



Supreme Court State of Tennessee

CHIEF JUSTICE
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Judge Joe Thompson, presiding judge 18th judicial district

DATE: May 4, 2020

RE: 18th Judicial District Re-Opening Plan

On April 30, 2020, the Tennessee Supreme Court received the 18th Judicial District Re-Opening Plan. Please revise your plan and address the following:

- (1) Except for the grand jury, every court in the JD must commit to limiting the number of persons in a courtroom at any given time to 10 people (e.g. litigants, attorneys), plus the judge, court personnel, witness, and court security. The plan must include language affirming that commitment for every court under the plan.
- (2) Some courts have specified cleaning procedures for their respective courtrooms, but some have not. Please have the courts that have not address this issue.
- (3) The juvenile court needs to address how social distancing will be handled in the courtroom and outside the courtroom.
- (4) The criminal court needs to address how witnesses will be handled.

18th Judicial District Plan

Complying with Tennessee Supreme Court Order

In Re:COVID-19 Pandemic (April 24, 2020)

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Supreme Court issued its Order regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic on April 24, 2020 (“the Order”) and directed that “[c]ourts should continue to conduct as much business as possible by means other than in-person court proceedings;” and

WHEREAS, the Order further directed each judicial district to “develop a comprehensive written plan to gradually begin conducting in-person court proceedings (other than jury trials) in some non-emergency matters;” and

WHEREAS, the Order further required each plan to “contain guidelines and restrictions designed to minimize to the greatest possible extent the risk of spread of COVID-19 from in-person court hearings;” and

WHEREAS, the Order further stated that it is “intended to be interpreted broadly for protection of the public from risks associated with COVID-19;”

NOW, THEREFORE as evidenced by the undersigned, the 18th Judicial District of Tennessee hereby submits this comprehensive plan to the Tennessee Supreme Court for its approval.

Section I. Sumner County Juvenile Court Building

- A. All persons entering the Juvenile Courthouse, including Juvenile Court and Clerks’ staff, as well as law enforcement personnel, shall be immediately screened by Court Security. Screening shall be completed by both touchless thermometer and questionnaire. Any person exhibiting a temperature of 100.4 or higher shall not be allowed in the Courthouse. Any person who fails to comply with either requirement shall not be allowed in the Courthouse.
- B. All litigants, witnesses, and attorneys shall check-in with either Juvenile Court staff or Court Security to ensure that their case is on the docket and that they are available. The Court has a check-in form that notes the person’s name, case name, and a telephone number where they may be immediately reached. Once check-in is complete, all litigants and witnesses shall return to their vehicles to await being called. Due to the potential of having multiple cases on the docket, attorneys may choose to remain in the courthouse.
- C. Any person entering the Courthouse or Courtrooms shall be allowed the use of personal protection equipment such as masks or gloves.

- D. Only Attorneys, and parties to the specific action, shall be allowed in the Courtroom. All witnesses will be called to the Courtroom, as needed. No children (other than those to testify), supporters, or other non-parties and/or witnesses shall be allowed in the Courthouse or the Courtroom.
- E. The number of persons in the Courthouse shall be limited to essential personnel necessary to conduct Court business, including Juvenile Court staff and Clerk's Office personnel, Court Security Officers, the parties, their attorneys, and necessary witnesses. Persons having business with the Clerk's Office shall go directly to and from that office, after being properly screened.
- F. For those in-person cases, docket sizes shall be limited. Hearing times will be staggered, as required, to ensure proper social distancing within the Courthouse and Courtrooms.
- G. The Judge and Magistrate shall allow for limited in-person proceedings for the following matters:
1. · Emergency Custody & Visitation cases
 2. · Voluntary Surrenders of Parental Rights
 3. · DCS Emergency Removals & Preliminary Hearings
 4. · DCS Emergency Placement Reviews
 5. · DCS Permanency Plan Ratification Hearings, though children shall appear via teleconference
 6. · Detention Hearings
 7. · Transfer Hearings, where a child defendant is being detained
 8. · Temporary Restraining Orders
 9. · Orders of Protection
 10. · Child Support, prioritizing establishment and modification cases
 11. · Delinquent cases, prioritizing felony cases, and cases where a child defendant is being detained
 12. · Bench Trials
- H. The use of Zoom videoconferencing shall be available for all matters, except trials, where requested. Zoom shall be the preferred method for hearing the following matters:
1. · Motions on procedural issues, including those pre-trial motions before bench hearings
 2. · Motions where there shall be limited testimony, such as for Default
 3. · Plea Agreements, but only after the Plea Agreement Forms are signed and submitted to the Court prior to the entry of the plea.
 4. · Uncontested matters
 5. · Pre-Trial Conferences

