

Bankruptcy Practitioners in the Middle District of Georgia,

Subject: Middle District of Georgia Bankruptcy Court Response to COVID-19 Pandemic (4<sup>th</sup> Announcement)

Date: March 27, 2020

Since our last announcement, we would like to update you on the following:

ALBANY COURT FOR APRIL 14 – 16 WILL BE TELEPHONIC HEARINGS ONLY Judge Carter will issue an order next week informing parties that all hearings for the Albany circuit court calendar scheduled for April 14 – 16 will be telephonic hearings only.

RESET OF 341 MEETINGS Administrative Order #124 resets 341 meetings during the period March 17 to April 10, 2020. Over the past week, the court and the US Trustee's office have been working to determine scheduling for the reset meetings as well as developing the appropriate notices to send. The manner in which the reset meetings and ALL meetings beginning on April 13 (which will also have to be re-noticed) and all new cases filed after a date to be determined will occur as follows:

- All meetings will be conducted by teleconference.
- Notices resetting meetings will contain teleconference call-in instructions.
- Meetings will be scheduled at specific times. Each meeting will be allotted 10 minutes.
- Notices will contain information that will need to be provided to the trustee prior to the meeting date.
- For meetings already scheduled through the end of April, they will be rescheduled to comply with the 10 minute per meeting schedule.
- We do not know any more than anyone else when this will all end. We will update meeting schedules as we know more information.

MAXIMIZATION OF COURT EMPLOYEE TELEWORK On March 25, 2020, the court expanded its use of telework and is now operating at minimum staffing without having to close the courthouse. Our telework capability remains high with all employees able to telework.

TELEPHONIC HEARINGS Administrative Order #126 prohibits all in-person hearings and requires all participants to call in on the Judge's AT&T teleconference line. Our Judges report that their hearings are going well. You are reminded to review Administrative Order #126 and comply with its provisions regarding telephone conferencing rules. Additionally, please be mindful of how you are holding the handset to make sure that you are not breathing into the handset.

AMENDED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER #129 DIGITAL SIGNATURES The order was amended to allow attorneys 60 days to obtain an original signature on documents filed with the court. No certification to the court is required. You can find the Amended Administrative Order on our website.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER #130 ADMISSION OF DIRECT EVIDENCE THROUGH DECLARATIONS The judges issued an order allowing attorneys to submit direct evidence in contested matters by declaration(s) complying with 28 U.S.C. § 1746. You can find the order on our website.