

OMB APPROVAL	
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**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP**

Check this box if no longer subject to Section 16. Form 4 or Form 5 obligations may continue. See Instruction 1(b).

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 or Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person* <u>Akin Okan I.</u>  (Last) (First) (Middle) 9 GREENWAY PLAZA, SUITE 110  (Street) HOUSTON TX 77046  (City) (State) (Zip)	2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol <u>Stellar Bancorp, Inc. [ STEL ]</u>	5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable)  Director _____ 10% Owner _____ Officer (give title below) _____ Other (specify below) _____ <u>Senior Executive VP, CRO</u>
	3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year) <u>08/30/2023</u>	
	4. If Amendment, Date of Original Filed (Month/Day/Year)	
Rule 10b5-1(c) Transaction Indication  <input type="checkbox"/> Check this box to indicate that a transaction was made pursuant to a contract, instruction or written plan that is intended to satisfy the affirmative defense conditions of Rule 10b5-1(c). See Instruction 10.		

**Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned**

1. Title of Security (Instr. 3)	2. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year)	2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year)	3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8)		4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed Of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5)			5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 3 and 4)	6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4)	7. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4)
			Code	V	Amount	(A) or (D)	Price			
Common Stock	08/30/2023		M		12,735	A	\$14.11	74,747	D	

**Table II - Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)**

1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3)	2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security	3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year)	3A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year)	4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8)		5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5)		6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year)		7. Title and Amount of Securities Underlying Derivative Security (Instr. 3 and 4)	8. Price of Derivative Security (Instr. 5)	9. Number of derivative Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 4)	10. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4)	11. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4)	
				Code	V	(A)	(D)	Date Exercisable	Expiration Date						Title
Common Stock <sup>(1)</sup>	\$14.11	08/30/2023		M			12,735	(2)	01/23/2024	Common Stock	12,735	\$14.11	11,200	D	

**Explanation of Responses:**

- 1. Denotes exercise of employee option (right to buy) common stock.
- 2. Currently exercisable.

**Remarks:**

/s/ Justin M. Long, attorney-in-fact 09/01/2023

\*\* Signature of Reporting Person Date

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

\* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see Instruction 4 (b)(v).

\*\* Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations See 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure.

Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB Number.