appropriate and in the public interest that public administrative proceedings be, and hereby are, instituted against Imran Parekh (“Respondent” or “Parekh”) pursuant to Rule 102(e)(3)(i) of the Commission’s Rules of Practice.¹

II.

In anticipation of the institution of these proceedings, Respondent has submitted an Offer of Settlement (the “Offer”) which the Commission has determined to accept. Solely for the purpose of these proceedings and any other proceedings brought by or on behalf of the Commission, or to which the Commission is a party, and without admitting or denying the

¹ Rule 102(e)(3)(i) provides, in relevant part, that:

The Commission, with due regard to the public interest and without preliminary hearing, may, by order, . . . suspend from appearing or practicing before it any . . . accountant . . . who has been by name . . . permanently enjoined by any court of competent jurisdiction, by reason of his or her misconduct in an action brought by the Commission, from violating or aiding and abetting the violation of any provision of the Federal securities laws or of the rules and regulations thereunder.

findings herein, except as to the Commission’s jurisdiction over him and the subject matter of these proceedings, and the findings contained in Section III.3 below, which are admitted, Respondent consents to the entry of this Order Instituting Public Administrative Proceedings Pursuant to Rule 102(e) of the Commission’s Rules of Practice, Making Findings, and Imposing Remedial Sanctions (“Order”), as set forth below.

III.

On the basis of this Order and Respondent’s Offer, the Commission finds that:

1. Imran Parekh, age 42, is a resident of Hopkinton, Massachusetts. From 2016 to August 2018, he was the Finance Director for the Aquatics & Disinfection Division – Americas at Evoqua Water Technologies Corp. (“Evoqua”). Parekh is not currently and has never been registered as an accountant. Parekh most recently worked as the CFO of a private company with offices in North Carolina and New York.

2. Evoqua Water Technologies Corp. is a Delaware corporation headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Evoqua describes itself as a provider of water treatment solutions. In October 2017, Evoqua registered its common stock with the Commission pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (“Exchange Act”), and its stock traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol AQUA.

3. On July 10, 2023, a judgment was entered against Parekh, permanently enjoining him from future violations of Section 17(a) of the Securities Act of 1933, Sections 10(b) and 13(b)(5) of the Exchange Act and Rules 10b-5 and 13b2-1 thereunder, and aiding and abetting violations of Sections 13(a), 13(b)(2)(A) and 13(b)(2)(B) of the Exchange Act and Rules 12b-20, 13a-1, 13a-11, and 13a-13 thereunder, in the civil action entitled Securities and Exchange Commission v. Evoqua Water Technologies Corp. et al., Civil Action No. 1:23-cv-00105-MSM-PAS, in the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island (“Civil Action”). On March 15, 2024, a final judgment was entered against Parekh in the Civil Action, ordering him to pay \$5,489 in disgorgement, \$1,342 in prejudgment interest, and a \$40,000 civil money penalty, and barring him for a period of ten years from serving as an officer or director of a public company.

4. The Commission’s complaint alleged, among other things, that from at least the fourth quarter of 2016 through August 2018, Parekh, as the Finance Director of one of Evoqua’s divisions, knowingly or recklessly engaged in accounting practices that operated as a fraud and resulted in Evoqua improperly recognizing revenue and reporting materially false revenue amounts in its financial statements filed with the Commission. The Complaint alleged that Parekh knowingly or recklessly inflated the revenue Evoqua reported quarterly and at year-end by improperly accounting for “bill-and-hold” transactions, for which Evoqua recognized revenue from the sale of filtration products without meeting recognized bill-and-hold criteria or following relevant accounting principles. As a result, Evoqua recognized revenue earlier than accounting principles permitted.

IV.

In view of the foregoing, the Commission deems it appropriate and in the public interest to impose the sanction agreed to in Respondent Parekh's Offer.

Accordingly, it is hereby ORDERED, effective immediately, that:

A. Parekh is suspended from appearing or practicing before the Commission as an accountant.

B. After ten years from the date of the Order, Parekh may request that the Commission consider Parekh's reinstatement by submitting an application to the attention of the Office of the Chief Accountant.

C. In support of any application for reinstatement to appear and practice before the Commission as a preparer or reviewer, or a person responsible for the preparation or review, of financial statements of a public company to be filed with the Commission, other than as a member of an audit committee, as that term is defined in Section 3(a)(58) of the Exchange Act, Respondent shall submit a written statement attesting to an undertaking to have Respondent's work reviewed by the independent audit committee of any public company for which Respondent works or in some other manner acceptable to the Commission, as long as Respondent practices before the Commission in this capacity and will comply with any Commission or other requirements related to the appearance and practice before the Commission as an accountant.

D. In support of any application for reinstatement to appear and practice before the Commission as a member of an audit committee, as that term is defined in Section 3(a)(58) of the Exchange Act, as a preparer or reviewer, or as a person responsible for the preparation or review, of any public company's financial statements that are filed with the Commission, Respondent shall submit a statement prepared by the audit committee(s) with which Respondent will be associated, including the following information:

1. A summary of the responsibilities and duties of the specific audit committee(s) with which Respondent will be associated;
2. A description of Respondent's role on the specific audit committee(s) with which Respondent will be associated;
3. A description of any policies, procedures, or controls designed to mitigate any potential risk to the Commission by such service;
4. A description relating to the necessity of Respondent's service on the specific audit committee; and
5. A statement noting whether Respondent will be able to act unilaterally on behalf of the Audit Committee as a whole.

