

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
(Release No. 34-89518; File No. SR-CboeBZX-2020-058)

August 10, 2020

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Cboe BZX Exchange, Inc.; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of a Proposed Rule Change to Amend Rule 20.10 Concerning Off-Floor Transfers

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the “Act”),¹ and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,² notice is hereby given that on July 29, 2020, Cboe BZX Exchange, Inc. (the “Exchange” or “BZX”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “Commission”) the proposed rule change as described in Items I and II below, which Items have been prepared by the Exchange. The Exchange filed the proposal as a “non-controversial” proposed rule change pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A)(iii) of the Act³ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.⁴ The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rule change from interested persons.

I. Self-Regulatory Organization’s Statement of the Terms of Substance of the Proposed Rule Change

Cboe BZX Exchange, Inc. (the “Exchange” or “BZX”) proposes to amend Rule 20.10.

The text of the proposed rule change is provided below.

(additions are underlined; deletions are [bracketed])

* * * * *

Rules of Cboe BZX Exchange, Inc.

* * * * *

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

³ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(iii).

⁴ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

Rule 20.10. Off-Floor Transfers of Positions

(a) – (c) No change.

(d) Prior Written Notice. A Member(s) and its Clearing Member(s) (to the extent that the Member is not self-clearing) must submit to the Exchange, in a manner determined by the Exchange, written notice prior to effecting an off-floor transfer from or to the account(s) of a Member(s), except that notification is not required for transfers [to correct errors] effected pursuant to subparagraph (a)(1) or (a)(2) of this Rule.

* * * * *

(g) Routine, Recurring Transfers. The off-floor transfer procedure set forth in this Rule is intended to facilitate non-routine, non-recurring movements of positions[. The off-floor transfer procedure] and is not to be used repeatedly or routinely[in circumvention of the normal auction market process], except for transfers between accounts of the same person pursuant to subparagraph (a)(2). The off-floor transfer procedure may not be used in circumvention of the normal auction process.

* * * * *

The text of the proposed rule change is also available on the Exchange's website (http://markets.cboe.com/us/equities/regulation/rule_filings/bzx/), at the Exchange's Office of the Secretary, and at the Commission's Public Reference Room.

II. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

In its filing with the Commission, the Exchange included statements concerning the purpose of and basis for the proposed rule change and discussed any comments it received on the proposed rule change. The text of these statements may be examined at the places specified in Item IV below. The Exchange has prepared summaries, set forth in sections A, B, and C below, of the most significant aspects of such statements.

A. Self-Regulatory Organization’s Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

1. Purpose

Rule 20.10 describes exceptions to the prohibition against off-floor transactions set forth in Rule 20.9, subject to certain conditions. The exception in Rule 20.10(a)(2) provides that off-floor transfers of positions are permissible if from one account to another account where no change in ownership is involved (i.e., accounts of the same person),⁵ provided the accounts are not in separate aggregation units or otherwise subject to information barrier or account segregation requirements. These transfers are subject to, among other things, the requirement to submit prior written notice of the transfers to the Exchange pursuant to paragraph (d) and the restriction on effecting these transfers repeatedly or routinely.

The proposed rule change excepts off-floor position transfers effected pursuant to Rule 20.10(a)(2) from the prior written notice requirement in paragraph (d) and from repeated, recurring use restriction in paragraph (g). Off-floor position transfers pursuant to Rule 20.10(a)(2) do not involve a change in ownership. In other words, such transfers may only occur between the same individual or legal entity. These types of transfers are merely transfers of positions from one account to another, both of which accounts are attributable to the same individual or legal entity, and thus the transferred option positions will continue to be attributable to the same person. A market participant effecting an off-floor position transfer pursuant to Rule 20.10(a)(2) is analogous to an individual transferring funds from a checking account to a savings account, or from an account

⁵ Rule 1.5(p) defines “person” as a natural person, partnership, corporation, limited liability company, entity, government, or political subdivision, agency or instrumentality of a government.

at one bank to an account at another bank – the money still belongs to the same person, who is just holding it in a different account for personal financial reasons.

Because there is no change in ownership of positions transferred pursuant to Rule 20.10(a)(2), the Exchange believes it is appropriate to permit them to occur as routinely and repeatedly as a market participant would like. These transfers will continue to be subject to the prohibition on netting set forth in Rule 20.10(b), and thus may not result in the closing of any positions. While the off-floor position transfers permitted by Rule 20.10 were intended to accommodate non-routine and non-recurring transfers, the Exchange believes permitting routine, recurring off-floor position transfers that do not result in a change in ownership or reduction in open interest is consistent with the purpose of not being used to circumvent the normal auction purpose. Additionally, given that these transfers may occur on a regular basis in accordance with a market participants' business needs and procedures, the Exchange believes prior written notice would be onerous and would not serve any purpose given the lack of change in ownership and in open interest. The Exchange believes this will provide market participants with additional flexibility to structure their option position accounts as they believe is appropriate and move their positions between accounts as they deem necessary and appropriate for their business and trading needs, including for risk management purposes.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes the proposed rule change is consistent with the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the "Act") and the rules and regulations thereunder applicable to the Exchange and, in particular, the requirements of Section 6(b) of the Act.⁶ Specifically, the

⁶ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

Exchange believes the proposed rule change is consistent with the Section 6(b)(5)⁷ requirements that the rules of an exchange be designed to prevent fraudulent and manipulative acts and practices, to promote just and equitable principles of trade, to foster cooperation and coordination with persons engaged in regulating, clearing, settling, processing information with respect to, and facilitating transactions in securities, to remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system, and, in general, to protect investors and the public interest. Additionally, the Exchange believes the proposed rule change is consistent with the Section 6(b)(5)⁸ requirement that the rules of an exchange not be designed to permit unfair discrimination between customers, issuers, brokers, or dealers.

