

## **VIRGINIA:**

### **In the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court for the City of Portsmouth on May 18, 2020.**

On March 12, 2020, Governor Northam entered Executive Order Number Fifty-One (2020) Declaration of a State of Emergency Due to Novel Coronavirus COVID-19. On March 16, 2020, the Chief Justice issued an order declaring a judicial emergency for all district and circuit courts of the Commonwealth to protect the health and safety of court employees, litigants, judges, and the general public. On March 27, 2020, the Justices of the Supreme Court of Virginia unanimously extended the Declaration of Judicial Emergency to April 26, 2020. On April 22, 2020, the Supreme Court of Virginia again extended the Declaration of Judicial Emergency through May 17, 2020. On May 6, 2020, the Supreme Court of Virginia again extended the Declaration of Judicial Emergency through June 7, 2020 with certain notable changes.

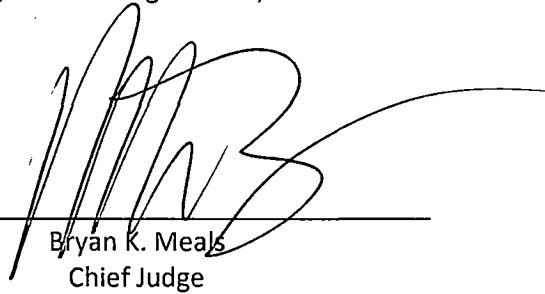
In accordance with the order of the Supreme Court of Virginia dated May 6, 2020 regarding operations of this Court during the Judicial Emergency and, more particularly, from May 18, 2020 through June 7, 2020, I hereby order the following measures be instituted and utilized in this Court:

- 1) This Court shall continue to prioritize emergency matters, including, but not limited to, quarantine or isolation matters, criminal arraignments, bail reviews, protective order cases, emergency child custody or protection cases, and proceedings necessary to safeguard applicable constitutional protections.
- 2) This Court shall continue to conduct as much business as possible by means other than in court proceedings, including, but not limited to the use of video conferencing, telephone, teleconferencing or any other electronic means that does not involve in-person contact. These methods are preferred over in-person court proceedings.
- 3) This Court may hear any non-emergency matter, including, but not limited to any criminal matter, civil matter, child custody and visitation case, child support, spousal support and/or any other matter within this Court's subject matter jurisdiction as defined in Va. Code § 16.1-241.
- 4) Any case heard in this Court shall be subject to the following logistical requirements:
  - a) Only those personnel necessary for each case will be permitted in the courtroom;
  - b) Those persons sitting in the courtroom must remain at least six feet apart. If this distance cannot be maintained given the demands of a particular case, the Presiding Judge may order that certain persons remain outside of the courtroom until needed, as he or she sees fit;
  - c) Any person who has travelled internationally; has been in quarantine, isolated or required to self-monitor; has been diagnosed with, or has had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19; has experienced fever, persistent cough, or shortness of breath; or has resided with or been in close contact with any person in the above-mentioned categories, shall not be permitted in the courtroom for any reason, except with the consent of the presiding judge and only under extraordinary circumstances.
- 5) This Court shall accept pleadings, orders and other documents that are electronically signed, including those where the electronic signature is accomplished through scanning.
- 6) This Court strongly prefers that all persons who come to court wear appropriate personal protective equipment including face masks and/or face coverings.

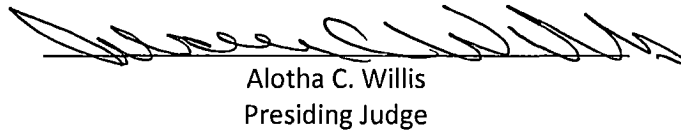
- 7) This Court shall implement enhanced measures to clean and disinfect its courtrooms in accordance with Centers for Disease Control guidelines.
- 8) Continuances and excuses for failing to appear in court shall be liberally granted for any cause resulting from the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- 9) The Clerk of Court for this Court shall be open to the public from 8:00am to 3:00pm to conduct business in person and from 8:00am to 4:00pm to conduct business over the telephone.

This Order shall be in effect from May 18, 2020 through June 7, 2020.

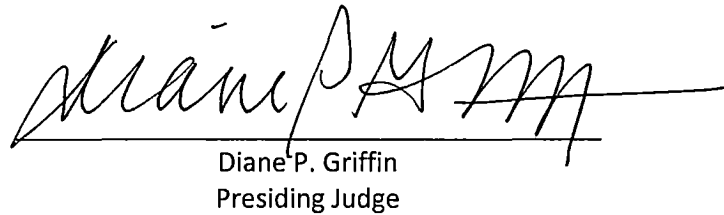
It is so ORDERED.



Bryan K. Meals  
Chief Judge



Alotha C. Willis  
Presiding Judge



Diane P. Griffin  
Presiding Judge