

**THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
MEIGS COUNTY, OHIO**

GENERAL DIVISION AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION

LOCAL RULES OF PRACTICE

Hon. Linda R. Warner, Judge

Pomeroy, Ohio

Effective October 1, 2026

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SECTION 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

RULE 1.01. Effective Date.

These rules apply to all cases filed in or transferred to the Meigs County Court of Common Pleas General and Domestic Relations Divisions on or after October 1, 2026, and to all further proceedings in cases pending on that date, except to the extent that, in the opinion of the Court, their application in a particular pending case would not be feasible or would work injustice, in which event the former local rules apply to that case. Except as provided in the preceding sentence, all local rules issued prior to October 1, 2026, are revoked.

These rules do not govern the procedures in the Meigs County Common Pleas Court Juvenile or Probate Divisions or in the Meigs County Court (i.e. Municipal Court).

RULE 1.02. Scope.

These rules conform to the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, the Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure, and the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio (Sup. R.) and provide for the efficient and expeditious management of business before the Common Pleas Court for Meigs County, Ohio, General Trial and Domestic Relations Divisions ("Court") with due regard to local practices and requirements.

These rules shall supersede all previous local rules and administrative orders of this Court, whether or not such prior rules or orders were formally vacated. However, these Local Rules are not meant to supersede the Rules of Superintendence for Common Pleas Courts established by the Supreme Court of Ohio, the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, or the Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure. Any previously ordered local rules of practice that conflict with the following rules shall be rendered void and of no force and effect.

RULE 1.03. Amendments.

These rules may be amended and/or supplemented as needed and required by law.

RULE 1.04. Hours of Operation.

The hours of the Court are generally Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Court shall be in session at such other times and hours as the administrative judge or any judge assigned shall prescribe to meet special situations or conditions.

RULE 1.05. Holidays and Court Closures.

The Court is closed on the days designated as holidays each year by the Meigs County Board of County Commissioners, pursuant to the Board's annual holiday calendar. These

typically include: New Year's Day; Martin Luther King Jr. Day; President's Day; Memorial Day; Juneteenth Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Columbus Day; Veterans' Day; the second half of the day on general election day; Thanksgiving Day and the day following; and Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The Court shall also be closed on any other day the Board of County Commissioners designates as a county holiday, or as otherwise provided in Rule 1.04.

The Court may also close from time to time due to dangerous weather conditions or other emergencies. Notice of any such closure will be posted on the Court's website, www.meigscommonpleascourt.com, and on the Court's social media accounts.

RULE 1.06. Citation Form.

These Rules shall be cited as "Meigs County Local Rule ____."

RULE 1.07. Contact Information.

Meigs Common Pleas Court General Trial and Domestic Relations Divisions, with Judge Linda R. Warner, is located at 100 East Second Street; Suite 302; Pomeroy, Ohio 45769; 740-992-6439 phone; and 740-992-3828 fax; 740-992-4636 jury hotline; and 740-992-4537 probation or community control. Email inquiries may be sent to info@meigscommonpleascourt.com.

Meigs Common Pleas Court Clerk of Courts, Clerk Samantha Mugrage, located at 100 East Second Street, Room 303, Pomeroy, Ohio 45769; 740-992-5290 phone, 740-992-4429 fax and legal@meigscountyclerkofcourts.com email.

A complete directory of all county offices can be found on the Court's website.

RULE 1.08. Courthouse Security.

(A) All persons entering the Meigs County Courthouse, including elected officials, attorneys, law enforcement and security officers, must enter through the second street ground level entrance of the Courthouse Building and will be subject to security screening. Screenings will occur for each visit to the Meigs County Courthouse regardless of the purpose or the hour. Employees with security issued key fobs are directed to enter the building through alternate doors.

(B) Persons will not be permitted into the Courthouse with firearms or dangerous ordnances, pocket-knives, or any object the Security Officer deems to be unsafe for visitors to the Courthouse. All persons, bags, and containers are subject to search by Courthouse Security.

(C) The centralized security screening area required by this rule is operated by the Meigs County Sheriff's Office.

RULE 1.09. Court Attire.

(A) All persons must dress in proper attire when entering the courthouse or a courtroom. No attorney, party, witness, or other visitor shall be permitted to appear in the courtroom or offer testimony while dressed in inappropriate or revealing shorts, "tank tops," or other attire not appropriate for a courtroom setting. No person may enter or remain in the courthouse or a courtroom wearing clothing that displays sexually explicit images or language, or other vulgar or offensive language or images. It shall be the duty of counsel to advise their clients and witnesses of this rule prior to their appearance in court. Any person dressed inappropriately under this rule will be asked to leave, change clothing, and return properly attired.

(B) Court security personnel and other court staff must be able to clearly see all visitors, including their faces, throughout their entire visit to the courthouse and courtrooms. Visitors must remove hats, hoods, and other head coverings before entering, and must keep them off while remaining in, the courthouse and courtrooms, except where worn for religious reasons.

RULE 1.10. Term of Court.

The Court shall be in continuous session for the transaction of judicial business. Each calendar year shall be divided into three (3) terms, for purposes of Chapter 2313 of the Ohio Revised Code.

RULE 1.11. Official Record.

(A) The electronic version of documents, whether filed through the E-Filing Portal in the first instance or received by the Clerk's Office in paper format and subsequently scanned into electronic format, constitutes the official record in a case. There will be one official audio record of all proceedings before the Court kept and maintained by the Official Court Reporter, and that record remains the official record of the proceedings regardless of any other recording permitted under this rule.

(B) Unless first granted written authorization by the Court, no person other than the Official Court Reporter may audio or video record, or photograph, any proceeding in the courtroom. A request for such authorization, including a request by a media organization to record and disseminate courtroom proceedings, must be made by application to the Court. Recording or photographing under this rule may occur only after the Court has signed an order granting the application and authorizing the specific person or organization to do so.

(C) Any recording or photographing done in violation of this rule shall be confiscated and destroyed, and the person responsible may be held in contempt of court.

RULE 1.12. Courthouse Facility Dogs.

The Court's facility dogs are part of the Court's staff and may be present in the courtroom and interact with parties, attorneys, witnesses, and visitors during proceedings. Any person with allergies to, or a fear of, dogs should notify the Clerk of Courts so that accommodations can be made to keep the dogs away from that person.

RULE 1.13. Food, Drink, and Expectation of Privacy.

(A) No food or drink is permitted in the courtroom, except water in a closed, capped container.

(B) There is no expectation of privacy in the common areas of the courthouse or in the courtrooms.

RULE 1.14. Cell Phones and Electronic Devices.

All cell phones and other electronic devices must be silenced or turned off while court is in session. Consistent with Rule 1.11 of these Local Rules, phones and other devices may not be used to record audio or video, or to take photographs, in the courtroom without prior written authorization from the Court. A device used in violation of this rule may be confiscated.

RULE 1.15. Courtroom Decorum.

(A) All persons in the courtroom shall remain quiet and avoid disturbances while court is in session. A person who violates courtroom rules may be required to leave.

(B) Individuals may not speak with or meet with the judge individually about a pending matter. Parties will have the opportunity to address the Court in open court, with all parties and their attorneys present. An attempt to communicate with the judge outside of a proceeding, regarding a matter pending before the judge, may require the judge to recuse and have another judge assigned, delaying the proceeding.

RULE 1.16. Content Advisory; Presence of Children.

(A) Testimony, evidence, photographs, or video presented in the courtroom may be graphic and unsuitable for all audiences. Persons should use discretion before bringing children, or others in their care, into the courtroom.

(B) Individuals accused of violent or serious crimes may be present in the courtroom. A person who is not required to be present, and who is not comfortable being near such individuals, should not enter.

(C) Child victims and witnesses may be present in the courtroom for that purpose. Children are otherwise discouraged from attending serious criminal trials and custody matters, and may be asked to leave if disruptive.

RULE 1.17. Courtroom Surveillance and Live-Streaming.

(A) Courtrooms are under video and audio surveillance at all times.

(B) While court is in session, proceedings may be broadcast on the Court's Zoom platform and the Meigs Common Pleas Court YouTube channel, consistent with Rule 1.11 of these Local Rules. By entering a courtroom, a person consents to that person's image being broadcast over Zoom, Teams, and/or the Meigs Common Pleas Court YouTube channel.

RULE 1.18. Forms.

Forms mentioned in these Local Rules can be obtained from either the Ohio Supreme Court website at <https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov> or at this Court's website at <https://meigscommonpleascourt.com>.

RULE 1.19. References.

All references to any county offices and/or agencies herein, i.e., Clerk of Courts, Sheriff's Office, Common Pleas Court, refer to Meigs County offices and agencies, unless specifically designated otherwise.

SECTION 2. OFFICIAL COURT RECORDS

RULE 2.01. Court Files.

(A) Case files, both open and closed, shall not be removed from the office of the Clerk of Courts, unless written Court authorization has been given, or if a file is being taken directly to or from the Court or the office of the Clerk of Courts.

(B) Case documents, as defined by Sup.R. 11.09, are public records. However, some documents submitted to or filed with the Court are excluded from the definition of case documents under Sup.R. 11.09 and related provisions.

(C) Most records in Common Pleas Court cases are available by searching the Clerk of Courts website (<https://meigscountyclerkofcourts.com>) or directly through the Court's

case management system at <https://meigseaccess.com>. These resources include the ability to view complete images of filings, unless prohibited by statute or the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio. Persons are encouraged to use these resources and are free to print images directly from them.

(D) If a certified copy, or a document not available online, is requested, the request must be in writing. The Clerk shall provide paper or electronic copies of documents maintained in the case file, except that sealed documents, transcripts, and other protected documents shall not be copied without the express written permission of the Judge or the assigned Magistrate. The Clerk shall require a deposit in advance to secure copying costs, at the rate set forth in the Court's current [fee schedule](#). The Clerk shall have a reasonable period of time in which to copy requested documents.

(E) No person, other than a public official or an employee of the Clerk of Courts or the Court, shall make copies of documents in a paper case file by any means, including but not limited to a camera or scanner, to photograph or duplicate documents. Because case file documents are generally available for public viewing and printing over the internet (subject to the exceptions in this rule), the Clerk of Courts is not required to provide paper copies of documents that are not the subject of a certification request.

(F) Certified copies, or copies of documents not viewable online but otherwise available to the public, may be obtained from the office of the Clerk of Courts at the rate set forth in the Court's current [fee schedule](#). All requests for the Clerk of Courts to make copies must be in writing and accompanied by the applicable fee. The Clerk of Courts shall have a reasonable period of time in which to honor such requests.

RULE 2.02. Preservation of Files.

The Clerk of Courts is responsible for maintaining case files of official Court actions. The Clerk shall file together and carefully preserve all papers, documents, and/or document images delivered to the Clerk for filing in every action or proceeding. Nothing in this rule shall prohibit the Clerk from maintaining such papers or files in electronic format only.

RULE 2.03. Removal of Paper Case Files.

No paper case files, or parts thereof, shall be removed from the Clerk's custody by anyone other than the Judge, a Magistrate of the Court, or an employee of the Court, without the express written permission of the Clerk of Courts.