- I. Continuances for in-person proceedings, particularly for delinquent petitions, may be liberally granted, if the Court is contacted in sufficient time prior to the hearing.
- J. Courtrooms and public areas of the Courthouse shall be disinfected before and after all in-person proceedings.
- K. Court filings shall be allowed via email. Those cases that require notarization may either use the Online Notary Public Act or, alternately, shall be allowed to file with a declaration under the penalty of perjury.
- L. Juvenile Court staff shall continue to work on a modified in-office schedule, and shall continue to be allowed to work remotely. Each Youth Services Officer, Probation Officer, and Judicial Assistant working remotely shall be required to continue to be available in the event that they are needed to return to the office. Each staff member shall check their email and voicemail, and return messages in a timely fashion. Probation Officers shall continue to monitor their caseloads by telephone and/or Zoom, and shall be available to the children being supervised. Some probation requirements may, at the discretion of the Judge or Magistrate, be waived if requested by a child's probation officer.

Section II. Sumner County Courthouse (Chancery and Circuit Courts)

- A. All persons entering the Sumner County Courthouse, without exception to include court and clerk's staff, as well as law enforcement personnel, shall be immediately screened by court security. Screening shall be completed by both touchless thermometer and questionnaire. Any person who (1) answers "Yes" to any of the screening questions or (2) is exhibiting a temperature of 100.4 or higher shall not be allowed in the courthouse and shall be directed to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per CDC guidelines. Any person who fails to comply with either requirement shall not be allowed in the courthouse.
- B. Use of personal protective equipment is strongly encouraged by all members of the public entering the courthouse.
- C. All high-touch surfaces including but not limited to, elevator buttons, door handles, door knobs, bannisters, counter-surfaces, and benches should be regularly sanitized every two (2) hours in accordance with Governor Lee's "Tennessee Pledge." Courtrooms shall be disinfected after every in-person hearing and prior to the beginning of the next proceeding.
- D. The court will, as encouraged by the Order continue to conduct as much of its business as possible using telephone conferences and videoconferences. In addition to the exceptions contained in the Tennessee Supreme Court's original order dated April 13, 2020, the court may,

in its discretion also permit the scheduling of bench trials for in-person hearings in appropriate cases.

- E. The number of persons in the Courthouse shall be limited to essential personnel necessary to conduct court business, including court staff and clerk's office personnel, court security officers, the parties, their attorneys, and necessary witnesses. Persons having business with the clerk's office shall go directly to and from that office, after being properly screened.
- F. Witnesses for in-person court hearings desiring to wait inside the courthouse may do so only with court permission and by wearing a clean face covering or mask. If they opt not to wear such a mask, they shall be required to wait outside of the courthouse in their vehicle or other nearby location. The attorney calling the witness shall notify such witnesses by text or phone call that his/her testimony is required and the witness will then be permitted to enter the courthouse.
- G. For those in-person cases, docket sizes shall be limited. Hearing times will be staggered, as required, to ensure proper social distancing within the courthouse and courtrooms. Only those persons involved with the instant court hearing will be allowed in the courtroom. All others will wait as directed by courthouse security.
- H. The use of Zoom videoconferencing will be the primary platform for all matters. The circuit and chancery courts have previously released guidelines for these matters which must be followed by all parties, especially with respect to the exchange of exhibits. In domestic matters, Local Rule 6.03 will be enforced and the courts will require parties to strictly comply with this rule.
- I. Continuances for in-person proceedings may be more liberally granted, if the Court is contacted in sufficient time prior to the hearing and upon a showing of good cause,
- J. In-person hearings will generally be conducted in the circuit court room because of its suitability for social distancing. The chancery and circuit courts shall coordinate their dockets to ensure the maximum available use of this courtroom. Courtroom seating will be by alternating rows with appropriate markings to identify a minimum of six feet of physical distancing. Judges and court officers will strictly enforce these rules

