

IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT FOR THE TOWN OF WHITE BLUFF, TENNESSEE

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ORDER REGARDING THE CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS IN REPOSE TO THE  
COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Order Suspending In-Person Court Proceedings issued by the Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court, the Court makes the following findings and orders:

1. The White Bluff Municipal Court must remain operational under all circumstances.
2. However, the Court must safeguard resources to insure there are sufficient personnel to administer justice.
3. Pursuant to the Order of the Tennessee Supreme Court, all in person court proceedings in the White Bluff Municipal Court must be, and are hereby, suspended with the following exceptions:
  - a. proceedings necessary to protect constitutional rights of criminal defendants, including bond-related matters and plea agreements for incarcerated individuals. This also covers preliminary hearings for incarcerated individuals; and
  - b. Proceedings directly related to the COVID-19 public health emergency.
4. Other essential hearings will continue with the use of video conferencing and other methods of communication.
5. Judicial Department personnel remain on call twenty-four hours a day to handle Initial Appearances, Search Warrants, and all other magistrate functions. However, these functions will be handled via video conferencing when

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*Dixie Kerr*  
DIXIE KERR

MUNICIPAL/GENERAL SESSIONS  
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possible.

6. The White Bluff Municipal Court Clerk's Office will remain open. Dixie Kerr, City Court Clerk, can be reached via telephone at (615) 797-3131, facsimile at (615) 797-9583, and electronic mail at [dixie.kerr@townofwhitebluff.com](mailto:dixie.kerr@townofwhitebluff.com)
7. All court filings are requested to be made via electronic mail or facsimile.
8. All court filings may be signed by electronic signature, including an image imported into a document or a signature as follows: "s/ printed name".
9. Captain Amy Longtin has made it possible for attorneys to "visit" inmates in the Dickson County Jail via video conferencing. Attorneys may register at <https://dicksontn.gtlvisitme.com/app>. All attorneys are encouraged to use this method of communication with their clients. All visitation will be determined by jail administration. However, attorneys are free to seek relief from the court should the need arise.
10. All citations issued by the White Bluff Police Department will be set following the expiration of the of the suspension order. Chief Fulcher provide guidance to the White Bluff Police Department.
11. All persons arrested with or without warrant will make an initial appearance before a magistrate as usual. However, these initial appearances will be expanded to minimize non-essential court appearances.
  - a. The magistrate will determine whether a warrant or summons shall be issued;
  - b. If a warrant is issued, bail will be set;
  - c. The magistrate will determine if the Defendant intends to proceed with or without counsel;
  - d. If counsel is requested, the magistrate will determine if the defendant is

indigent. If so, counsel will be appointed;

- e. If the Defendant wishes to obtain counsel, a preliminary hearing will be set and the Defendant will be given an opportunity to hire counsel;
- f. If the Defendant wishes to proceed *pro se*, the magistrate will determine whether the Defendant wishes to have a preliminary hearing. If so, the hearing will be scheduled. If not, the case will be bound over to the Dickson County Grand Jury.

12. If applicable, attorneys will be appointed at the initial appearance. These appointment orders will explain the process regarding essential in-person hearings. Defendants will be given an opportunity to consult with an attorney, or to proceed *pro se* and negotiate with the District Attorney's Office, via video conferencing.

13. All bond hearings, preliminary hearings, and plea entries for incarcerated individuals will continue to take place on the regularly scheduled court days. However, all matters will be fully resolved at the first in court hearing. Furthermore, these hearings will be closed excepts for attorneys, parties, witnesses, security officers, and other necessary persons.

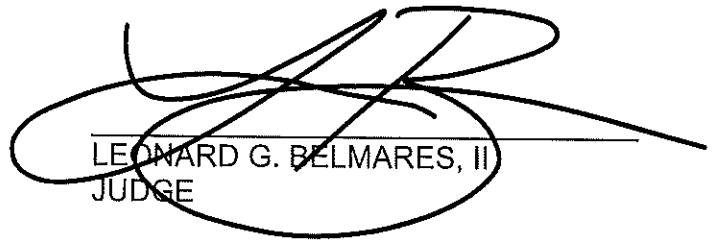
14. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that all attorneys, who are appointed or retained, be prepared to go forward with the hearing on the scheduled date. If an attorney is unable to attend court or not able to be prepared, they should seek a continuance prior to the hearing date. Again, this is necessary to limit in-person court appearances.

15. All hearings currently set, in which the defendant is not incarcerated, on March 24, 2020 are reset to April 28, 2020. Furthermore, all subpoenas are continued as well.

16. All applicable portions of the Order of the Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court are incorporated and adopted into this order.

IT IS THEREFORE, ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that the foregoing findings and orders are implemented effective 4:00pm today, and are to remain in effect until March 31, 2020.

Entered this 13th day of March, 2020.



LEONARD G. BELMARES, II  
JUDGE