RULE 2.04. Court Recordings.

(A) The Court records all hearings electronically. The Court's electronic recordings are the official record. Electronic recordings, audio tapes, digital recordings, and any stenographer notes shall be maintained by the Court for three years from the date of the particular recording. Any interested party or non-party desiring to preserve the record beyond that period must make timely arrangements with the appropriate court personnel to have the record transcribed or designated for permanent storage.

(B) If an electronic recording of a hearing before a judge is not available for purposes of appeal, App.R. 9(C) applies.

RULE 2.05. Transcripts.

(A) Transcripts may be ordered by making a written request for the specific hearing requested. The original request must be filed with the Clerk of Courts, and a copy either hand-delivered or mailed directly to the judge's or magistrate's office. All requests for transcripts must include the full case caption and case number, and the date and time of the hearing.

(B) Transcription services are provided by the official Court Reporter and any contracted transcription services selected by the official Court Reporter. The fees for preparing transcripts and copies are set forth in the Court's current [fee schedule](#).

(C) The official record for purposes of appeal, or to prosecute or defend objections to a magistrate's decision, remains the transcript as prepared under Rule 2.05(B).

RULE 2.06. Public Records.

(A) It is the policy of the Meigs County Court of Common Pleas, General Trial and Domestic Relations Divisions, to comply with public records requests. The applicable rules for records retention and public access for the courts of Ohio are found in the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio.

(B) The Court Administrator is the Court's custodian of administrative records. All requests for public records not otherwise addressed by these Local Rules should be made to the Court Administrator.

SECTION 3. COUNSEL ISSUES

RULE 3.01. Ohio Attorneys.

All Ohio attorneys practicing before this Court shall be registered with the Ohio Supreme Court and licensed in good standing.

RULE 3.02. Pro Hac Vice and Out-of-State Attorneys.

Any attorney admitted to the practice of law in another state, but not in Ohio, is not permitted to enter an appearance in any case before the Court unless the attorney has first (1) registered with the Office of Attorney Services of the Supreme Court of Ohio and obtained a Certificate of Pro Hac Vice Registration, as required by Gov.Bar R. XII, and (2) been granted permission by this Court to appear pro hac vice, upon a motion to which the Certificate of Pro Hac Vice Registration is attached and which otherwise complies with Gov.Bar R. XII. Registration with the Office of Attorney Services may be made at <https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/PHVLogin>.

RULE 3.03. Written Appearance of Counsel.

Any attorney retained or appointed in any case before this Court shall promptly enter a written appearance in the case as counsel of record. Although filing a notice of appearance immediately upon being retained is encouraged, so that the attorney will receive notices and pleadings, this rule shall not be construed as requiring a notice of appearance separate from an entry of appearance made by filing a responsive pleading. No attorney shall appear at a hearing on behalf of a party unless that attorney has first entered a written appearance as counsel of record for that party, unless otherwise authorized by the Court.

RULE 3.04. Multiple Counsel for a Party.

(A) Each attorney joining in a single pleading shall separately sign the pleading, even when the attorneys practice together in the same firm. If a pleading that constitutes an appearance by counsel contains one signature line but more than one typewritten name under the signature line, the attorney who signs the pleading — or, if the signature is illegible, the first name typewritten on the pleading — shall be considered counsel of record for the party.

(B) Designation of Trial Counsel. When two or more attorneys join in a single pleading, even when the attorneys practice in the same firm, only one counsel shall be designated as Trial Counsel, in writing. In the absence of a written designation, the Court will consider the first attorney listed on the first pleading filed to be Trial Counsel. Any change in Trial Counsel must be reported to the Court in writing, and the new Trial Counsel's name substituted as Trial Counsel.

(C) Inclusion in Case Docket for Electronic Access. When there are multiple attorneys of record for a single party, the Clerk of Courts shall identify all attorneys of record as such in the Court's electronic case management system, so as to permit all such counsel access to non-public information or documents associated with the case.

(D) Responsibility of Trial Counsel. Trial Counsel shall be responsible for the action and shall attend all hearings, conferences, pretrials, and the trial. Trial Counsel may not send outside counsel or local counsel to make a limited appearance in order for Trial Counsel to avoid travel to the jurisdiction in which the matter is filed. ONLY the attorney of record, who is fully knowledgeable in the proceeding, along with the party (with authority to resolve issues, enter into stipulations, and potentially settle the matter), shall attend the hearings.

(E) Notices and Correspondence. All notices or communications from the Court, and all documents required by law to be served on parties, will be sent to the designated Trial Counsel, as well as to other counsel of record for whom an email address is provided. Pursuant to Crim.R. 49(B) and Civ.R. 5(B), those notices will be sent by email, with an electronic document attachment when possible. Trial Counsel is ultimately responsible for notifying the parties, co-counsel, and associated counsel of all such matters.

RULE 3.05. Court-Appointed, Indigent Defense Counsel.

(A) Appointment of either a public defender on the Court's approved list or a private attorney shall be made by the Court. If none of the attorneys on the indigent counsel appointment list are available or able to represent a party, the Court shall find a private attorney to be assigned for those services. The Court maintains a list of private attorneys who wish to serve on the appointed counsel list.

(B) The Court will conduct a periodic review to ensure an equitable distribution of appointments among the attorneys on the list.

(C) The qualifications of appointed counsel shall conform to Ohio Adm.Code 120-1-10.

RULE 3.06. Affidavit of Indigency.

Before counsel is appointed, each alleged indigent defendant must file the Ohio Public Defender's Form OPD-206R, commonly referred to as the Financial Disclosure/Affidavit of Indigency form, setting forth the facts in support. The form must disclose whether counsel has been retained in the matter to date, including whether any payments have been made to that counsel. No attorney who has received, or been promised, compensation from any source shall be appointed to represent that indigent defendant.

RULE 3.07. Compensation and Expenses.

All requests for compensation shall be made by completing the prescribed Ohio Public Defender forms and submitting them to the Court within forty-five (45) days after the termination entry is filed in the case, unless extended by the Court for good cause shown. The rate of compensation shall be commensurate with the applicable Meigs County

Board of County Commissioners' Resolution, and current rates of compensation are set forth in the Court's current [fee schedule](#).

RULE 3.08. Appointment and Withdrawal of Counsel.

(A) When a defendant is unable to employ counsel, the assigned judge shall appoint counsel to represent the defendant pursuant to Crim.R. 44 and Rule 3.05 of these Local Rules. The appointment shall be reflected in a judgment entry.

(B) An attorney may not withdraw from representation without the permission of the Court. An attorney who desires to withdraw shall file a written motion with the Court. An attorney is not deemed to have withdrawn from representation until the withdrawal is reflected in a judgment entry.

RULE 3.09. Conformity with Sup.R. 4.31.

(A) Appointment Defined. The term "Appointment" has the same meaning set forth in Sup.R. 4.31(A).

(B) Anything in this rule that conflicts, from time to time, with the requirements of Sup.R. 4.31 shall be superseded by the provisions of Sup.R. 4.31.

(C) Application. Any attorney or court officer requesting an appointment from the Meigs County Court of Common Pleas, or inclusion on the Court's appointment list, shall complete and submit a written application for the appointment.

(D) Continuing Education Certification Required. Before receiving an appointment, and at every biennial continuing-education cycle thereafter, the appointed attorney shall certify, under oath: (1) that the attorney is in compliance with all continuing legal education requirements and administrative regulations of the Ohio Public Defender's Office for maintaining competency in the practice of felony criminal defense; and (2) that the attorney's legal services and compensation are recognized as eligible for full or partial reimbursement from the Ohio Public Defender's Office to Meigs County.

(E) Removal from List. Failure to provide the certification required under division (D) of this rule shall result in removal of the attorney from the Court's appointment list.

(F) Rotation of Appointments. The Court shall use a rotary system from a graduated list that pairs the seriousness and complexity of the case with the qualifications and experience of the person to be appointed. The Court may, for its convenience, maintain separate lists for different types of appointments.

(G) Considerations for Appointments. In making appointments for the representation of indigent felony defendants, the Court shall consider: (1) the anticipated complexity of the

case; (2) any educational, mental health, language, or other challenges facing the party for whom the appointment is made; (3) the relevant experience of persons available to accept the appointment, including proficiency in a foreign language, familiarity with mental health issues, and familiarity with scientific or other evidence issues; (4) the avoidance of conflicts of interest or other situations that may delay timely completion of the case; and (5) intangible factors, including the court's or judicial officer's view of a potential appointee's commitment to providing timely, cost-effective, quality representation to each prospective client.

RULE 3.10. Effect of Inclusion on an Approved List.

Persons on a list maintained by the Court of persons pre-qualified to serve are not assured a substantially equal number of appointments. No person is granted a legal right or claim by virtue of this rule.

RULE 3.11. Withdrawal of Counsel of Record.

(A) Any attorney seeking to withdraw as counsel of record shall file a written motion and submit a proposed judgment entry to the Court through the Clerk's e-filing system. The motion and proposed judgment entry shall state with particularity the reason(s) for the requested withdrawal, and any application to withdraw must be submitted at least 21 days before the hearing or trial.

(B) No attorney will be permitted to withdraw as counsel of record unless one of the following requirements is met:

(1) By motion, where the motion contains a client-signed acknowledgment stating: (a) that the client understands the case will proceed according to the schedule previously established by the Court, whether or not the client retains new counsel; (b) that the client consents to the withdrawal; and (c) the physical, mailing, and email address, and telephone number, where the client may be personally contacted by the Court;

(2) By concurrent substitution of new counsel of record; or

(3) By hearing, at which the Court finds good cause for the withdrawal, with the client and the withdrawing attorney present, unless the client fails to appear following proper notice.

RULE 3.12. Pro Se (Self-Representing) Litigants.

Nothing in these Rules shall be construed to prevent any party from representing himself or herself in any action before the Court as a pro se or self-representing party. As used in these Rules, "counsel" means the attorney of record for a particular party, and any reference to "counsel" applies equally to a pro se or self-representing party, unless clearly

inapplicable. Any pleading, motion, or other filing by a pro se or self-representing party shall be signed by that party pursuant to Civ.R. 11, and shall contain the party's U.S. Postal Service mailing address, telephone number, and email address. A pro se or self-representing party must follow all applicable rules, regulations, and procedures in the same manner as a party represented by an attorney.

SECTION 4. COURTROOM PROCEDURES

RULE 4.01. Witnesses — Separation.

In any trial where the Court has ordered a separation of witnesses, it shall be the responsibility of counsel to see that such witnesses leave the courtroom. It shall also be the responsibility of the bailiff and/or counsel to call to the Court's attention the presence of any witness who remains or later enters the courtroom. Any witness who enters the courtroom and listens to the testimony of other witnesses after a separation of witnesses is ordered may not testify if an objection is made by opposing counsel and the objection is sustained by the Court. The Court, in its discretion, may permit the witness to testify if the Court finds that the interests of justice require the testimony, or that the witness heard or observed nothing that would prejudice the opposing party or parties. A general order directing the separation of witnesses only excludes witnesses from the courtroom and/or from listening to testimony; it does not prevent communication or contact between witnesses outside the courtroom, provided they do not discuss testimony that took place in the courtroom. The Court will, if requested, make such additional exclusionary orders as permitted by Evid.R. 615, to the extent the Court, in its discretion, determines appropriate.