E. In support of any application for reinstatement to appear and practice before the Commission as an independent accountant (auditor) before the Commission, Respondent must be associated with a public accounting firm registered with the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (the “PCAOB”) and Respondent shall submit the following additional information:

1. A statement from the public accounting firm (the “Firm”) with which Respondent is associated, stating that the firm is registered with the PCAOB in accordance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002;
2. A statement from the Firm with which the Respondent is associated that the Firm has been inspected by the PCAOB and that the PCAOB did not identify any criticisms of or potential defects in the Firm’s quality control system that would indicate that Respondent will not receive appropriate supervision; and
3. A statement from Respondent indicating that the PCAOB has taken no disciplinary actions against Respondent since seven (7) years prior to the date of the Order other than for the conduct that was the basis for the Order.

F. If Respondent is licensed as a certified public accountant (“CPA”), then in support of any application for reinstatement, Respondent shall provide documentation showing that Respondent’s license is current and that Respondent has resolved all other disciplinary issues with any applicable state boards of accountancy. If Respondent’s CPA licensure is dependent upon reinstatement by the Commission, then Respondent shall provide documents reflecting this requirement. If Respondent has never been licensed as a CPA, then Respondent shall submit a signed affidavit truthfully stating under penalty of perjury that Respondent has never been licensed as a CPA.

G. In support of any application for reinstatement, Respondent shall also submit a signed affidavit truthfully stating, under penalty of perjury:

1. That Respondent has complied with the Commission suspension Order, and with any related orders and undertakings, including any orders in Securities and Exchange Commission v. Evoqua Water Technologies Corp. et al., or any related Commission proceedings, including any orders requiring payment of disgorgement or penalties;
2. That Respondent undertakes to notify the Commission immediately in writing if any information submitted in support of the application for reinstatement becomes materially false or misleading or otherwise changes in any material way while the application is pending;
3. That Respondent, since the entry of the Order, has not been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude that would constitute a basis for a forthwith suspension from appearing or practicing before the Commission pursuant to Rule 102(e)(2);

4. That Respondent, since the entry of the Order:
 - a. has not been charged with a felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude as set forth in Rule 102(e)(2) of the Commission's Rules of Practice, except for any charge concerning the conduct that was the basis for the Order;
 - b. has not been found by the Commission or a court of the United States to have committed a violation of the federal securities laws, and has not been enjoined from violating the federal securities laws, except for any finding or injunction concerning the conduct that was the basis for the Order;
 - c. has not been charged by the Commission or the United States with a violation of the federal securities laws, except for any charge concerning the conduct that was the basis for the Order;
 - d. has not been found by a court of the United States (or any agency of the United States) or any state, territory, district, commonwealth, or possession, or any bar thereof to have committed an offense (civil or criminal) involving moral turpitude, except for any finding concerning the conduct that was the basis for the Order; and
 - e. has not been charged by the United States (or any agency of the United States) or any state, territory, district, commonwealth, or possession, civilly or criminally, with having committed an act of moral turpitude, except for any charge concerning the conduct that was the basis for the Order.
5. That Respondent's conduct is not at issue in any pending investigation of the Commission's Division of Enforcement, the PCAOB's Division of Enforcement and Investigations, any criminal law enforcement investigation, or any pending proceeding of a State Board of Accountancy, except to the extent that such conduct concerns that which was the basis for the Order.
6. That Respondent has complied with any and all orders, undertakings, or other remedial, disciplinary, or punitive sanctions resulting from any action taken by any State Board of Accountancy, or other regulatory body.

H. Respondent shall also provide a detailed description of:

1. Respondent's professional history since the imposition of the Order, including
 - a. all job titles, responsibilities and role at any employer;

- b. the identification and description of any work performed for entities regulated by the Commission, and the persons to whom Respondent reported for such work; and

2. Respondent's plans for any future appearance or practice before the Commission.

I. The Commission may conduct its own investigation to determine if the foregoing attestations are accurate.

J. If Respondent provides the documentation and attestations required in this Order and the Commission (1) discovers no contrary information therein, and (2) determines that Respondent truthfully and accurately attested to each of the items required in Respondent's affidavit, and the Commission discovers no information, including under Paragraph I, indicating that Respondent has violated a federal securities law, rule or regulation or rule of professional conduct applicable to Respondent since entry of the Order (other than by conduct underlying Respondent's original Rule 102(e) suspension), then, unless the Commission determines that reinstatement would not be in the public interest, the Commission shall reinstate the respondent for cause shown.

K. If Respondent is not able to provide the documentation and truthful and accurate attestations required in this Order or if the Commission has discovered contrary information, including under Paragraph I, the burden shall be on the Respondent to provide an explanation as to the facts and circumstances pertaining to the matter setting forth why Respondent believes cause for reinstatement nonetheless exists and reinstatement would not be contrary to the public interest. The Commission may then, in its discretion, reinstate the Respondent for cause shown.

L. If the Commission declines to reinstate Respondent pursuant to Paragraphs J and K, it may, at Respondent's request, hold a hearing to determine whether cause has been shown to permit Respondent to resume appearing and practicing before the Commission as an accountant.

By the Commission.

Vanessa A. Countryman
Secretary