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IN THE JUSTICE COURT OF SPARKS TOWNSHIP
COUNTY OF WASHOE, STATE OF NEVADA

FILED
ANITA WHITEHEAD, CLERK
SPARKS JUSTICE COURT

DEC 23 2020

By  DEPUTY CLERK

IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER
CONCERNING VACATING IN-PERSON
TRIALS AND SETTING ZOOM
PRELIMINARY HEARINGS

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-10

WHEREAS, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to accelerate and threaten the citizens of Washoe County and Nevada;

WHEREAS, the Sparks Justice Court had begun to reschedule in-person trials and preliminary hearings as the infection and hospitalization rates improved, only to see them tragically increase over the last several weeks;

WHEREAS, the data from the Washoe County Health District shows the new COVID-19 cases quadrupled from 100 cases a day in early October to 400 cases a day in mid-November;

WHEREAS, the Truckee Meadows COVID Risk Meter currently shows the COVID-19 risk in our community as “Very High” and the Washoe County COVID Task Force cautions that: “Case Numbers are high and hospital beds are filing up. Only leave your home for essential functions . . . socially isolate as much as possible.”;

WHEREAS, due to public safety concerns created by the drastic increase in COVID-19 cases within our community, the Court finds it necessary to restrict in-person access to the Court again; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Judge of the Sparks Justice Court has the authority pursuant to NRS 4.157(c) to make administrative decisions pertaining to the business of the Court.

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1 AND GOOD CAUSE BEING SHOWN,

2 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

- 3 1. The Sparks Justice Court will continue to accept all court filings and operate while
4 managing cases within the parameters of this Order.
- 5 2. All parties, counsel, and members of the public are prohibited from entering the Sparks
6 Justice Court without a mask or other appropriate face covering. They are further
7 prohibited from entering the Court if they have a body temperature over 100.4°F, have
8 otherwise been asked to quarantine or isolate, have an active case of COVID-19 or been
9 exposed to someone who has COVID-19 in the last 14 days, or are currently
10 experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- 11 3. The Court is hereby closed for all in-person access and will remain closed for all in-
12 person access during any time where the Truckee Meadows COVID Risk Meter is at
13 “Very High” or “Severe.” During this closure, all Court proceedings will be conducted
14 via teleconference and/or videoconference.
- 15 4. All currently scheduled in-person trials will be vacated. If counsel wishes to proceed
16 with a remote Zoom trial, please file a motion with the Court. All currently scheduled
17 in-person preliminary hearings will be converted to remote Zoom hearings and **held as**
18 **set** unless an objection is made by motion setting forth good cause why the preliminary
19 hearing cannot be held remotely. The Court may choose to stack multiple trial and
20 preliminary hearing settings in order to manage the available trial and preliminary
21 hearing settings.
- 22 5. If the Truckee Meadows COVID Risk Meter should fall below the threshold of “Very
23 High,” the Court may re-open to in-person access on a limited case-by-case basis.
24 During any such re-opening, the Court will operate in the following manner:

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1 a. All court proceedings, including civil and criminal trials, preliminary hearings,
2 and all other hearings will be conducted via audiovisual technology in lieu of
3 personal, in-court appearances unless the Court specifically orders otherwise on
4 a case-by-case basis. If any party wishes to request an exception to this
5 provision, the party shall file a written request (with proof of service upon all
6 other parties) for an in-person trial/hearing at least 10 business days prior to the
7 scheduling. The written request shall specify the reasons why personal, in-court
8 appearances by the parties and/or witnesses are necessary. Any other party to
9 the case may file a written objection to the request within three calendar days
10 from the date that the request is filed and served. If the request is granted, the
11 parties, counsel, witnesses, and any other individuals in the courtroom are
12 required to wear a face covering while on the Sparks Justice Court premises,
13 including during the entire proceeding, unless specifically relieved of that
14 obligation by the presiding judge.

15 b. The Court’s customer service windows may reopen to the public subject to any
16 occupancy and social-distancing requirements that are deemed necessary and
17 appropriate by Court Administration including, but not limited to, requiring all
18 business be conducted by appointment only.

19 6. If the Truckee Meadows COVID Risk Meter should fall to the threshold of “Moderate”
20 or lower, the Court may resume in-person access in most case types without requiring a
21 party to request an in-person proceeding by written motion.

22 7. During any Court closure, payments of fines and fees may still be processed
23 electronically at <http://justicecourts.washoecounty.us/public/default.aspx>; or by placing
24 them in the Court drop box; or by phone (24 hours a day/seven days a week) by calling

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1 GovPayNet at (888) 604-7888; the representative will ask for the "PLC" which is
2 **a003b5.**

3 8. Regardless of whether the Court is closed or not, individuals who need to file
4 documents in Court are strongly urged to do so by utilizing the Sparks Justice Court
5 drop box located on the northeast corner of the building at 1675 E. Prater Way, Suite
6 107; by accessing the Court's electronic filing system (for civil actions only); or by e-
7 mailing an electronic copy of the document to the following email addresses:

8 a. Civil cases: SJCCivil@washoecounty.us

9 b. Criminal cases: SJCCriminal@washoecounty.us

10 c. Citation (traffic) cases: SJCCitations@washoecounty.us

11 9. Any documents submitted to the Court for filing shall include a proof of service upon
12 the other party(ies) to the case.

13 10. Exceptions to this Order may be made on a case-by-case basis upon proper application
14 to the Court in order to facilitate the ends of justice.

15 This Administrative Order 2020-10 shall stay in full force and effect until amended or
16 rescinded by the Sparks Justice Court.

17 IT IS SO ORDERED.

18 Dated this 23rd day of December 2020.

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21 Chief Judge Kevin Higgins
22 Justice of the Peace
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