RULE 4.02. Use of Lectern.

In all evidentiary proceedings, counsel shall use the lectern when addressing the Court or jury, or when examining a witness, unless otherwise permitted by the Court. In non-evidentiary hearings, counsel shall rise at counsel table and address the Court from a standing position, unless otherwise permitted by the Court.

RULE 4.03. Dress Code.

All attorneys, parties, and witnesses, when attending Court, shall dress in a manner that reflects respect for the Court and for the decorum of formal legal proceedings. No individual shall appear in the courtroom dressed inappropriately, as determined by the Court, including but not limited to appearing in clothing that displays sexually explicit images or language, or other vulgar or offensive language or images. It shall be the duty of counsel to advise the parties and witnesses of this rule prior to their appearance in Court.

RULE 4.04. Multiple Attorneys.

Except with permission of the Court, only one counsel for each party shall be permitted to be heard on any motion, or on any question arising during the course of a trial or hearing, or during argument to the Court or jury; and only one counsel shall be permitted to examine the same witness in any trial or hearing.

RULE 4.05. Counsel Table Seating.

Only counsel and the parties shall be seated at counsel table, unless otherwise expressly permitted by the Judge or Magistrate.

RULE 4.06. Exhibits.

(A) All exhibits shall be submitted for use at trial in electronic format, as directed by the Court, either using the Court's exhibit email (meigscourtexhibits@gmail.com) or by uploading to the Court's cloud-based storage and presentation system, which is currently CaseCenter by Thomson Reuters. A physical copy of exhibits shall also be presented to the Court for purposes of appellate review.

(B) Plaintiff's exhibits should be marked with numbers, and Defendant's exhibits shall be marked with letters. However, as long as the exhibit labels clearly identify the party offering the proposed exhibits, all exhibits may instead be numbered. The Court shall direct the parties as to whether to submit proposed exhibits through email or through CaseCenter. To the extent practical, all exhibits should be marked with the case number of the action, with a place to note the date offered. If CaseCenter is not ordered to be used, all marked paper exhibits shall be scanned and provided to the Court in electronic format, so that the exhibits may be shown through the Court's monitoring system rather than handling paper copies between counsel and witnesses.

(C) All original exhibits shall be marked in advance of the hearing or trial and, to the extent practicable, provided not only in electronic format but also bound in three-ring binders, with a table of contents or exhibit list in front of the exhibits, both for appellate purposes and in the event of any problems with the planned technology.

(D) The parties shall exchange copies of all exhibits at least seven (7) days in advance of trial or hearing, or at the final pretrial if one is scheduled. Once a hearing or trial commences, no additional exhibits shall be uploaded without leave of Court. A copy of each party's exhibits for use during a jury trial shall also be furnished to the Judge or Magistrate electronically in PDF format at least 72 hours before trial. The electronic copy shall include an index followed by all anticipated exhibits, in the order marked.

(E) If the trial is to a jury, each party shall provide the Court with an electronic/digital copy of their respective exhibits, pre-marked and in order, together with an exhibit index, by email attachment or flash drive, prior to the commencement of trial.

(F) Exhibits withdrawn or not offered during trial or hearing shall be returned to the party at the conclusion of the hearing or trial, pursuant to the procedures set forth in Sup.R.

11.28(F). If original exhibits are presented in a three-ring binder, an exhibit that is withdrawn or not offered shall be removed from any binder retained in evidence, unless necessary for appellate record purposes.

(G) Exhibits offered and admitted into evidence, and exhibits excluded from evidence on objection, shall remain in the custody of the Court. Exhibits, with the exception of exhibits in murder cases, shall be available for return to the offering party upon expiration of the appeal process. Any request for the return of exhibits shall be made by written motion.

(H) By express stipulation on the record, a copy may be substituted for any original exhibit introduced into evidence during a hearing or trial.

RULE 4.07. Courtroom Digital Presentation Equipment.

The Court has equipment to assist in the digital presentation, display, and annotation of exhibits, including but not limited to CaseCenter (from Thomson Reuters), an Elmo document camera, projection equipment, monitors on the walls, at counsel tables, and at the witness stand, LCD television(s), and wireless projection capabilities, as well as the capability to connect an attorney's or party's own device and to annotate exhibits at both counsel table and the witness stand. This equipment is to be used for digital display and presentation of hearing and trial exhibits, to enhance and facilitate the effective and efficient use of exhibits. Court personnel are available to provide appropriate training prior to a scheduled hearing, as well as limited technical assistance to litigants during the proceeding itself.

RULE 4.08. Courthouse Facility Dogs.

The Court's facility dogs are part of the Court's staff and may be present in the courtroom and interact with parties, attorneys, witnesses, and visitors during proceedings. Any person with allergies to, or a fear of, dogs should notify the Clerk of Courts so that accommodations can be made to keep the dogs away from that person.

RULE 4.09. Food, Drink, and Expectation of Privacy.

(A) No food or drink is permitted in the courtroom, except water in a closed, capped container.

(B) There is no expectation of privacy in the common areas of the courthouse or in the courtrooms.

RULE 4.10. Cell Phones and Electronic Devices.

All cell phones and other electronic devices must be silenced or turned off while court is in session. Consistent with Rule 1.11 of these Local Rules, phones and other devices may not be used to record audio or video, or to take photographs, in the courtroom without prior written authorization from the Court. A device used in violation of this rule may be confiscated.

RULE 4.11. Courtroom Decorum.

(A) All persons in the courtroom shall remain quiet and avoid disturbances while court is in session. A person who violates courtroom rules may be required to leave.

(B) Individuals may not speak with or meet with the judge individually about a pending matter. Parties will have the opportunity to address the Court in open court, with all parties and their attorneys present. An attempt to communicate with the judge outside of a proceeding, regarding a matter pending before the judge, may require the judge to recuse and have another judge assigned, delaying the proceeding.

RULE 4.12. Content Advisory; Presence of Children.

(A) Testimony, evidence, photographs, or video presented in the courtroom may be graphic and unsuitable for all audiences. Persons should use discretion before bringing children, or others in their care, into the courtroom.

(B) Individuals accused of violent or serious crimes may be present in the courtroom. A person who is not required to be present, and who is not comfortable being near such individuals, should not enter.

(C) Child victims and witnesses may be present in the courtroom for that purpose. Children are otherwise discouraged from attending serious criminal trials and custody matters, and may be asked to leave if disruptive.

RULE 4.13. Courtroom Surveillance and Live-Streaming.

(A) Courtrooms are under video and audio surveillance at all times.

(B) While court is in session, proceedings may be broadcast on the Court's Zoom platform and the Meigs Common Pleas Court YouTube channel, consistent with Rule 1.11 of these Local Rules. By entering a courtroom, a person consents to that person's

image being broadcast over Zoom, Teams, and/or the Meigs Common Pleas Court YouTube channel.

SECTION 5. E-FILING

RULE 5.01. E-Filing is Mandatory for Attorneys; Limited Exceptions.

Electronic filing is mandatory for all attorneys. The Court and Clerk of Courts provide for filing by electronic document ("e-Filing") through the Court's authorized electronic filing system, currently accessed at <https://meigseaccess.com>. The Clerk will no longer accept facsimile or email for filing. All licensed attorneys are required to file through the Clerk of Courts' e-Filing system. Unless otherwise ordered, all civil, criminal, and domestic relations case types are designated e-File case types for purposes of this Section. Counsel may file a document in paper form only as provided in Rules 5.13(F) and 5.20.

RULE 5.02. Submission of Electronic Judgment Entries, Orders, and Decrees; Electronic Signatures.

(A) The Court (Judge and Magistrates) accepts electronic proposed or agreed judgment entries, decrees, orders, magistrate orders, magistrate decisions, and related attachments, in Microsoft Word electronic format, for review, potential modification, signature, and subsequent filing with the Clerk of Courts.

(B) A judgment entry, decree, order, or decision submitted electronically that also contains the signatures of approving counsel and/or one or more of the parties may be submitted electronically, but should only be submitted in Adobe Acrobat PDF format, with all signatures "flattened" to protect the integrity of the document (the same as paper). Judgment entries, decrees, orders, or decisions not requiring the signatures of approving counsel may be submitted electronically in Microsoft Word format (preferred) or Adobe Acrobat PDF format for signature and processing by the Court.

(C) Documents signed electronically by the Judge or a Magistrate shall be annotated manually or have digital images affixed. Any signature applied electronically shall be flattened into the document prior to filing with the Clerk of Courts, so as to maintain the integrity of the document (the same as paper). Judges and Magistrates shall be individually responsible for protecting the integrity of their respective digital signature formats.

RULE 5.03. E-Filing Process — Documents Required to Be E-Filed.

Except as otherwise provided in Rules 5.13(F) and 5.20, all pleadings, motions, briefs, memoranda of law, deposition transcripts, transcripts of proceedings, orders, and other

documents submitted in designated e-File case types shall be filed electronically through the Court's authorized electronic filing system. Except as provided in Rules 5.13(F) and 5.20, the Clerk shall not accept or file any document in paper form in mandatory e-File cases from litigants represented by counsel. Litigants who are not represented by counsel (pro se or self-representing parties), and who are not currently registered users of the Court's e-File system, may file initial documents in paper form with the Clerk in person, by U.S. Mail, or by using the Clerk's Public Access Terminal, only on a temporary basis, until such time as they become registered users. All persons accessing the Court's e-File system shall be required to become registered users on or after their initial access to the Court. Documents filed in accordance with this rule shall be deemed filed and shall become the Court's Official Court Record when they are entered by the Clerk in the Court's e-File system.

RULE 5.04. Definitions.

The following terms used in this Section shall be defined as follows:

- (A) "Case Management System" ("CMS"): The Court's CMS manages the receipt, processing, storage, and retrieval of data associated with a case, and performs actions on that data. The Court's CMS is CourtView, supported by Equivant, and is accessed by registered users and the public at <https://meigseaccess.com>.
- (B) "Clerk Review": A review of documents by the Clerk in accordance with Court rules, policies, procedures, and practice. The Clerk may review the data and documents electronically submitted to ensure compliance with Court rules, policies, procedures, and practices before creating a docket entry or before docketing the case.
- (C) "Confidentiality" or "Confidential": All documents submitted for e-Filing shall not be considered a public record until accepted by the Clerk, and shall remain confidential thereafter if so entitled to confidentiality under rule or law.
- (D) "File ID": A number assigned to a document upon submission to the CMS. A registered user may log into their account to review the status of documents filed in cases on which the registered user is a filer, and view the number assigned to each filing for receipting/verification purposes.
- (E) "Court Electronic Record": Any document that the Court receives in electronic form, records in the CMS, and stores in its Document Management System. This includes Court-initiated filings, as well as pleadings, other documents, and attachments created by parties or their counsel. It does not include physical exhibits brought into the courtroom for the Court's or jury's edification that cannot be captured in electronic form.

