

MINUTES
BENCH BAR COMMITTEE
Monday, May 4, 2020
By C. Edward S. Mitchell, Chairman

Attendance

Participants were: Judge Butts, Judge Lovecchio, Judge McCoy, Judge Linhardt, Judge Tira, Brian Bluth, Bob Elion, Ryan Gardner, Skip Greevy, Jessica Harlow, Brad Hillman, Angela Lovecchio, Ed Mitchell, Cliff Rieders, Nicole Spring, Adrienne Stahl, Mike Wiley, Dave Wilk, Jeff Yates, Tom Waffenschmidt, Michele Frey

Method: Because of the restrictions on gatherings and the closing of the courthouse and law offices due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the meeting was conducted by conference call.

Purpose: The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how the Court is conducting business during the closure of the courthouse during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

The Court has issued Administrative Orders March 27, 2020 and April 27, 2020 extending the closure of the Courts of the 29th Judicial District to the public as to non-essential functions through May 15, 2020. Those Orders list the essential functions which have been occurring during the closure of the Courts.

Judge Butts and the other Judges discussed how essential functions are being conducted and what precautions are being utilized for the protection of participants.

What can be done by video or phone is being done by those methods. In-person hearings when necessary are being held. Only the Judge, court reporter, parties and counsel are permitted in the courtroom. Social distancing is being observed. Masks are being worn. Witnesses remain outside the courthouse until called and then remain in the courthouse and courtroom only during their testimony. Exhibits are being scanned and circulated in advance.

Sanitation devices are available in the courthouse. Courtrooms are being sanitized between hearings.

The Supreme Court has appointed a committee of Judges and lawyers to discuss when jury trials will again become available and how they will be performed.

Deadlines, except for initial filings governed by statutes of limitations, have been suspended by Order of the Supreme Court. These suspensions will end May 8, 2020. Filings made by close of business May 11, 2020 will be timely for any deadlines which would have occurred during the suspension.

Boxes are available in the lobby of the courthouse for filings in the offices of the Prothonotary and Clerk of Courts and Register and Recorder. Instructions on how those filings are to be made are included in the Administrative Orders issued by the

Court.

Two Judges are available each day in the courthouse. The other Judges are working from home.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be August 3, 2020 at noon. The location and method of participation will be contained in the Notice of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

C. Edward S. Mitchell
Chairman