IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF CLAXTON
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: §

COVID-19 EMERGENCY §

WHEREAS, The Honorable Harold D. Melton, Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, did enter Fourth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency on July 12, 2020.

NOW THEREFORE, the following shall be **ORDERED:**

(A) Court proceedings, remotely or in-person, shall continue in compliance with public health guidance, requirements of the United States and Georgia Constitution. Proceedings shall occur remotely unless required by law to be in person or unless it is not practicable for technical or other reasons for persons participating in the proceeding to participate remotely.

(B) This Court may compel the participation of litigants, witnesses and other essential personnel in remote judicial proceedings.

FURTHER ORDERED are the following guidelines for in-court proceedings:

(C) Directions for those who have, have been exposed to, or are especially vulnerable to, COVID-19:

1. Persons who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, who have been exposed to COVID-19 within 14 days; or who are experiencing fever or cough, should not attempt to enter the Courthouse, but should call the telephone number provided with your court notice, or at the Courthouse door, to speak with someone from the Court.
2. Persons with some health limitations which make them especially vulnerable to COVID-19 are invited to call the telephone number provided with your

court notice, or at the door, to speak with someone from the Court.

(D) Admissions to the Courtroom: All persons entering the Courthouse shall:

1. Be screened for cough, fever and recent exposure to COVID-19.
2. Use hand sanitizer provided by security officers.
3. Wear a face mask at all times while in the public areas of the courthouse (masks will be provided at the door if needed).
4. Comply with directives of court and security personnel regarding appropriate distancing.

(E) Movement within the Courthouse, persons within the courthouse, and outside of the courtrooms, SHALL:

1. Stay at least six feet from all other persons (except those with whom they are related or with whom they traveled to court), to the extent practicable.
2. When notified that a courtroom is full, follow instructions for sitting elsewhere.
3. Wear a face mask at all times while in a courtroom or any other area of the courthouse except as exempted by the Court and while speaking to the court or testifying.
4. Comply with directives of court and security personnel regarding appropriate distancing.
5. Due to the limited seating, person with business before the Court are encouraged not to bring nonessential person(s) with them, especially children.
6. Anyone using pens supplied by the Court must return it as directed for cleaning.

7. To allow for distanced seating, each person shall sit in a marked space. No one shall sit in a space not marked. If available, an additional area may be used for overflow seating and spectators may observe the proceeding by live audio-video stream if available. Persons with cases on the calendar shall be given priority for seating in the courtroom.

8. Persons in designated overflow seating area shall maintain order and quiet so that everyone can see and hear the proceedings.

9. Persons who have completed their business with the Court may be asked to leave or be required to sit in the overflow seating area so that persons with business with the court can be seated in the active courtroom.

10. If overflow seating is not available those with business before the court will be given a number and will be called when their case is ready.

(G) Special Court Procedure:

Due to ongoing judicial emergency, the Court is employing special procedures to minimize the risk to everyone's health. To this end, we are scheduling more court sessions, with fewer cases summoned per session; seating in the courtroom will be limited to designated seats, designed to require distancing; and distancing will be enforced by Court bailiffs and Sheriff's deputies. Handling of paperwork will be kept to a minimum. Courtrooms will be sanitized between sessions.

(H) Contempt of Court:

The Procedures outlined in this Order are necessary for the safe, efficient operation of this Court. Persons failing to observe these procedures may be cited for Contempt of Court.

SO ORDERED this 20th day of July, 2020.

PAUL K. COOK, JUDGE, CLAXTON
MUNICIPAL COURT