(F) "Court-Initiated Filings": Official Court documents entered into the docket or register of actions, such as notices or orders.

(G) "Digitally Signed and Flattened" (Signature): A signature applied in the same manner or method by the attorney or filing party as an original signature is applied on a paper document, utilizing a stylus upon an electronic surface or signature device such as a computer tablet touch screen or electronic signature pad, and which is then flattened into the document so that it cannot be removed or lifted from the document after application is finalized.

(H) "Direct Access": The ability of any person to inspect and obtain a copy of a court record at all reasonable times during regular business hours at the place where the record is made available.

(I) "Document": A filing made with the Clerk in either electronic format or paper form, becoming the Court's official record.

(J) "Document Management System" ("DMS"): A DMS manages the receipting, indexing, storage, and retrieval of electronic and non-electronic documents associated with a case.

(K) "Electronic Filing" ("e-File"): The electronic transmission, acceptance, and processing of a filing. A submission consists of data, one or more documents, and images. This definition does not include facsimile or email.

(L) "Electronic Service" ("eService"): The electronic transmission of an original document to all case participants who are registered users of the Court's e-File system, via the e-File system. Upon the completion of any transmission to the e-File system, an electronic receipt shall be issued to the sender acknowledging receipt by the e-File system.

(M) "Nunc Pro Tunc": "Now for Then" — the designation for an order that allows a Judge to correct an order previously made that was improperly entered or expressed, or that was inadvertently not filed timely.

(N) "Public Access": Both Direct Access and Remote Access.

(O) "Public Access Terminal": A terminal located in the Clerk's office for use by the public during regular business hours. Users shall be charged for printed copies of documents at rates permitted by law and set forth in the Court's current [fee schedule](#).

(P) "Registered User": A person who has read and agreed to the terms of the CMS's User Agreement, has provided their credentials through the CMS proving their identity, and has been provided with a User ID and password through the CMS. A registered user, by

virtue of registration with the CMS, expressly assents to service by email as the default method of service for all documents except complaints. A registered user may log into their account at any time to review cases on which they are a party, and shall use the CMS to file any documents electronically, at any time of day, from any location, using their User ID and password.

(Q) "Rejected Filing": A document that does not comply with the applicable Court rules, policies, and procedures, and does not meet the requirements of Clerk Review.

(R) "Remote Access": The ability of any person to electronically search, inspect, and copy a court record at a location other than the place where the record is made available.

(S) "Service of Documents": All pleadings (unless excluded herein), motions, briefs, memoranda of law, deposition transcripts, transcripts of proceedings, orders, and other documents filed electronically with the Clerk shall be served by the parties to a case and the Court in accordance with Civ.R. 5. Once a registered user has entered an appearance in the case, service thereafter shall be provided by email from the Court.

(T) "System Error": A failure of the Court's e-File system as defined in Rule 5.13(F)(1).

RULE 5.05. Service of Court-Initiated Filings.

For designated e-File case types, service of Court-Initiated Filings shall be made via eService, subject to the provisions of this Section.

RULE 5.06. Registration in E-File System.

(A) All counsel of record shall register with the Court's e-File system to file, serve, receive, review, and retrieve copies of e-Filed pleadings, orders, and other documents in the case.

(B) Pro se or self-representing parties may also register with the Court's e-File system at the time of their initial filing, and shall thereafter be subject to mandatory e-Filing. A pro se or self-representing party's e-Filing credentials shall only be operable within the case in which that party is a litigant.

(C) If a party or counsel of record does not have internet access, the party or counsel of record may use the Clerk's Public Access Terminal or a Meigs County Law Library terminal to register to use the Court's e-File system and to e-File documents, during regular office hours. Terminals with internet access are available for public or attorney use in the Meigs County Law Library, located on the third floor of the Meigs County Courthouse, 100 East Second Street, Pomeroy, Ohio 45769.

RULE 5.07. Electronic Filing and Service of Orders and Other Papers.

For designated e-File case types, the Court shall issue, file, and serve notices, orders, and other documents electronically, subject to the provisions of this Section.

RULE 5.08. Designation of Electronic Filing Cases.

(A) Upon an order designating any case type as an e-File case, parties to an assigned e-File case who are represented by counsel shall promptly take steps to allow their counsel to file, serve, receive, review, and retrieve copies of the pleadings, orders, and other documents filed in the case electronically. Parties filing electronically or receiving electronic service of any documents filed must become registered participants in the Court's e-Filing system.

(B) For designated e-File case types, except as provided in Rules 5.13(F) and 5.20, the Court shall not accept or file any pleading or instrument in paper form. Parties shall electronically file a document by registering to use the Court's authorized electronic filing system. If a party does not have internet access, the party may use the Clerk's Public Access Terminal or the Meigs County Law Library terminal to register and to file documents electronically.

(C) Any document filed electronically that requires a filing fee may be rejected by the Clerk unless the filer has complied with the mechanism established by the Court for the payment of filing fees in accordance with Civ.R. 5(E)(3).

RULE 5.09. Confidential and Unique Electronic Identifier.

(A) The Court's e-File system shall assign an individual who has registered pursuant to Rule 5.06 a confidential and unique electronic identifier that shall be used to file, serve, receive, review, and retrieve e-Filed pleadings, orders, and other documents in the case.

(B) Each person to whom a unique identifier has been assigned shall be responsible for the security and use of that identifier.

(C) All e-Filed documents shall be deemed to be made with the authorization of the party assigned the specific unique electronic identifier, unless the party proves to the satisfaction of the Court, by clear and convincing evidence, that the contrary is demonstrated.

(D) A pro se or self-representing party's authorization shall be limited to the action in which they are a party.

RULE 5.10. Official Court Record.

For documents that have been e-Filed under this Section, or documents filed in paper format as permitted under specific circumstances that have been scanned and uploaded to the e-File system by the Clerk, the electronic version constitutes the Official Court Record. E-Filed documents have the same force and effect as those filed by traditional means.

RULE 5.11. Form of Documents.

(A) Format. All pleadings, motions, briefs, and other documents shall be:

- (1) Typewritten or printed, double spaced, on 8½" x 11" paper, not less than 10-point and not greater than 12-point regular type font, paginated sequentially; and
- (2) Free of links to other documents or references to the CMS unless incorporated into the filed document. External links are prohibited.

(B) Portable Document Format ("PDF").

- (1) Except as provided in Rule 5.11(B)(2), all e-Filed documents, pleadings, and papers shall be filed with the Clerk in PDF format.
- (2) A proposed order or proposed entry shall be submitted in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) format and shall reference the specific motion to which it applies.

(C) Size of E-Filed Documents.

- (1) Individual documents included in a submission shall not exceed 10 megabytes in size.
- (2) Any combination of documents e-Filed in one submission shall not exceed 30 megabytes in size.

RULE 5.12. Signatures.

(A) Attorney/Filing Party Signature. E-Filed documents that require the signature of the attorney or filing party shall be signed with a conformed signature of "/s/ [name]," or shall bear a blue-colored, digitally applied and flattened original signature of the attorney or filing party (digitally applied and flattened original signatures must be in blue-colored inking).

(B) The correct format for an attorney's conformed signature is as follows:

/s/Attorney Name

Attorney Name

Bar Number 1234567

Attorney for [Plaintiff/Defendant] XYZ Corporation

ABC Law Firm

Address

Telephone

Fax (if available), and

E-mail address of the individual attorney

(C) The conformed signature and/or the digitally applied and flattened original signature on an e-Filed document is deemed to constitute a signature on the document for purposes of signature requirements imposed by the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio, the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, the Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure, and any other law.

(D) Multiple Signatures. When a stipulation or other document requires two or more signatures, the filer shall: (1) confirm that the content of the document is acceptable to all persons required to sign; (2) indicate the agreement of other counsel or parties at the appropriate place in the document, usually on the signature line; and (3) e-File the document, indicating the signatories (e.g., /s/ Jane Doe, /s/ John Smith), or including electronically applied original, flattened signatures.

(E) Original Signatures. Documents requiring an original signature, such as an affidavit or other notarized document, that do not contain digitally applied original, flattened signatures and/or a properly applied electronic notary, shall be scanned and e-Filed as a PDF.

(1) The filer shall maintain the signed document in the filer's records and have it available for production upon request of the Court.

(2) The signed document shall be maintained until the case is closed and the time for appeal has expired, or the appeal has been heard and all opportunities for post-judgment relief are exhausted.

(3) Signature of Judge or Judicial Officer. E-Filed documents may be signed by a Judge or judicial officer via a digitally applied and flattened signature. All orders, decrees, judgments, and other documents signed in this manner shall have the same force and effect as if the Judge had affixed their signature to a paper copy of the order and journalized it.

RULE 5.13. Time, Effect, and Process of E-Filing.

(A) Submission. Any filing may be e-Filed with the Clerk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

(B) Receipt. Filing of electronic documents shall be made by submitting the documents through the E-Filing Portal. Confirmation of receipt by the E-Filing Portal is only a confirmation of receipt of the document, not a confirmation that the documents were accepted for filing.

(C) Clerk Review. After Clerk Review, a filer will receive notification from the Clerk that the submission has been accepted or rejected.

(1) If the submission is rejected, the document shall not become part of the Court record, and the filer shall be required to re-submit the document to meet the requirements. If the document is corrected and resubmitted under the same File ID, it shall retain the original submission date and time. If a new, subsequent filing is submitted instead, the newly submitted document shall receive a new submission date and time.

(2) If the submission is accepted, the document shall be docketed and filed.

(D) Official Time Stamp. Upon acceptance, the submission shall be deemed filed and shall receive an electronic stamp that includes the date and time the filer submitted the document to the Court's e-File system, as well as the unique confirmation number of the filing. Once accepted, the document will be deemed filed for purposes of Ohio law and the relevant rules of court procedure.

(E) Filing documents through the E-Filing Portal does not alter any filing deadlines.

(1) Documents received after 11:59:59 p.m. local observed time in Pomeroy, Ohio through the E-Filing Portal shall not be considered for filing until the next business day. The time of receipt of a document is the time stamp provided by the Court's E-Filing Portal; the time stamp provided by any other computer system shall not alter the time of receipt or the effect of this rule.

(2) Documents submitted through the E-Filing Portal after 4:00:00 p.m. local observed time in Pomeroy, Ohio will not be reviewed by the Clerk's Office until the next business day. They will be considered timely if the documents comply with these rules and were received on or before the date they were due.

(3) After review by the Clerk's Office, a separate communication indicating whether the documents were accepted for filing will be sent to the email address registered with the account of the person who submitted the documents through the E-Filing Portal.

(F) System Errors.

(1) A "System Error" occurs when the Court's e-File system is unable to accept filings, continuously or intermittently, for more than one hour on any day, as determined by the Clerk from the records of the Clerk or the e-File system vendor. The Clerk shall post notice of each System Error, including the date and time it began and ended, on the Clerk's website and at the Clerk's counter, and shall retain a record of each System Error. A failure of a filer's own electrical power, internet service, equipment, software, or email is not a System Error.