Section III. Sumner County Criminal/General Sessions Building

A. Criminal Court for Sumner County

CRIMINAL COURT OPERATING PROCEDURES From May 11, 2020, until July 3, 2020

**ADMISSION TO THE JUSTICE CENTER TO ATTEND CRIMINAL COURT
SUMNER COUNTY, TENNESSEE**

Everyone, with a few exceptions (see below), shall come through the South Water entrance to the Criminal Justice Center for COVID-19 screening. During screening each person will be asked a series of relevant questions, and their temperatures will be taken. All attorneys will come through this entrance, along with probation officers, law enforcement personnel, witnesses, and defendants [NO families]. Judges, their staff, court reporters, clerks, public defenders, and assistant district attorneys will come in through a separate entrance and follow the same screening process.

From that point all individuals with business in Criminal Court will proceed in one of two ways: all attorneys, law enforcement, and probations officers will go to various conference rooms practicing appropriate social distancing; all defendants will be required to sit in a long hallway that uniquely serves the Criminal Court and leads to a side, secured entrance to Criminal Court. All defendants will sit in chairs, specifically set six (6) feet apart. All defendants will be required to wear face masks while waiting for their cases to be heard.

Defendants will be admitted one at a time as called by security, when their case is to be heard through the Criminal Court side door. They will be escorted into the Court by security.

COURTROOM ADMISSIONS

These procedures will vary, as set out below, depending on the type of hearings being conducted.

**DURING ALL ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN CRIMINAL COURT,
THERE WILL BE AN ALLOWANCE WITH APPROPRIATE SOCIAL DISTANCING OF UP TO
TWENTY-FIVE (25) PERSONS IN THE COURTROOM UNLESS AS SPECIFICALLY SET OUT
BELOW.**

1. ARRAIGNMENT:

- a) Defendants in jail – video from the jail.
- b) NON-jail defendants – wait in the hallway in chairs and wear masks to come in individually through the side door of the courtroom straight to the podium to address the Court.

2. SETTINGS INVOLVING THOSE RECENTLY ARRESTED FOR “ATTORNEY AND SET CONFERENCES / REPORT ATTORNEY CONFERENCES”

Same procedure as JAIL and NON JAIL defendants for Arraignments

3. MOTIONS AND HEARINGS:

Jail and non-jail cases will be scheduled and conducted the same way as addressed above for entering the courtroom. They will be scheduled by staggering the hearings in the afternoons and all day on Fridays. Courtroom entry will be limited as set out above.

4. GUILTY PLEAS:

In the past this Court has taken all guilty pleas on three (3) consecutive Thursdays each month. There are ten (10) assistant district attorneys in Sumner County, and on those Thursdays three (3) assistant district attorneys came in with their assigned cases, three (3) months after arraignment for a “settlement day” – where cases are settled or set for jury trials.

Because there will be no jury trials until July, 2020, other days open up during each week and each assistant district attorney will now have a “settlement day” by themselves to settle cases or set them for trial.

Guilty pleas will be handled individually with defendants in jail or on bond / cite warrants. Jail defendants will be brought from jail one at a time and will stand by the podium with their attorney for the guilty plea. Only the necessary personnel will be in the courtroom. Defendants on bond will be sitting in the hallway as set out above, and called in one at a time to go through guilty pleas. Attorneys will wait in conference rooms until their case is ready, and our security officers will notify the attorneys involved in each case when ready.

5. JURY TRIALS:

Jury trials will be suspended until July 3, 2020.

