STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA IN DISTRICT COURT

COUNTY OF WARD NORTH CENTRAL JUDICIAL DISTRICT

EMERGENCY ORDER, COVID 19

[1] One or more Ward County Court personnel have recently tested positive for COVID-19.

[2] Contact tracing and other measures have led to the quarantine of all reporters/recorders in the Ward County Courthouse, as well as the quarantine of three judicial officers.

[3] In addition, at least three members of the Ward County Clerk of Court’s office have been ordered to quarantine.

[4] The lack of essential personnel has severely limited the Court’s ability to continue with all but the most essential services. Further, the Court does not believe it wise to subject the citizens of Ward County who might be called as potential jurors, witnesses, parties, or attorneys to exposure to the virus.

[5] For the protection of the public, as well as remaining Court personnel, attorneys, the members and staff of the Ward County State’s Attorney’s Office, the Ward County Sheriff’s Office and other security personnel, the undersigned, as the Presiding Judge of the North Central Judicial District, has determined that exigent circumstance exist requiring the continuance and rescheduling of all pending proceedings, and the cessation of all but essential Court functions in Ward County.

[6] IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

[7] All civil and criminal jury trials currently scheduled for August 3-21, 2020, are hereby CONTINUED until further order of the Court.

[8] All demands for speedy trial are acknowledged, and those trials will be given first priority as soon as practicable on or after August 24, 2020.

[9] All bench trials currently scheduled for August 3-21, 2020, are hereby CONTINUED until further order of the Court, unless otherwise approved by the Judge assigned to the case.

[10] All other contested civil matters, including evictions, restraining order proceedings, small claims, and motions currently scheduled for August 3-21, 2020, are hereby CONTINUED until further order of the Court, or unless otherwise approved by the Judge assigned to hear the case.

[11] Essential Court hearings for mental health procedures, juvenile procedures, and criminal master calendar proceedings will proceed as scheduled.

[12] The Court will accommodate all requests to appear by reliable electronic means for all proceedings during the timeframe of August 3-21, 2020, provided recording and Clerk of Court services are available. Counsel, and any pro se party should contact the Ward County Clerk of Court, 701 857 6600, to make arrangements for appearances by reliable electronic means.

[13] Defaults, probate proceedings, and other matters not requiring hearings may proceed as usual.

[14] August 3, 2020

[15] Gary H. Lee, Presiding District Judge, North Central Judicial District