(2) On any business day on which a System Error occurs during the Clerk's regular office hours, the Clerk shall accept documents in paper form at the Clerk's counter for the remainder of that business day, without the affidavit required by Rule 5.20(H).

(3) A document that was due on a day on which a System Error occurred, and that could not be e-Filed before the deadline because of the System Error, shall be deemed timely filed if it is e-Filed no later than 11:59 p.m., or filed in paper form during the Clerk's regular office hours, on the next business day after the Clerk posts notice that the System Error has ended. The filer shall state on the first page of the document, or in an accompanying notice, that the document is filed under this division. This division is subject to Rule 5.20(N).

RULE 5.14. Service.

(A) Instructions for Service. For all documents that require service by the Clerk, or documents for which a party is requesting that service be made by the Clerk, Instructions for Service shall be filed as a separate document. The Clerk shall not accept Instructions for Service that do not designate the names and addresses of the parties to be served. If the address of the party to be served is unknown, the filer shall substitute "unknown" for the address.

(B) Complaint and Related Documents in Civil Cases.

(1) Upon filing the original complaint, or any counterclaim, cross-claim, or third-party complaint, in addition to the Instructions for Service required by Rule 5.14(A), the filer shall include the address of the plaintiff(s) and defendant(s) in the caption of the document. If the address of any plaintiff or defendant is unknown, the filer shall substitute "unknown" for the address in the caption.

(2) Unless an attorney or party has obtained permission, signed by the assigned Judge, to defer service of summons for a specific period of time, the Instructions for Service filed with the original complaint or any counterclaim, cross-claim, or third-party complaint shall indicate a method of service pursuant to Civ.R. 4. The Clerk shall issue a summons and process the method of service in accordance with the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure.

(3) Indictments in criminal cases shall be filed through the Court's e-File system in compliance with these rules, and shall be served on defendants according to the Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure.

(4) Documents Filed Subsequent to a Complaint or Indictment.

(a) In accordance with Civ.R. 5 and Crim.R. 49, unless the filer requests service by the Clerk and files the Instructions for Service required by Rule 5.14(A), the filer, not the Clerk, shall be responsible for serving all documents filed subsequent to the original complaint on all parties or their attorneys.

(b) When a submission is deemed filed under Rule 5.13(C)(2), the e-File system shall generate a Notification of Electronic Filing to the filer and any other party who is a registered user of the e-File system. For a registered e-filer, the Notification of Electronic Filing shall constitute service under Civ.R. 5 and Crim.R. 49.

(c) eService of documents to registered users of the e-File system subsequent to the complaint or indictment shall be considered valid and effective service, and shall have the same legal effect as an original paper document.

(d) The filer shall serve a paper copy of the document on all pro se parties who are not registered e-file users of the Court's e-File system, in accordance with Civ.R. 5 and Crim.R. 49.

RULE 5.15. Entries and Orders.

(A) The Court's e-File system shall generate a Notification of Electronic Filing for all entries and orders signed by the Judge. This Notification of Electronic Filing shall constitute service under Civ.R. 5 and Crim.R. 49.

(B) After the order or entry has been signed and filed, the Court or Clerk shall serve on all pro se parties who are not registered users of the Court's e-File system copies of all entries and orders submitted to the Court for signature, in accordance with Civ.R. 5 and Crim.R. 49.

RULE 5.16. Certificate of Service.

(A) Proof of service of all documents required or permitted to be served shall be made in compliance with Civ.R. 5(B)(3) and Crim.R. 49(C).

(B) The Certificate of Service shall be signed in accordance with applicable Ohio court rules and laws, including these rules, and shall contain the following language for each party entitled to service:

"I hereby certify that on [date] this document was e-Filed via the Court's e-File system, which shall send notifications of this filing to the following: [list parties or their counsel who are registered users of the Court's e-File system].

I hereby certify that on [date] I served this document in accordance with [Civ.R. 5 or Crim.R. 49] on the following: [list pro se parties who are not registered users of the Court's e-File system] through the United States Postal Service by mailing to the name and mailing address of _____."

RULE 5.17. Service Date and Time to Respond or Act.

(A) For pro se or self-representing parties who are registered users of the Court's e-File system, and for counsel of record, service shall be deemed complete at the time the Notification of Electronic Filing is generated by the Court's e-File system.

(B) Service upon a party or an attorney who is a registered e-file user shall be made in accordance with Civ.R. 5(B) and Civ.R. 5(D). Consistent with Civ.R. 5(B) and Civ.R. 6(D), parties served electronically are not entitled to the three-day extension of time to respond that they would otherwise be entitled to if served by mail or commercial carrier service. This limitation on the "three-day rule" applies only to documents served subsequent to the complaint.

RULE 5.18. Failure of eService.

If the e-File system fails to generate the Notice of Electronic Filing, the party to be served may be entitled to an order extending the date for any response, or the period within which any right, duty, or act must be performed.

RULE 5.19. Personal and Private Information in Documents Filed with the Clerk.

(A) Definition. Personal and private information includes, but is not limited to, social security numbers, financial account numbers, names of minors, information protected by law from public disclosure, or other personal identification numbers.

(B) Exclusion. The filer shall not include personal and private information in any document filed with the Court unless such inclusion is necessary and relevant to the case, or unless it is filed as a separate document not subject to public record, such as a Personal Identifier Information Sheet where applicable. This requirement extends to exhibits or addenda attached to filings, such as preliminary and financial reports that itemize state liens using social security numbers as case numbers, or medical records.

(C) Redaction. If personal and private information is necessary and must be included in a document, the filer shall redact the personal and private information as follows:

- (1) For social security numbers, financial account numbers, or other personal identification numbers, all but the last four digits shall be redacted.
- (2) For minors, only the child's initials shall be included.
- (3) For any other personal or private information, the information shall be replaced with "[REDACTED]."
- (D) Responsible Party. The filer is responsible and liable for redacting personal and private information. The Clerk shall not review each document for compliance with this rule.
- (E) Entries and Orders. Personal and private information required to be included in entries and orders shall be redacted in the manner set forth in Rule 5.19(C).
- (F) Documents Required to Be Filed Under Seal. All filers are responsible for notifying the Clerk of any document being filed that is required to be filed under seal, pursuant to Sup.R. 11.09 and related provisions of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio governing case documents excluded from public access.

RULE 5.20. Exceptions to E-Filing.

- (A) Exhibits, attachments, or other documents that may not be comprehensibly viewed in a PDF shall be filed in their physical form with the Court.
- (B) All documents related to civil protection orders, certificates of judgment, and executions of judgment may be filed in paper form with the Clerk. No domestic violence civil protection order filings will be available for online public access. All information and filings for domestic violence civil protection orders must be maintained in the paper Clerk of Courts filing system or, if by a duly authorized eWarrants user, through the eWarrants system.
- (C) Pro se or self-represented parties who are not registered users of the Court's e-File system may initially file documents in paper form with the Clerk in person, by U.S. Mail, or by using the Clerk's Public Access Terminal, pending registration as a user. Documents filed in accordance with this rule shall be deemed filed and shall become the Court's Official Court Record when entered by the Clerk in the Court's e-File system. For good cause shown, upon proper written application, the Court may, on a case-by-case basis, exempt a pro se or self-represented party from the e-Filing requirements.
- (D) Bonds filed in criminal cases may be filed in paper form with the Clerk (scanned and imported into the CMS).
- (E) Subpoenas to be issued by the Clerk may be filed in paper form with the Clerk.

(F) Criminal case documents filed at arraignment and prior to arraignment may be filed in paper form if bearing the original signature of the defendant.

(G) A motion, entry, and certification for appointed counsel fees may be filed in paper form, subject to the discretion of the Court.

(H) Failure at Counsel's Office on the Due Date. The Clerk shall accept a document in paper form from counsel under this division only if all of the following apply:

(1) The document is due that day under a statute, rule, or order of the Court;

(2) Counsel or counsel's staff tenders the document in person at the Clerk's counter during the Clerk's regular office hours; and

(3) The document is accompanied by a completed affidavit of counsel, substantially in the form of Appendix A to Section 5, stating:

(a) The date, time, and nature of a failure of electrical power, internet service, or computer equipment or software at counsel's office;

(b) The steps taken to restore service;

(c) That no alternate means of e-Filing, including the Clerk's Public Access Terminal, the Meigs County Law Library terminal, or another reasonably available internet connection, could be used to e-File the document before the deadline; and

(d) Any available documentation of the failure, such as a provider outage notice or service ticket, or the reason none is available.

The Clerk shall not accept a document in paper form under this division unless the affidavit is complete. The unavailability of counsel's email, counsel's unfamiliarity with the e-File system, or the absence of counsel's staff is not a failure under this division.

(I) Leave to File Instantly. If a failure described in division (H)(3)(a) of this rule prevents counsel from e-Filing a document on the day it is due, and counsel cannot reasonably tender the document under division (H), including because the failure occurs after the Clerk's office closes, counsel may e-File the document, together with a motion for leave to file instantly and the affidavit described in division (H)(3), no later than 11:59 p.m. on the next business day. The Court may grant leave in its discretion. This division does not apply to any jurisdictional deadline.

(J) Emergency Ex Parte Relief. The Clerk shall accept in paper form a motion for emergency ex parte relief under Rule 12.30, Civ.R. 65(A), or Civ.R. 75(I), together with supporting affidavits and a proposed order, when counsel is personally present at the

courthouse to present the motion to the Judge or a Magistrate for immediate review on the day it is filed. All subsequent filings in the matter shall be e-Filed.

(K) Disability Accommodation. Counsel who cannot use the e-File system because of a disability may submit a written request for accommodation to the Court's ADA Coordinator designated under Rule 18.01(E). Any accommodation shall be granted by written order of the Court, shall be prospective only, and shall specify the alternative filing method permitted and its duration.

(L) Other Extraordinary Circumstances. Except as provided in divisions (A) through (K) of this rule and in Rule 5.13(F), the Clerk shall not accept a document in paper form from counsel except by prior written order of the Court, entered upon counsel's motion showing extraordinary circumstances beyond counsel's control. Infrequent practice before this Court, a preference for paper filing, lack of familiarity with the e-File system, or the general quality of counsel's internet service are not extraordinary circumstances.

(M) Processing, Record, and Oversight.

(1) A document accepted in paper form from counsel under divisions (H) through (L) of this rule, or under Rule 5.13(F)(2), shall be deemed filed when tendered to the Clerk. The Clerk shall scan the document into the e-File system on the day it is filed, and the scanned document shall constitute the Official Court Record under Rule 5.10.

(2) The Clerk shall maintain a log of each document accepted in paper form from counsel under this rule or Rule 5.13(F)(2), stating the case number, counsel, date and time tendered, and division relied upon, and shall provide the log to the Court monthly.