6. GRAND JURY:

At this time, a Sumner County Grand Jury has not been impaneled since the March 25th, 2020, Supreme Court Order.

The next grand jury will be impaneled on June 1st, 2020, to hear all cases going back to March 25th, 2020. This Grand Jury will be impaneled for a period of four (4) months. The Grand Jury will be impaneled in the main courtroom with appropriate social distancing for the jurors.

The room where the Grand Jury will meet is large enough for social distancing for the twelve (12) Grand Jurors, the foreman, and witnesses.

B. General Sessions I and III

1. The Courts will continue to utilize electronic and telephonic methods to the extent possible to hear motions, cases, and other matters.
2. All in-court appearances will be limited to parties, witnesses, and their respective attorneys.
3. In General Sessions I, parties and witnesses will be limited to no more than 30 participants at a time to ensure social distancing in the court room.
4. In General Sessions III, parties and witnesses will be limited to no more than 20 participants at a time to ensure social distancing in the court room. Parties and witnesses greater than the above limitations of each court room will be requested to remain in their vehicles until such time as needed in court.
5. All parties, witnesses, and attorneys, as well as court staff, will be encouraged to utilize PPE, such as masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer.
6. Parties and witnesses shall be required to remain in the courtroom until their case is heard unless prior approval is granted by the Court. The hallways will be utilized for Attorney-Client conferences and for no other purpose. No loitering in the hallway.
7. Pursuant to the April 24, 2020 Order of the Supreme Court at Nashville, the Courts will not entertain Unlawful Detainer Warrants or any other process that will result in an eviction, ejection, or other displacement from a residence based upon the failure to make a rent, loan, or other similar payment absent extraordinary circumstances as determined by the Judge. This limitation will remain in effect through Sunday, May 31st, 2020.
8. In criminal matters, when a disposition has been reached in a case where the defendant is represented by an attorney, the attorney will notify the court that the case is ready to be disposed and the court will hear that matter at the first available time regardless if the defendant is one of the participants in court or waiting in a vehicle. The court will ensure that social distancing is maintained as these defendants are brought into the courtroom and straight to the podium for disposition.

C. Judicial Commissioners' Office

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Sumner County Judicial Commissioners have taken steps to mitigate the possibility of contamination by eliminating person to person contact wherever possible. With the planned reopening of the court system, additional steps are being taken to prepare for the increase caused by the current closure. The areas outlined below will be addressed as follows:

1. **Order of Protection/Private Prosecutor Warrants** - These documents will be completed as much as possible via electronic means. Signatures will be obtained in the Commissioners' presence.
 - Email Documents
 - Complete documents via Telephone
 - The use of PPE
 - Plexiglass to be placed over open window for separation when having face to face interaction
 - Individual work space cleaned frequently throughout each shift
 - Person to Person contact
 - Social Distancing
 - PPE
 - Hand sanitizer/frequent hand washing

2. **Interaction with Law Enforcement Agencies**
 - Officers to take all paperwork to magistrate's office
 - Door of office to remain closed and locked at all times (must interact at window)
 - The use of PPE
 - Plexiglass to be placed over open window for separation when having face to face interaction
 - Individual work space cleaned frequently throughout each shift
 - Person to Person contact
 - Social Distancing
 - PPE
 - Hand sanitizer/frequent hand washing

3. **Determination of Bail for Defendants in Custody**
 - Interview with Defendant will be completed through glass window or by phone with visibility through glass window
 - Return of Person to Person interview in Defendant's cell will be strongly discouraged with the following guidelines if no other option is available:
 - Social Distancing
 - PPE
 - N95 Respirator if Defendant exhibits symptoms of COVID-19
 - Hand sanitizer/frequent hand washing

The Judicial Commissioners' offices are located in the Sumner County Jail and Sumner County Sheriff's Office. In addition to the previous listed precautions, the following steps will be

strictly followed before individuals will be allowed entrance into the building by Sheriff's office staff:

- All persons entering the building will be screened using the recommended Coronavirus questions and their temperature taken.
- There will be a limit of two people allowed to enter at any given time and social distancing will be enforced.
- Only Individuals who are a party to a case or have legitimate business will be allowed to enter.

