

## **Hamilton County General Sessions Criminal & Civil Court Scheduling Update**

In order to effectuate the Tennessee Supreme Court's most recent December 22, 2020 order (further prohibiting in-person court proceedings other than certain exceptions), and pursuant to the Eleventh Judicial District's May 7, 2020 COVID-related standing order, all criminal cases involving defendants who are not in custody, as well as all civil cases pending in Hamilton County General Sessions Court, will be rescheduled or otherwise handled in a virtual manner in the coming months.

Please call or email the following telephone numbers/email addresses when rescheduling your cases:

- Court Administration Office/Judges' Assistants - (423) 209-7660; [JanH@hamiltontn.gov](mailto:JanH@hamiltontn.gov); [LisaK@hamiltontn.gov](mailto:LisaK@hamiltontn.gov); [AmyF@hamiltontn.gov](mailto:AmyF@hamiltontn.gov)
- General Sessions Criminal Court Clerk's Office - (423) 209-7600
- General Sessions Civil Court Clerk's Office - (423) 209-7630; [DebbieE@hamiltontn.gov](mailto:DebbieE@hamiltontn.gov); [AprilB@hamiltontn.gov](mailto:AprilB@hamiltontn.gov)

### **CRIMINAL DIVISIONS**

If you are an attorney representing a criminal defendant who is on bond (and who does not have a co-defendant in custody), your client's case may be rescheduled if it cannot be resolved in a virtual manner. As such, contact the Hamilton County District Attorney General's Office PRIOR to your client's previously scheduled court date concerning possible resolution. Hearings may be held via WebEx in accordance with previous COVID-related orders; however, you must have an agreement to set the hearing virtually PRIOR to your client's previously scheduled court date to avoid it being rescheduled.

Plea agreements may continue to be entered virtually. Therefore, be in touch with the Assistant District Attorney handling the case and/or the Court Administration Office to arrange to enter a virtual plea.

Finally, if you are an attorney representing a bondsman, please note that the Monday "Final Judgment/Bond Dockets" will be held virtually at 8:30 a.m. on Mondays in General Sessions Criminal Courtroom 3 (see the WebEx virtual courtroom information below).

#### **1:30 AFTERNOON DOCKETS CANCELLED THROUGH MARCH**

All 1:30 afternoon dockets in January, February, and March have been cancelled. As such, your client's traffic case, misdemeanor/felony initial case setting, or probation case may have been rescheduled or otherwise resolved. Be in contact with the General Sessions Criminal Court Clerk's Office or the Court Administration Office to discuss the disposition or rescheduling of the case.

### **CIVIL DIVISIONS**

Please follow the directions below concerning rescheduling civil motions, initial case settings, detainers, and other civil trials currently pending before the General Sessions Civil Divisions. If you plan on filing a new case, call or email the General Sessions Civil Court Clerk's Office concerning an appropriate initial case setting date.

## **INITIAL CASE SETTINGS AND MOTION DOCKETS (MONDAYS & FRIDAYS)**

Civil cases currently set on the Monday and Friday initial case setting/motion dockets are being rescheduled. If you are an attorney representing a party in a pending civil case, please attempt to contact the opposing party (or, if that party is represented, their attorney), and attempt to resolve your case or attempt to agree to in-person or virtual trial dates. If you settle or otherwise resolve your case, please call or email the Civil Court Clerk's Office.

If you and the opposing party (or, if that party is represented, their attorney) can agree to an in-person or virtual trial date, alert the clerk's office. The Court asks that you and the opposing party choose three potential trial dates. The clerk's office will attempt to accommodate your first choice, yet may be unable to do so in light of crowd restrictions. Further, advise the clerk when rescheduling your case if there will be multiple parties, witnesses, etc., so that the Court can attempt to limit crowd sizes on a particular day.

If you are an attorney representing a plaintiff and are unable to contact the opposing party or otherwise agree to a disposition or new court date, you may choose a new Monday or Friday date to reset your initial case setting/motion (see schedule below). You must reschedule with the clerk's office at least 10 days prior to the previously scheduled court date. After the clerk has approved the new date, you are then responsible for sending notice of the new initial case setting/motion date to the opposing party.