(3) The Court may review any affidavit submitted under division (H) or (I) of this rule. If the Court finds, after notice and an opportunity to be heard, that counsel invoked division (H) or (I) without a factual basis, the Court may impose sanctions, including assessment of costs, striking a filing that is not subject to a jurisdictional deadline, or suspending counsel's use of divisions (H) and (I) for a stated period.

(4) Counsel who invokes division (H) or (I) of this rule more than twice within any twelve-month period may be ordered to appear and show cause why counsel's use of those divisions should not be suspended.

(N) Jurisdictional Deadlines. Nothing in these rules extends a jurisdictional deadline, including a statute of limitations or the time for filing a notice of appeal.

RULE 5.21. Collection of Filing Deposit and Fees.

Any document requiring payment of a filing deposit or fee to the Clerk in order to achieve valid filing status shall be filed in the same manner as any other e-Filed

document. The e-File system accepts payment of deposits and fees electronically. Alternatively, the e-File system can accommodate the filing of an application and proposed order to determine inability to prepay the court cost deposit.

APPENDIX A TO SECTION 5. AFFIDAVIT OF COUNSEL UNDER RULE 5.20(H) AND (I)

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF MEIGS COUNTY, OHIO

☐ **GENERAL DIVISION** ☐ **DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION**

_____,
Plaintiff/Petitioner,

-vs-

Case No. _____

_____,
Defendant/Respondent.

**AFFIDAVIT OF COUNSEL
IN SUPPORT OF FILING UNDER
LOC.R. 5.20(H) OR (I)**

STATE OF OHIO)
) ss:
COUNTY OF _____)

The undersigned, being first duly sworn according to law, states as follows based on personal knowledge:

1. I am counsel of record for _____ in this case. My Ohio Supreme Court Attorney Registration Number is _____.

2. This affidavit is submitted in support of (check one): ☐ tender of a paper filing at the Clerk's counter under Loc.R. 5.20(H); ☐ a motion for leave to file instanter under Loc.R. 5.20(I).

3. The document to which this affidavit applies is titled:

_____.

4. The document was due on _____, 20____, under (identify the statute, rule, or order setting the deadline): _____.

5. The following failure occurred at my office located at

_____ (check all that apply): ☐ loss of electrical power;

☐ loss of internet service; ☐ failure of computer equipment or software.

6. The failure began on _____, 20____, at _____ a.m./p.m. and (check one):
☐ was continuing when I signed this affidavit; ☐ was restored on _____,
20____, at _____ a.m./p.m.

7. Description of the failure: _____

_____.

8. Steps taken to restore service (identify any provider, technician, or vendor contacted, the time of contact, and any ticket or reference number): _____
_____.

9. I considered the following alternate means of e-Filing and could not use them to e-File the document before the deadline for the reasons stated:

☐ Clerk's Public Access Terminal: _____

☐ Meigs County Law Library terminal: _____

☐ Mobile hotspot or other connection: _____

☐ Other: _____

10. Documentation of the failure (check one): ☐ is attached (e.g., provider outage notice or service ticket); ☐ is not available because:
_____.

11. Not counting this affidavit, I have invoked Loc.R. 5.20(H) or (I) _____ time(s) in the preceding twelve months.

12. The failure described above was not caused by the unavailability of my email, my unfamiliarity with the e-File system, or the absence of my staff.

13. I understand that this affidavit applies only to the document identified in paragraph 3; that nothing in the Local Rules extends a jurisdictional deadline (Loc.R. 5.20(N)); and that if the Court finds, after notice and an opportunity to be heard, that I invoked Loc.R. 5.20(H) or (I) without a factual basis, the Court may impose sanctions under Loc.R. 5.20(M)(3).

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NAUGHT.

Signature of Counsel

Printed Name: _____

Atty. Reg. No.: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Sworn to and subscribed in my presence this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Notary Public / Deputy Clerk of Courts

My commission expires: _____

FOR CLERK USE ONLY

Date and time tendered: _____ at _____ a.m./p.m. Received by: _____

Affidavit complete: ☐ Yes ☐ No (paper not accepted under Loc.R. 5.20(H))

Scanned into e-File system on: _____ Entered in paper-filing log: ☐ Yes

SECTION 6. COSTS

RULE 6.01. Cost Deposit.

Any party filing an action or claim in this Court shall deposit court costs at the time the pleading is filed, unless the filing party is not required by law or Court order to make such a deposit. The Clerk of Courts shall publish a schedule of court costs, and all deposits shall be made in the amount specified in that schedule. The Clerk of Courts may refuse to file a party's pleading if a cost deposit in the proper amount is not tendered with the pleading. The schedule of court costs may be modified from time to time. For the current deposit and fee requirements, see the Meigs County Clerk of Courts website at <https://meigseaccess.com/eservices/>, or contact the Clerk of Courts at legal@meigsclerkofcourts.com.

References in these Rules to the "fee schedule," the "current fee schedule," the "Court's current fee schedule," or the "fee schedule then in effect" mean the current schedule of court costs and fees published by the Clerk of Courts under this rule, including any fees set by order of the Court, available at <https://meigseaccess.com/eservices/>.

RULE 6.02. Additional Deposits.

(A) Upon receiving notification from the Clerk of Courts that the deposits for court costs to date are insufficient to pay all anticipated court costs, the Court may require, from time to time, additional deposits toward court costs.

(B) Certain cases and individuals may be entitled to a waiver of the obligation to prepay a full deposit with the initial filing. Applications and proposed entries to waive the prepayment of court costs are available from the Clerk of Courts.

RULE 6.03. Waiver of Court Costs Deposit.

The Clerk of Courts shall accept a pleading filed without a court cost deposit if an Ohio Supreme Court Financial Disclosure/Fee Waiver Application and Order, approved by the Judge or Magistrate of this Court, is submitted with the pleading. The current form is available on the Ohio Supreme Court's website at <https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/courtSvcs/justiceAccess/resources/CivilFeeWaiver.pdf>. The filing of an Application of Indigency for Court Costs does not relieve the party of liability for court costs. A party may be relieved from prepaying court costs deposits, but ordered to make payments toward court costs over time until actual costs incurred are paid. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to prevent the Court from requiring any other party to the action to make a sufficient deposit for costs, or from assessing costs to any party.

RULE 6.04. Costs and Final Judgment.

(A) Every proposed final judgment, order, or decree submitted to the Court shall clearly address the payment of court costs, including which party or parties shall pay them and, if shared, in what proportion. The Court may decline to sign a proposed final entry that does not address costs.

(B) Consistent with Civ.R. 58(A), the Clerk of Courts shall journalize every judgment, order, or decree signed by the Court, whether or not it addresses costs. If a signed final judgment, order, or decree does not address costs, the Clerk shall promptly notify the Court, and the Court may enter a supplemental order allocating costs. Unless and until the Court orders otherwise, costs not addressed in a final judgment, order, or decree shall be assessed as follows:

(1) In civil cases, consistent with Civ.R. 54(D), against the party or parties against whom judgment is entered, including a defendant against whom default judgment is entered; against the plaintiff upon the plaintiff's voluntary dismissal; and equally among the parties upon a dismissal by agreement or settlement, unless the parties' agreement provides otherwise;

(2) In domestic relations cases, equally between the parties if both parties appeared and participated in the action, or against the plaintiff or petitioner if the defendant or respondent did not appear; and

(3) In criminal cases, against the defendant upon conviction, consistent with R.C. 2947.23, unless waived by the Court.

(C) Upon final judgment, the Clerk of Courts is directed to apply all deposits for costs to outstanding court costs in the case, regardless of which party was ordered to pay court costs. Any additional costs due, beyond the deposit, shall be collected pursuant to the order directing payment of costs.

APPENDIX A TO SECTION 6. DEPOSITS FOR COSTS

MEIGS COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS DEPOSITS FOR COSTS (effective June 5, 2026)

The following schedule of court costs is published by the Clerk of Courts under Rule 6.01 and reflects the deposit and fee requirements then in effect. This schedule may be modified from time to time; the current schedule is available at the Meigs County Clerk of Courts website, <https://meigseaccess.com/eservices/>, directly at <https://meigscountyclerkofcourts.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/meigs-deposits-for-costs-as-of-6.5.26.pdf>, or by contacting the Clerk of Courts at legal@meigsclerkofcourts.com.

DOMESTIC	
Divorce (with or without children)	\$500.00
Dissolution, Annulment, or Legal Separation (with or without children)	\$500.00
Complaint for Parentage, Custody, Support (married but separated parents)	\$500.00
Answer & Cross Complaint, Counter Claim, Third Party in an action of Divorce, Dissolution or Annulment	\$250.00
Answer & Cross Complaint, Counter Claim, Third Party in action of Parenting	\$250.00
With more than 1 Defendant	\$20.00 per defendant
Reopen	\$300.00
Amended Complaint with service	\$100.00 + \$20 per defendant
Additional Service Request	\$50.00 per party
Service of Complaint or Petition by Sheriff (per person per service attempt)	\$75.00
Service by Public Posting	\$100.00

Guardian Ad Litem Deposit	\$750.00 per party
CIVIL	
Foreclosure Complaints	\$900.00
Other Civil Complaints	\$800.00
Cross, Counter, Third Party Complaints	\$200.00
With more than 5 Defendants	\$20.00 per defendant
Jury Deposit	\$1,500.00
Appraisal (due with praecipe for Order of Sale)	\$300.00
Sheriff's Sale Online System License fee (due with praecipe for Order of Sale)	\$510.00
Motion to Vacate Sheriff Sale	\$100.00
Motion/Petition to Terminate Duty to Register as a Sex Offender	\$150.00
Motion/Petition for Relief from Disability	\$250.00
Petition for Court-Ordered Title	\$250.00
Re-Open Case	\$300.00
Amended Complaint with service	\$100.00 + \$20 per defendant
Additional Service Request (per party requested)	\$50.00
Service of Complaint or Petition by Sheriff (per person per service attempt)	\$75.00
Certificate for Qualification of Employment (CQE)	\$100.00
Certificate for Qualification for Housing (CQH)	\$100.00
COURT OF APPEALS	

Notice of Appeal	\$250.00
Answer/Counterclaim	\$200.00
Reopen	\$150.00
CERTIFICATE OF JUDGMENTS	
Foreign Certificate of Judgment	\$150.00
Issue and File Certificate of Judgment	\$35.00
Release Certificate of Judgment	\$5.00
Release of Ohio Dept. of Taxation Certificate of Judgment (prior to 1.1.17)	\$30.00
Release of Ohio Dept. of Taxation Certificate of Judgment (on or after 1.1.17)	\$40.00
EXECUTIONS	
Aid of Execution	\$250.00
Debtors Exam, Garnishment, Bank Attachment	\$250.00
Writ of Possession	\$150.00
Personal Service by Sheriff	\$75.00 per party
MISCELLANEOUS	
Jury Deposit (due one week prior to trial)	\$1,500.00
Foreign Subpoena	\$75.00
Motion for Standing Special Process Server	\$100.00
Jury Service – Half Day	\$15.00
Jury Service – Full Day	\$30.00
Witness Fees – Half Day	\$6.00

Witness Fees – Full Day	\$12.00
Mileage	\$0.50 per mile
U.S. Regular Mail Service (#10 envelope)	\$4.00
USPS Certified Mail Service	\$25.00
Certificate of Mailing	\$5.00
Copies (certified)	\$5.00 + \$0.15 per page
Copies (uncertified)	\$0.15 per page
Copies (exemplified/authenticated)	\$10.00 + \$0.15 per page
Service copies for e-Filing	\$0.15 per page
Copy of Local Rules	\$20.00
Process Server (to file return)	\$10.00
Complete Record Charge	\$1.00 per page
CRIMINAL	
Expungement	\$100.00
Application for Sealing of the Record	\$100.00
Petition for Driving Privileges	\$50.00/90 days
RePath Monitoring	\$250.00 per month

SECTION 7. PLEADING REQUIREMENTS

RULE 7.01. Paper / Image Size.

