

MAR 16 2020

PROBATE COURT OF GREENE COUNTY, OHIO

THOMAS M. O'DIAM
JUDGE PROBATE DIVISION
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

IN RE:
OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Case No. 11540MISC

Judge Thomas M. O'Diam

**EMERGENCY ORDER REGARDING
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Court makes the following findings of fact as the basis for this Order.

The State of Ohio has declared a public health emergency regarding the coronavirus ("COVID-19) outbreak and worldwide pandemic.

The Greene County Health Department has declared a similar public health emergency for all of Greene County, Ohio.

The Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court has instructed the judges of all courts to develop plans for continued operations that will responsibly address this public health emergency while maintaining essential court functions to the greatest extent possible.

The situation is fluid and rapidly changing, requiring the Court's plan to adjust as circumstances necessitate.

The Court finds that these emergency circumstances warrant immediate adjustment of this Court's policies, procedures and Local Rules of Court in a manner that will permit the continued operations of the Court while balancing the health and safety of the public and all Court personnel.

ORDERS

Therefore, the Court issues the following Orders, all of which are effective immediately:

Hearing and Trial Schedules

The Court will make all efforts to maintain its existing schedule for hearings and trials as currently set on its docket. If any party, or his or her attorney, to any proceeding is uncomfortable appearing in person at the public courthouse, they are directed to call the Court immediately, but no later than 24 hours before the scheduled proceeding. The Court will make its best effort to conduct the hearing by telephone conference call, if permitted by law and if the case is of a nature that telephone communication would be suitable and appropriate. If the proceeding cannot be conducted by telephone, the Court will automatically grant a continuance of the proceeding until the public health emergency related restrictions subside to a point that it is safe to hold the proceeding in person.

Limitations on Attendance

For all hearings and trials that do proceed as scheduled, the Court limits attendance in the courtroom to only the parties and their attorneys, if any. No other persons will be permitted to enter the courtroom or to wait in the lobby of the courthouse.

Court Filings

The Court will continue to receive all filings as normal and will continue to follow the methods and requirements in Local Rule 57.4. The Probate Court Clerk's office remains open for in-person filings for the time being. The Court urges all persons to consider and follow alternatives to in-person filings, including mail and fax methods. Mailed filings will be processed as received and must include payment and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. Fax filings are also permitted with follow-up by mail of the original documents and full payment within 5 business days.

Citation Process for Delinquent Filings

In order to avoid citations for delinquent filings, the Court urges the use of its extension procedures in Local Rule 56.1. The Court will automatically grant a 60 day extension of any filing upon filing the appropriate application for extension. The Court suspends its citation process in Local Rule 77 for 60 days. In lieu of a citation, the Court, on its own motion, will issue a 60 day extension before a citation is issued.

Social Media Communications

The Court has created and will maintain a special social media page on Facebook, titled "Judge Tom O'Diam," through which it will communicate these Orders and updated information as it occurs to the public and all affected parties. The Court recommends consulting that page frequently for further updates and additional information.

It is so ordered.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T.M. O'Diam", written over a horizontal line.

Thomas M. O'Diam, Judge