

IN RE: BUSINESS OF COURT
**ORDER ENDING JUDICIAL
EMERGENCY AUGUST 31, 2021**

FILED
PROthonotary
2021 JUN 25 P
CLERK OF COURTS
COUNTY OF COLUMBIA

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
FOR THE 26TH JUDICIAL
DISTRICT, COLUMBIA /MONTOUR
COUNTIES PENNSYLVANIA

(PA SUPREME COURT # 41-MM-2020)

ORDER

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court authorized each Pennsylvania judicial district to declare a judicial emergency for their respective judicial districts on March 16, 2020; and

WHEREAS, by order dated May 27, 2020, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court terminated the statewide judicial emergency order effective June 1, 2020, while specifically empowering President Judges of the state judicial districts to declare and/or continue local states of emergency and specifically limit in-person access to the courts and to suspend certain rules and to suspend jury trials, consistent with "prevailing health and safety norms" and to "protect court personnel, court users, and members of the public"; and,

WHEREAS, this court ordered a judicial emergency in the 26th Judicial District on March 16, 2020, and amended the order several times, the latest being dated February 19, 2021, which extended the judicial emergency through December 31, 2021; and

WHEREAS, by various orders of this court, jury trials have been suspended in this judicial district, now through December 31, 2021; and,

WHEREAS, the Court of Common Pleas for the 26th Judicial District of Pennsylvania has deemed it prudent for the safety of its staff, court users, and the public to enforce and encourage safety protocols throughout the pandemic, subject to changing and fluid pandemic circumstances and prevailing health and safety norms: and

WHEREAS, by Order dated June 21, 2021, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has directed that local judicial emergencies shall not extend past August 31, 2021, and that the courts shall be fully staffed and open; and

WHEREAS, with the exceptions of jury trials which are slated to resume in September 2021, the courts of the 26th

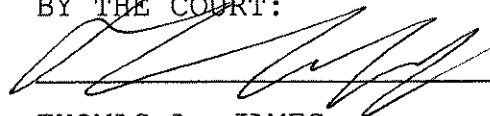
Judicial Districts have been fully open while utilizing safety protocols; and

WHEREAS, safety protocols have been adjusted by the CDC and Commonwealth officials to reflect the significant recent decrease in Covid related deaths and illnesses.

THEREFORE, this 25th day of June, 2021, the court **ORDERS** that:

1. The judicial emergency in the 26th Judicial District shall end on August 31, 2021.
2. Jury trials shall resume with the September 2021 Trial Term.
3. Remote proceedings shall continue to be utilized within the discretion of each judge and provided that there is no legal prohibition. For example, preliminary hearings, violation hearings, and sentencing hearings may continue to be held remotely but only with the consent of the parties.
4. The court continues to encourage all persons to observe and use health safety protocols as suggested by the CDC and other public health officials.
5. The court continues to encourage court staff, counsel, litigants, and all others involved in the court process to permanently adopt efficient procedures developed during the court emergency and to discard inefficiencies that may have been insidiously engrained in the court culture.

BY THE COURT:


P.J.
THOMAS A. JAMES