All documents filed with the Court shall be on letter-size paper, or of a similar electronic image format (approximately 8½" x 11"), in portrait format. If filed as a physical paper

document, all pages shall be secured by a paperclip (and not stapled) at the top left-hand corner, and unfolded.

RULE 7.02. Page Numbering.

All pages shall be numbered in the following format: bottom center of the page shall state "Page __ of ____." A page number is not required on the first page of a pleading, or on a one-page pleading.

RULE 7.03. Margins.

All pleadings, including electronic documents, shall have a minimum 1.5" margin at the top of all pages subsequent to the first page, and a minimum 0.5" margin at all other edges, except as specifically required elsewhere by these Rules.

RULE 7.04. Caption of Pleadings.

(A) The case caption (style) on all pleadings shall designate the name of the Court, the name of the County and State, the case number of the action, the parties, and the title of the pleading.

(B) The current mailing addresses of all parties to the action shall be included in the caption of any complaint, petition, or motion that initiates a new case, or that re-activates a previously closed case.

RULE 7.05. Space for Time-Stamp.

A sufficient blank space, with a minimum 1.5" top margin, shall be contained at the top of each page to allow sufficient space for the Clerk's time-stamp. Centering the name of the Court on two or three separate lines at the top of the pleading, in addition to the minimum mandatory margin, should provide sufficient space for the time-stamp.

RULE 7.06. Copies.

The party filing a pleading by physical paper filing (except judgment entries submitted electronically, or otherwise submitted for electronic court signature) shall provide the Clerk of Courts with sufficient copies for service on all parties and counsel, if service by the Clerk is requested or required by law. If insufficient copies are provided, the Clerk of Courts may make the additional copies and bill the cost as court costs in the case. When paper copies are necessary to complete service of an electronically processed judgment entry (i.e., where a single image file is electronically imported into the Court's case management system), the cost of such copies shall be billed to the costs of the case.

RULE 7.07. Contents of Pleadings.

The contents of all pleadings shall be typewritten in black print (including any electronic submission of a document), or clearly and legibly printed in permanent ink. The Court does not permit the filing of pleadings completed in pencil, other erasable print, or that are illegible.

RULE 7.08. Case Designation Sheet and Mandatory Email Address.

Any party filing a new or post-judgment proceeding in any action in this Court shall file a Case Designation Sheet with the initial pleading. The Clerk of Courts may refuse to accept any new or post-judgment pleading that re-opens a closed case unless the pleading includes a Case Designation Sheet. All counsel and pro se or self-representing litigants shall provide an email address and phone number to the Clerk of Courts, pursuant to Civ.R. 11, for service purposes.

RULE 7.09. Case Numbering.

All cases received by the Clerk of Courts for filing shall be numbered with a prefix designating the year of filing, an alpha designation indicating the type of case, and a consecutive number designating the order in which the case was filed. All case numbers shall be consecutive, in a new series each calendar year.

RULE 7.10. Publishing Procedures.

Parties requesting legal notices shall prepare the legal notice and prepay the cost of the notice to the legal publisher. The requesting party is required to submit proof of payment and proof of publishing to the Clerk of Courts for filing. The prepaid cost can be taxed as costs in the case. The legal notice shall be prepared and submitted to the Clerk of Courts for endorsement prior to publishing.

RULE 7.11. Subpoenas.

(A) Time. Except for good cause shown, the Clerk shall not be required to issue a subpoena, nor shall the Sheriff be required to serve one, unless a praecipe for the subpoena is filed with the Clerk at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the time set for trial.

(B) Deposits. The Clerk of Courts shall not be required to issue subpoenas for service by anyone other than counsel of record, unless the party requesting issuance of the subpoena has provided sufficient funds to the Clerk to pay witness fees as required by R.C. 2335.06.

RULE 7.12. Complex Litigation.

Plaintiff's attorney(s) shall notify the Clerk of Courts within 180 days of filing a complaint, and defense attorney(s) shall notify the Clerk of Courts within 180 days of service, that a case shall be designated as complex litigation under Sup.R. 5.22.

RULE 7.13. Names, Addresses, Phone Numbers, and Email Addresses of Parties.

(A) All pleadings and motions to reopen a case shall include in the caption the address, direct telephone number, and direct email address of each party, subject to division (C) of this rule. A "direct" telephone number or email address is one assigned to and regularly monitored by the party personally, and not a general firm telephone number, a general firm email address, or an answering service. If a party's address, telephone number, or email address changes while the case is pending, the party shall report the change to the Clerk of Courts by filing a written Notice of Change of Address or Contact Information.

(B) All individuals who are not represented by legal counsel shall include their name, physical and mailing addresses, telephone number, and email address on all pleadings and motions filed with the Court. The telephone number and email address must be the party's own direct telephone number and email address, as described in division (A) of this rule.

(C) Protected Addresses and Confidential Contact Information.

(1) A party is not required to include the party's residential address in any caption or other public filing, and shall instead state "Address Confidential" in its place, if the party (a) alleges in an affidavit or a pleading under oath that the health, safety, or liberty of the party or a child would be jeopardized by disclosure of the address or other identifying information, consistent with R.C. 3127.23(D); (b) is a protected person under a civil, temporary, or criminal protection order; or (c) is a participant in the Ohio Secretary of State's Safe at Home address confidentiality program. A party who withholds a residential address under this division shall provide a safe mailing address for service, which may be the address designated under the Safe at Home program.

(2) A party who withholds a residential address under division (C)(1) of this rule shall provide the address to the Clerk on the Personal Identifier Form or other confidential form designated by the Clerk. The Clerk shall maintain the information under seal, with access limited to the Court and Clerk staff, and the information shall not be disclosed to any other party or to the public except by order of the Court entered after a hearing at which the Court considers the health, safety, or liberty of the party or child and determines that disclosure is in the interest of justice.

(3) Any party may request, for safety or privacy reasons, that the party's direct telephone number, direct email address, date of birth, and the last four digits of the party's Social Security number be omitted from public filings. Upon such a request, the party shall provide that information on the Personal Identifier Form or other confidential form designated by the Clerk, which the Clerk shall maintain under seal as provided in division (C)(2) of this rule, except that the Court may order disclosure to other parties or counsel to the extent needed for service or case administration, consistent with the safety of the requesting party.

RULE 7.14. Attorney Registration Number.

The attorney signature block of all pleadings, motions, and filings shall include the attorney registration number assigned by the Supreme Court of Ohio, along with the firm name, physical and mailing addresses, phone number, and direct email address.

RULE 7.15. Motion Requirements.

(A) All motions shall be accompanied by a brief or memorandum in support of the motion, and/or affidavits, if appropriate, stating the grounds for the motion and citing relevant authorities. The motion, together with the brief or memorandum, whether supporting or opposing a motion, shall not exceed twenty-five (25) pages unless leave for a longer filing is granted by the Court. The page limit does not include the caption, any table of contents or table of authorities, the certificate of service, exhibits, affidavits, or other supporting evidentiary materials. If a filing exceeds the page limit without leave of Court, the Court may strike the filing and order a conforming version filed within seven (7) days.

(B) All motions on the non-oral docket shall also be accompanied by a proposed judgment entry in Microsoft Word format, in accordance with these Local Rules governing proposed judgment entries.

(C) Courtesy copies of all dispositive motions and responsive memoranda should be sent to the Court's office directly upon filing, along with the proposed Word entry.

(D) Oral argument upon a motion may not be held unless a written request is made by the party submitting or opposing the motion, or the Court deems an oral hearing appropriate. The reasons for the necessity of an oral hearing shall be stated in the body of the motion, and the words "Oral Hearing Requested" shall be placed in the caption of the motion.

RULE 7.16. Service on Opposing Parties.

(A) Every pleading, motion, brief, or memorandum filed with the Court shall be served on all opposing counsel, or upon all parties not represented by counsel.

(B) If the case is being opened, reopened, or if claims are being made against additional parties, the Clerk of Courts shall serve all opposing parties. The party filing the pleading or motion that opens or reopens the court file must request that the Clerk of Courts serve the document by filing a Request for Service, unless the party has filed a Waiver of Service under Civ.R. 4.7. The Request for Service may be filed as a separate document or at the end of the pleading or motion. Every Request for Service must state the full names and addresses of those to be served.

(C) All other documents shall be served by the party filing the document, as provided in Civ.R. 5. The pleading or motion must contain a Proof of Service, notifying the Court that opposing counsel or unrepresented parties have been sent or given a copy of the document. Every Proof of Service must state the full names and addresses of those served.

(D) No filing without a correct Request for Service, Proof of Service, or Waiver of Service will be considered by the Court.

SECTION 8. ORDERS, ENTRIES AND DECREES

RULE 8.01. Preparation of Orders, Entries and Decrees.

(A) Upon Motion Not Requiring Oral Hearing. Counsel shall submit a proposed judgment entry with any motion that does not require an oral hearing. Any proposed judgment entry submitted by counsel shall be contained within a separately captioned pleading titled "Judgment Entry," and shall not be located on the same page or series of pages as the motion giving rise to the proposed judgment entry. All proposed judgment entries shall be submitted in Word format and submitted through the e-Filing case management system.

(B) Upon Direction of the Court or Upon Settlement. Upon direction of the Court following an oral hearing, or following settlement, counsel for Plaintiff, or such other attorney as assigned by the Court, shall prepare a proposed judgment entry based upon the Court's verbal announcement of decision or the parties' settlement terms as recited into the record in open court. Unless a shorter timeline is ordered, counsel shall prepare the judgment entry and submit it to opposing counsel for approval within fourteen (14) days of the hearing. Opposing counsel shall thereafter have fourteen (14) days to review and approve the proposed entry. Counsel tasked with preparing the judgment entry shall submit a properly approved entry to the Court no later than thirty (30) days following the Court's direction or the settlement.

(C) Court-Prepared Orders and Decrees. This rule shall not be construed to preclude the Court, at any time, from sua sponte preparing and filing its own judgment or order with the Clerk.

RULE 8.02. Failure to Comply with This Section.

(A) Failure of counsel to prepare or submit a judgment entry in accordance with these rules may result in sanctions.