LifeSize Video Conferencing Platform has been purchased and is currently being installed. This will help to eliminate face to face interaction when possible. Once installed and functioning the magistrates will transition to video conferencing permanently when applicable.

Section IV. Sumner County Municipal Courts

A. Westmoreland Municipal Court

The City/Municipal Court dockets are held one to two times per month at 6:00 p.m. in a building which is approximately 2832 square feet in size. There are typically 75-100 participants (not including court personnel). I propose the following to reconvene in-person dockets:

1. There will be only ten (10) participants allowed inside at a time (again, not including court personnel, which may be four (4) – five (5) additional people (including me)).
2. The citations will be alphabetized by last name and will be grouped together by tens. A posting will be listed on the outside door of the building identifying each group by the corresponding letters of the alphabet. (Example: Group 1 may include those with last names beginning with letters A through F.)
3. Instructions will be posted for each person to identify his/her “group number” and to then return to his/her vehicle. At least one officer will remain at the outside door of the building. As one group is finished inside, the officer will indicate which group number is to come inside next. The posted instructions will include direction for each person to watch the officer to know when his/her group is being called to come inside.
4. There will be a specific request for no adult participant to bring extra people into the building unless doing so would be unsafe/harmful (e.g., adult with minor children who cannot/should not be left inside vehicle; adult participant who has trouble ambulating alone).
5. There will also be a post on the door that anyone who does not feel comfortable coming inside may request an alternate method.

6. If masks are available, I will provide one for any participant who asks. I will have hand sanitizer as well (if available). I can ask the court officers to wipe down the high-touch areas and chairs. I could have the officers open both the outer door and inner door for participant “touchless entry” into the building/room.
7. Should we have touchless thermometers, I will ask the court officers to use them on each person arriving. I will also have each officer ask the questions on the list provided by the Eighteenth Judicial District. Fevers or answers of “yes” will automatically exclude physical presence inside the building.

B. Portland Municipal Court

The following is the written proposal to commence in-person court proceedings for Portland Municipal Court in June 2020 or immediately upon approval.

1. Beginning in January 2020, due to the construction project for a new city hall in Portland, we temporarily moved our function to the Portland Police Department training room. This presents a unique opportunity for us now because, in order to get to the training room, everyone has been entering through a large open vehicle bay. We propose to simply move to the vehicle bay itself.
2. Defendants enter through a door from the parking lot immediately into a large vehicle bay. We can set up as many or as few chairs for the number of persons allowed in at any one time and space them as far apart as required, perhaps 15’ apart or more if desired.
3. Typically, most of our dockets fewer than 50 cases. We have been starting at 9:00 a.m. and it takes 2 hours or less, usually. We propose to stagger that number of cases into 2 or more dockets to keep the number of people in the room to 25 or less, starting at 9 and 10. We can add more if needed. We can also add more court days, considering we currently only meet two times per month.
4. I have started going through the citations in advance and culling out all the Defendants to whom I would offer traffic school and asking our court clerk to call them (most all of our citations have a telephone number for the Defendant) to try to arrange for them to sign up for the on-line course. Heretofore, I have been a proponent of in-person class; however, due to the circumstances I have relaxed my position on that. This should cut down on the number of in-person cases significantly.
5. A table with court personnel to do intake upon entry and collect payment upon exit will be set up immediately inside the door. All foreheads will be scanned with a touchless thermometer. Another table will be set up where Defendants will also be asked to sanitize any items/documents they may need to present to the Judge, i.e. proof of insurance, valid license, cell phones with which to display such evidence, etc.

B. Gallatin Municipal Court

The following is the written plan for In-Person Court proceedings for Gallatin Municipal Court. The plans are to begin in-person courts in June.