In particular, the Exchange believes the proposed rule change will remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system, and, in general, to protect investors and the public interest because it will provide market participants with a more efficient process to transfer open positions between their own accounts in accordance with their own business and trading needs, including to respond to then-current market conditions. Because these transfers would not result in a change in ownership or a reduction in open interest, the Exchange believes the proposed rule change remains consistent with the purpose of Rule 20.10, which was to prohibit use of the off-floor transfer procedure in circumvention of the normal auction process, as the normal auction process involves the opening or closing of positions through a transaction among multiple market participants. Market participants may maintain different accounts for a variety of reasons, such as the structure of their businesses, the manner in which they trade, their risk management procedures, and for

⁷ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

⁸ Id.

capital purposes. Given that these transfers may occur on a regular basis in accordance with a market participants' business needs and procedures, the Exchange believes prior written notice would be onerous and would not serve any purpose given the lack of change in ownership and in open interest. Therefore, the proposed rule change will benefit investors by permitting market participants to manage the open positions in their accounts in a manner consistent with their businesses.

The Exchange recognizes the numerous benefits of executing options transactions on an exchange, including price transparency, potential price improvement, and a clearing guarantee. However, the Exchange believes it is appropriate to permit position transfers among accounts of the same individual or legal entity where there is no impact on open interest to occur off the exchange, as these benefits are inapplicable to those transfers. These transfers have a narrow scope and are intended to permit market participants to achieve their own business needs. These transfers are not intended to be a competitive trading tool. There is no need for price discovery or improvement, as the transfer merely moves positions to different accounts for the same person and does not open or close any positions. These transfers will result in no change in ownership. The transactions that resulted in the open positions to be transferred pursuant to Rule 20.10(a)(2) were already guaranteed by a clearing member of The Options Clearing Corporation ("OCC"), and the positions may not be closed pursuant to the transfer and will continue to be subject to OCC rules, as they will continue to be held in an account with an OCC clearing member.

B. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Burden on Competition

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. The proposed rule change is not intended to address competitive issues. The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on intramarket competition that is

not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act because the proposed rule change will apply to all market participants in the same manner. All market participants will be able to effect off-floor position transfers pursuant to Rule 20.10(a)(2) on a recurring or routine basis without providing the Exchange with notice of such transfers. The Exchange does not believe the proposed rule change will impose any burden on intermarket competition that is not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act because it relates solely to the notice required for off-floor transfers that may occur today, and the frequency with which those transfers may occur. These transfers will continue to not result in a change in ownership or netting, and thus will have no impact on outstanding option positions.

C. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Comments on the Proposed Rule Change Received from Members, Participants, or Others

The Exchange neither solicited nor received comments on the proposed rule change.

III. Date of Effectiveness of the Proposed Rule Change and Timing for Commission Action

The Exchange has filed the proposed rule change pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A)(iii) of the Act⁹ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6) thereunder.¹⁰ Because the foregoing proposed rule change does not: (i) significantly affect the protection of investors or the public interest; (ii) impose any significant burden on competition; and (iii) become operative for 30 days from the date on which it was filed, or such shorter time as the Commission may designate, it has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act¹¹ and Rule 19b-4(f)(6)¹² thereunder.

⁹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A)(iii).

¹⁰ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

¹¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

¹² 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

At any time within 60 days of the filing of the proposed rule change, the Commission summarily may temporarily suspend such rule change if it appears to the Commission that such action is necessary or appropriate in the public interest, for the protection of investors, or otherwise in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. If the Commission takes such action, the Commission will institute proceedings to determine whether the proposed rule change should be approved or disapproved.

IV. Solicitation of Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments concerning the foregoing, including whether the proposed rule change is consistent with the Act. Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

Electronic comments:

- Use the Commission's Internet comment form (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>); or
- Send an e-mail to rule-comments@sec.gov. Please include File Number SR-CboeBZX-2020-058 on the subject line.

Paper comments:

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-CboeBZX-2020-058. This file number should be included on the subject line if e-mail is used. To help the Commission process and review your comments more efficiently, please use only one method. The Commission will post all comments on the Commission's Internet website (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>). Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications

relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for website viewing and printing in the Commission's Public Reference Room, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20549 on official business days between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Copies of the filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the Exchange. All comments received will be posted without change; the Commission does not edit personal identifying information from submissions. You should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to File Number SR-CboeBZX-2020-058 and should be submitted on or before [insert date 21 days from publication in the Federal Register].

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.¹³

J. Matthew DeLesDernier
Assistant Secretary

¹³ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).