If you do not contact the clerk's office via telephone or email within 10 days of the previously scheduled court date, the clerk's office will place the case "on hold" until contacted.

## **CIVIL TRIALS (TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS)**

If you are an attorney representing a party in a pending civil case, please attempt to contact the opposing party (or, if that party is represented, their attorney), and attempt to resolve your case or agree to alternative in-person or virtual trial dates. Virtual trials are encouraged; however, if you or the opposing party insists on an in-person hearing, you are encouraged to choose a date in mid to late 2021 in light of the possibility of additional Supreme Court orders lengthening the prohibition of in-person proceedings.

In addition, the Court asks that you and the opposing party choose three potential trial dates. The clerk's office will attempt to accommodate your first choice, yet may be unable to do so in light of crowd restrictions. Further, advise the clerk when rescheduling your case if there will be multiple parties, witnesses, etc., so that the Court can attempt to limit crowd sizes on a particular day.

If you have made a good faith effort to contact the opposing party (or, if that party is represented, their attorney), yet have been unable to do so, contact the General Sessions Civil Court Clerk's office to select a new court date. After the clerk has approved the new trial date, you are then responsible for sending notice of the new trial date to the opposing party.

If you do not contact the clerk's office via telephone or email within 10 days of the previously scheduled court date, the clerk's office will place the case "on hold" until contacted.

## **DETAINERS (THURSDAYS)**

In light of the continued restrictions on detainer actions imposed by the federal government, ALL PENDING DETAINERS set in January are being rescheduled UNLESS BOTH PARTIES AGREE to hold a virtual hearing.

Rescheduling cases shall proceed as stated in the paragraphs above.

### **INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT HEARINGS (THURSDAYS)**

Involuntary commitment hearings will proceed in the same manner as they have throughout the COVID pandemic until further notice.

### **CIVIL SCHEDULE**

Although cases may be set at alternative times/dates by the Court out of necessity, you should attempt to follow the following (previously amended) schedule when resetting cases, whether they are held virtually or in-person:

#### **MONDAY**

9:00 A.M. - LOCAL ATTORNEY INITIAL CASE SETTINGS

10:00 A.M. - LOCAL ATTORNEY INITIAL CASE SETTINGS

11:00 A.M. - MOTION DOCKET (SCIRE FACIAS & DUCES TECUM)

11:30 A.M. - PRO SE INITIAL CASE SETTINGS

#### **TUESDAY**

9:00 A.M. - TRIAL DOCKET

#### **WEDNESDAY**

9:00 A.M. - TRIAL DOCKET

#### **THURSDAY**

9:00 A.M. - DETAINER DOCKET (FILED BY PRIVATE ATTORNEYS)

10:30 A.M. - DETAINER DOCKET (FILED BY CHATTANOOGA HOUSING AUTHORITY ONLY)

1:00 P.M. - DETAINER DOCKET (FILED BY PRO SE PARTIES)

9:00 A.M./10:00 A.M./1:30 P.M. – INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT HEARINGS

#### **FRIDAY**

9:00 A.M. - OUT OF COUNTY ATTORNEY INITIAL CASE SETTINGS

10:00 A.M. - OUT OF COUNTY ATTORNEY INITIAL CASE SETTINGS

11:00 A.M. - OUT OF COUNTY ATTORNEY INITIAL CASE SETTINGS

### **WEBEX ROOM NUMBERS**

WebEx and Zoom virtual courtroom numbers for each judge/division are below. Virtual hearings may occur on those platforms, or through a WebEx or Zoom virtual room owned by a party/attorney.

#### **WEBEX VIRTUAL COURTROOM NUMBERS**

JUDGE SELL, DIV I – 133 058 3803

JUDGE MCVEAGH, DIV II – 133 929 3879

JUDGE WEBB, DIV III – 177 307 2206

JUDGE STATOM, DIV IV – 133 565 9247

JUDGE STARNES, DIV V – 133 059 2984

**ZOOM MEETING ROOM NUMBER (FOR ALL DIVISIONS)**

761 649 7905