- Court will be held in the basement/lunch room of Gallatin City Hall. This limits contact with city employees.
- Court Officers (wearing gloves and distancing) will question defendants about any COVID-19 symptoms before allowing in the courtroom.
- Court Officers provide directions to the courtroom and advise them to go directly there. This again limits contact with city employees.
- Face masks or gloves will not be required but allowed.
- Touchless thermometers will be used.
- Only a determined number will be allowed in the courtroom. Defendants not allowed in will be asked to provide a telephone number and wait in their vehicles. The court clerk will call them when space becomes available.
- Tables and chairs will be marked for designated seating using the social distancing guidelines.
- Judge will open court and provide information and instructions for the process of this policy.
- Defendants will come before the Judge one at a time.
- Defendants will place any documents on a tray provided by the court. The court officer (wearing gloves) will examine the documents and relay the information to the Judge. There will be multiple trays available but all trays will be disinfected once used.
- Once disposition is determined the defendant will be advised to pay any costs, fines or school fees within 30 days (offering payment plan immediately). No in-person payments will be accepted in the Court Clerk's office. All payments must be on-line, the drive-up window or by mail. Payment information will be announced before court, posted on the city website and city Facebook page.
- Defendants will be advised to exit courtroom and immediately leave the building.
- The courtroom will be cleaned thoroughly before and after all court proceedings.

This plan is subject to change but the suggested guidelines were definitely considered. The purpose of this plan is to provide safety to all involved and to allow all defendants the opportunity to be heard in a timely manner. The well-being of all is taken to heart during this transitional time.

D. Hendersonville Municipal Court

The following is the written plan for In-Person Court proceedings for Hendersonville City Court. The plan is to begin in-person court in June, 2020.

1. Court will be held in the Police Department Annex Building. No need for officers to direct defendants.
2. Court Officers (wearing gloves and distancing) will question defendants about any COVID-19 symptoms before allowing in the courtroom.
3. Face masks will be required, if available.
4. Touchless thermometers will be used.
5. Only a determined number will be allowed in the courtroom. Defendants not allowed in will be asked to provide a telephone number and wait in their vehicles. The Court Clerk will call them when space becomes available.
6. Tables and chairs will be marked for designated seating using the social distancing guidelines.
7. Judge will open court and provide information and instructions for the process of this policy.
8. Defendants will come before the Judge one at a time.
9. Defendants will place any documents on a tray provided by the court. The court officer (wearing gloves) will examine the documents and relay the information to the Judge. There will be multiple trays available but all trays will be disinfected once used.
10. Once disposition is determined, the defendant will be advised to pay any costs, fines or school fees within 30 days (offering payment plan immediately). No in-person payments will be accepted in the Court Clerk's Office. All payments must be made on-line or by mail. Payment information will be announced before court, and posted on the city website.
11. Defendants will be advised to exit courtroom and immediately leave the building.
12. The courtroom will be cleaned thoroughly before and after all court proceedings.

This plan is subject to change, but the suggested guidelines were definitely considered. The purpose of this plan is to provide safety to all involved and to allow all defendants the opportunity to be heard in a timely manner. The well-being of all is taken to heart during this transitional time.

D. Millersville Municipal Court

For several months, the City of Millersville's Municipal Court has been operating in the Millersville Community Center at 1181 Louisville Highway in Millersville. Continued use of this building will allow us to hold in-person court proceedings while still maintaining recommended social distancing guidelines.

It is not uncommon for dockets in Millersville to exceed 40 defendants present in court. Large crowds like these can be properly distanced given the available facilities:

1. The main auditorium can allow for 40 to 50 individuals seated at least six feet from each other. City Works will set up the chairs at appropriate intervals before court.
2. There are at least two additional rooms for overflow or family seating that allow for approximately 10 people per room when spaced at least 6 feet apart.
3. A long hallway and spacious foyer allow for those waiting to make a payment to the Clerk to be spaced six feet apart.
4. The Clerk's office where payments are made can accommodate over six feet of distance between the Clerk and defendant. A basket can be used to pass payment methods and necessary documents. Hand sanitizer will be available at said desk for public use.

