

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Before the
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

INVESTMENT ADVISERS ACT OF 1940
Release No. 4938 / June 7, 2018

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDING
File No. 3-18535

In the Matter of

RICHARD W. KESSLER,

Respondent.

ORDER INSTITUTING
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS
PURSUANT TO SECTION 203(f) OF THE
INVESTMENT ADVISERS ACT OF 1940,
AND NOTICE OF HEARING

I.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) deems it appropriate and in the public interest that public administrative proceedings be, and hereby are, instituted pursuant to Section 203(f) of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 (“Advisers Act”) against Richard W. Kessler (“Kessler” or “Respondent”).

II.

After an investigation, the Division of Enforcement alleges that:

1. From April 2008 to July 2017, Kessler was associated with an investment adviser. Kessler, age 47, is a resident of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

2. On June 27, 2017, the Acting Director/Deputy Director of the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department, Securities Division (“NMSD”), in In the Matter of Guardian Group Investments, LLC and Richard W. Kessler, Case No. 15-05-0005, entered a final order against Kessler permanently barring him from transacting securities in New Mexico. The state level bar was entered to resolve claims brought against Kessler by the NMSD.

3. According to the Proposed Summary Order filed by the NMSD, which was incorporated into the final order, from approximately March 2015 through August 2016, Kessler, the sole owner of an investment adviser, was a registered investment adviser representative and engaged in a number of prohibited business practices by an investment adviser under New Mexico state law, including taking custody of client funds without proper notice to the NMSD, failing to send account statements to clients, failing to maintain minimum capital and bond

requirements, failing to amend his Form U4 that was materially inaccurate and incomplete, and failing to distribute to clients a written disclosure statement and investment advisory contract.

III.

In view of the allegations made by the Division of Enforcement, the Commission deems it necessary and appropriate in the public interest that public administrative proceedings be instituted to determine:

A. Whether the allegations set forth in Section II hereof are true and, in connection therewith, to afford Respondent an opportunity to establish any defenses to such allegations; and

B. What, if any, remedial action is appropriate in the public interest against Respondent pursuant to Section 203(f) of the Advisers Act.

IV.

IT IS ORDERED that a public hearing for the purpose of taking evidence on the questions set forth in Section III hereof shall be convened at a time and place to be fixed, and before an Administrative Law Judge to be designated by further order as provided by Rule 110 of the Commission's Rules of Practice, 17 C.F.R. § 201.110.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall file an Answer to the allegations contained in this Order within twenty (20) days after service of this Order, as provided by Rule 220 of the Commission's Rules of Practice, 17 C.F.R. § 201.220.

If Respondent fails to file the directed answer, or fails to appear at a hearing after being duly notified, the Respondent may be deemed in default and the proceedings may be determined against him upon consideration of this Order, the allegations of which may be deemed to be true as provided by Rules 155(a), 220(f), 221(f) and 310 of the Commission's Rules of Practice, 17 C.F.R. §§ 201.155(a), 201.220(f), 201.221(f) and 201.310.

This Order shall be served forthwith upon Respondent as provided for in the Commission's Rules of Practice.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to Rule 360(a)(2) of the Commission's Rules of Practice, 17 C.F.R. § 201.360(a)(2), the Administrative Law Judge shall issue an initial decision no later than 75 days from the occurrence of one of the following events: (A) The completion of post-hearing briefing in a proceeding where the hearing has been completed; (B) Where the hearing officer has determined that no hearing is necessary, upon completion of briefing on a motion pursuant to Rule 250 of the Commission's Rules of Practice, 17 C.F.R. § 201.250; or (C) The determination by the hearing officer that a party is deemed to be in default under Rule 155 of the Commission's Rules of Practice, 17 C.F.R. § 201.155 and no hearing is necessary.

In the absence of an appropriate waiver, no officer or employee of the Commission engaged in the performance of investigative or prosecuting functions in this or any factually related

proceeding will be permitted to participate or advise in the decision of this matter, except as witness or counsel in proceedings held pursuant to notice. Since this proceeding is not “rule making” within the meaning of Section 551 of the Administrative Procedure Act, it is not deemed subject to the provisions of Section 553 delaying the effective date of any final Commission action.

By the Commission.

Brent J. Fields
Secretary