While the above considerations alone can allow for an effective and safe court, there are other procedures that we will employ to ensure a safe and convenient environment:

1. Those that are hard of hearing or physically limited will be allowed to sit closest to the Judge's bench.
2. Children will be limited to one "lap age" child per defendant. Otherwise, the Court will reserve the overflow rooms for family units.
3. Adult defendants will not be allowed to have other family members or friends present. They will be required to wait outside the building. The exception being for translators and those needed to attend defendants with disabilities or mobility issues.
4. Juvenile defendants will be limited to one parent or guardian.
5. All surfaces and chairs will be wiped down with disinfectant after each docket, complying with the recommendation that the "high touch" surfaces are cleaned once every two hours.
6. If available, officers will use a no-touch thermometer to check individual temperature readings. Those with high fevers will be allowed to reschedule their hearing.

By implementing these procedures and measures, I believe that Millersville can safely and effectively conduct court proceedings without putting any individuals at unnecessary risk. My staff and I must also be aware that this plan is a guideline and flexibility will need to be maintained to address unforeseen issues as they arise, while simultaneously maintaining recommended safety precautions.

E. White House Municipal Court

1. White House Municipal Court is not holding Court in May. We will be closed.
2. In June, the City of White House will expand from one court date on June 9th to two Court dates on June 9th and June 23rd. The cases will be spread out to three separate dockets with no more than 30 cases on each docket. The City Auditorium, which seats 500 people, will be used to distance people properly as they await their call to the Courtroom.
3. The number of tickets and other City Court business suggests there will be a total of between 75 and 100 people coming to Court in the Month of June, 2020, and they will be equally divided on each Court date.

F. Goodlettsville Municipal Court

The following is the written plan for In-Person Court proceedings for the Goodlettsville Municipal Court. At this time, Goodlettsville Municipal Court intends to begin in-person dockets in June 2020, with the first docket sounding on June 9, 2020.

- Court will be held in the auditorium of Goodlettsville City Hall.
- The city employees present in the courtroom to conduct court will be limited to the Judge, the Court Clerk and two Court Officers in order to limit contact between the public and other city employees.
- Chairs within the courtroom will be marked with tape to indicate where defendants may sit. Tape will be placed in a manner which complies with social distancing guidelines, and defendants will be seated at a minimum of 6 feet apart.
- Based on the capacity of the auditorium with social distancing in place, 20 defendants will be allowed into court at one time.
- No person other than a defendant with a pending case on the docket will be allowed in the courtroom.
- Court officers will question defendants about any COVID-19 symptoms before allowing defendants into the courtroom.
- Court Officers will provide directions to the courtroom and advise defendants to go directly there.

- Face masks will not be required but will be encouraged.
- Judge will open court and provide information and instructions for who their case will be heard and processed according to this policy.
- Defendants will come before the Judge one at a time at a podium.
- Defendants will place any documents on the podium. The court officer will examine the documents and relay the information to the Judge. The podium will be disinfected once used.
- Defendants will be allowed to pay any fines, costs or fees as they exit the building. In-person payments will be made through a glass window to protect employees. Should a defendant wish to make an in-person payment, social distancing markers will be placed on the floor to distance persons waiting to pay.
- Defendants will be encouraged to pay fees online. Payment information will be announced before court and posted on the city website.
- Defendants will enter court by one door and exist through another. Defendants will be advised to exit courtroom and immediately leave the building.
- The courtroom will be cleaned thoroughly before and after all court proceedings.
- We will offer an option to allow defendants to have their hearing conducted by Zoom video conference for resolution in lieu of an in person appearance.
- Traffic school is typically held in person in Goodlettsville. However, until the pandemic resolves, we are going to offer online traffic school as an alternative. In-person school will still be offered for those without the technological capabilities to complete their course online. However, this will allow us to address the 20 person capacity available in in our auditorium.

The plan is subject to change but the suggested guidelines were definitely considered. The purpose of this plan is to provide safety to all involved and to allow all defendants the opportunity to be heard in a timely manner.

Respectfully submitted by the Judges of the 18th Judicial District:

/e/Joe H. Thompson
Plan Designee
Circuit Court Judge