(B) Unilateral Submission to Court. If opposing counsel fails to approve or reject the proposed judgment entry in a timely fashion, counsel tasked with preparing the judgment entry shall unilaterally present the judgment entry to the Court with a certification stating: (1) that submission to opposing counsel was made according to these rules; (2) the date on which the proposed judgment entry was submitted to opposing counsel; (3) that opposing counsel failed to approve or reject the entry in a timely fashion; and (4) any other information that would assist the Court.

RULE 8.03. Disputes Concerning Proposed Entries.

If counsel cannot agree regarding the substance of a proposed judgment entry, each attorney shall submit a proposed version of the entry to the Court, in Word format, with an explanation of the dispute, within thirty (30) days following the hearing or settlement. The Court will not approve any disputed judgment entry that purports to settle the case on terms not previously memorialized in writing, or through recitation into the Court's record.

RULE 8.04. Electronic Processing of Judgment Entries, Decrees, and Orders.

(A) When Submitted on Paper. Judgment entries, decrees, orders, and decisions submitted to the Court (including to Magistrates) on paper shall be scanned and converted to an electronic document file for signature and adoption by the Court. The Court shall thereafter sign and file the document electronically.

(B) When Submitted Electronically. Judgment entries, decrees, orders, and decisions submitted to the Court electronically shall comply with, and be submitted in accordance with, Section 5 of these Local Rules (E-Filing).

RULE 8.05. Preparation of Entries.

(A) Every non-oral motion filed with the Court shall be accompanied by a proposed judgment entry suitable for use if the motion is granted. A party opposing a motion may provide the Court with a proposed judgment entry denying the motion. The Court may also direct a party to prepare an entry. A party directed by the Court to prepare an entry shall do so as directed, and shall submit it in Word format.

(B) All submitted entries must include a listing of all individuals and entities who should receive a copy of the judgment entry. The listing must appear on the left side of the page, below the signature block, aligned with the left margin, and shall include: all attorneys; self-represented parties; the Court Administrator; the Mediation Department (if relevant); the Child Support Enforcement Agency (in domestic relations matters, if relevant); the Guardian ad Litem (in domestic relations matters, if relevant); the Meigs County Sheriff; all relevant law enforcement agencies in civil protection order matters; and any other individual or entity who should receive a copy.

(C) For domestic relations cases, please provide one original plus service copies of the entry. For all other cases, please provide one original, and the Court will make necessary copies after the entry is signed by the Judge.

(D) A party submitting an entry to the Court may do so through email. Staff email addresses are found on the Court's website, <https://meigscommonpleascourt.com>, or by emailing info@meigscommonpleascourt.com.

SECTION 9 – MAGISTRATES

Rule 9.01 Appointment and Authority

(A) Magistrates of this Court shall be appointed by the Judge pursuant to Civ.R. 53, Crim.R. 19, and Sup.R. 4.20 through 4.21. A magistrate's authority extends to matters referred by the Judge in civil, criminal, and domestic relations cases.

(B) Qualifications. A magistrate shall satisfy all eligibility, education, and training requirements imposed by Sup.R. 4.20 and 4.21, and shall be duly licensed to practice law in the State of Ohio, unless otherwise permitted by statute or rule.

Rule 9.02 Categories of Referred Cases

(A) The following categories of matters are referred to the Magistrate of this Court. This is a non-exclusive list, and the Court may refer additional categories of matters to the Magistrate from time to time by administrative order:

(1) All domestic relations matters, including but not limited to divorce, dissolution, legal separation, annulment, parentage proceedings, pre-decree and post-decree motions, domestic violence and anti-stalking petitions, establishment and enforcement of child and spousal support, actions filed pursuant to foreign decrees and support orders, and motions relating to the issuance, modification, and termination of child support orders;

(2) Civil protection orders;

- (3) Foreclosure actions;
- (4) Default judgment proceedings, including damages hearings;
- (5) Garnishments, attachments, and replevin actions;
- (6) Judgment debtor examinations;
- (7) Forcible entry and detainer actions;
- (8) Administrative appeals;
- (9) Applications for a Certificate of Qualification for Employment;
- (10) Poverty affidavit hearings;
- (11) Motions to set aside a bond forfeiture judgment;
- (12) Felony arraignment and bond, as set forth in Rule 9.04; and
- (13) Pretrial matters in criminal cases, as set forth in Rule 9.03(B).

Rule 9.03 Scope of Reference

(A) Domestic Relations and Civil Matters. Pursuant to Civ.R. 53, in addition to the categories listed in Rule 9.02, the Judge may refer to the Magistrate any of the following: pretrial proceedings, any motion (including discovery motions), temporary orders, the trial of any civil case not tried to a jury, a jury trial upon the unanimous written consent of the parties as provided by Civ.R. 53, proceedings on an application for a civil protection order or temporary protection order, contempt proceedings (other than for indirect contempt of a person not before the Court), and any other matter necessary to regulate the proceedings.

(B) Criminal Matters. Pursuant to Crim.R. 19, the Judge may refer to the Magistrate pretrial matters in criminal cases, including but not limited to bond hearings, pretrial conferences, discovery disputes, and other pretrial motions, and, as provided in Rule 9.04, felony arraignment and the setting of bond. A magistrate shall not preside over a criminal trial, accept a felony guilty or no-contest plea, or impose sentence in a felony case, except as may be otherwise expressly authorized by the Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure or by statute.

(C) Order of Reference. Any matter referred to the Magistrate shall be referred by written order, docket entry, or standing order of the Court specifying the scope of the reference.

Rule 9.04 Felony Arraignment and Bond

Unless conducted by the Judge, the Magistrate shall conduct felony arraignment and set bond. Any post-arraignment request for review of bond shall be heard by the Judge.

Rule 9.05 Magistrate Hearings

(A) Magistrates shall conduct all hearings on referred matters in accordance with the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, the Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure, and these Local Rules as applicable to the division and nature of the case.

(B) All parties, counsel, and witnesses appearing before a magistrate shall comply with the courtroom procedure and decorum requirements set forth in Section 4 of these Rules.

Rule 9.06 Magistrate Orders

(A) A magistrate may enter orders without judicial approval as authorized under Civ.R. 53(D)(2), Crim.R. 19, or other applicable rule, including but not limited to: orders regulating pretrial and discovery proceedings, temporary restraining orders, and other orders necessary to regulate the proceedings that are not dispositive of a claim or defense of a party.

(B) Every order of a magistrate shall be in writing, signed by the magistrate, and captioned “Magistrate’s Order.” The Court shall journalize each Magistrate’s Order, and the Clerk of Courts shall serve a copy on all parties and/or counsel of record consistent with Section 5 (E-Filing) of these Rules.

(C) Objections to a Magistrate’s Order. Any party may object to a Magistrate’s Order by filing a motion to set aside the order within ten (10) days of the date the order is entered, stating the objection(s) with particularity. The filing of such a motion does not stay the effectiveness of the Magistrate’s Order unless the magistrate or the Court orders otherwise. A memorandum contra the motion may be filed within ten (10) days of the filing of the motion.

Rule 9.07 Magistrate's Decisions

(A) The Magistrate shall issue a decision on any matter referred under this Section that is dispositive of a claim or defense of a party. The Court shall journalize the Magistrate’s Decision, and the Clerk of Courts shall serve a copy on all parties and/or counsel of record.

(B) Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law. A Magistrate’s Decision may be general unless findings of fact and conclusions of law are timely requested by a party

or otherwise required by law. A request for findings of fact and conclusions of law shall be made before entry of the Magistrate's Decision or within seven (7) days after the decision is filed. If timely requested, the Magistrate may require any or all parties to submit proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law.

(C) A Magistrate's Decision is not effective unless adopted by the Court. The Court shall enter a judgment or interim order upon adopting, rejecting, or modifying a Magistrate's Decision, consistent with Civ.R. 53.

(D) Interim Orders. Consistent with Civ.R. 53(D)(4)(e)(ii), the Court may enter an interim order on the basis of a Magistrate's Decision without waiting for or ruling on timely objections where immediate relief is justified. The timely filing of objections does not stay an interim order, but the Court shall rule on the objections. An interim order shall not extend more than twenty-eight (28) days from the date of entry, subject to extension by the Court, for good cause shown, in increments of twenty-eight (28) additional days.

Rule 9.08 Objections to Magistrate's Decisions

(A) A party may object to a Magistrate's Decision by filing written objections with the Clerk of Courts in accordance with Civ.R. 53(D)(3)(b) or Crim.R. 19, as applicable, within the time permitted by the applicable rule. The objecting party shall serve a copy of the objections on all other parties and/or counsel of record and shall provide a copy to the Court within seven (7) days of filing. A timely request for findings of fact and conclusions of law stays the time for filing objections.

(B) Objections shall be specific and shall be supported by a memorandum. If the objection is based upon a finding of fact or upon the weight of the evidence, the objecting party must support the objection with a transcript of all relevant evidence submitted to the magistrate, or an affidavit of the evidence if a transcript is not available, and shall file same with the Court.

(1) A request for a transcript shall be submitted to the appropriate Court Reporter within three (3) days after the objections are filed. The party ordering the transcript shall arrange for payment in accordance with the current [fee schedule](#) maintained by the Clerk of Courts, and shall post any required deposit with the Court Reporter, with the balance due prior to delivery.

(2) All transcripts shall be filed by the Court Reporter with the Clerk of Courts and shall become part of the official record of the case. A copy shall be provided to the ordering party, upon request, in accordance with the current [fee schedule](#).

(3) Failure to timely file a transcript required to support an objection is grounds for the Court to overrule the objection.

(C) Memoranda contra objections may be filed by any party within ten (10) days of the filing of the objections.

(D) The timely filing of written objections to a Magistrate's Decision operates as an automatic stay of execution of the judgment, to the extent required by Civ.R. 53(D)(4)(e)(i) or Crim.R. 19, until the Court rules on the objections or otherwise orders the stay lifted.

(E) Consistent with Civ.R. 53(D)(5), for good cause shown, the Court shall allow a reasonable extension of time for a party to file a motion to set aside a Magistrate's Order or to file objections to a Magistrate's Decision. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, a failure by the Clerk to timely serve the party seeking the extension with the Magistrate's Order or Decision. A request for an extension shall be made by motion stating the grounds for the request.

Rule 9.09 Magistrate's Authority in Domestic Relations Matters

In addition to the general authority set forth in this Section, a magistrate assigned to a domestic relations matter may conduct any hearing, trial, or proceeding referred by the Judge involving divorce, dissolution, legal separation, annulment, allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, child and spousal support, and parenting time, subject to the objection and review procedures set forth in Rules 9.06 through 9.08.

Rule 9.10 Record of Proceedings

Proceedings before a magistrate shall be recorded to the extent required by Civ.R. 53, Crim.R. 19, and Sup.R. 10.00, using the Court's standard recording equipment or a Court Reporter, as directed by the Court.

SECTION 10 – CIVIL MATTERS

Rule 10.01 Case Management; Written Communications with the Court

(A) Pursuant to Sup.R. 3.00, the Court establishes this Section to provide for the prompt and fair disposition of all civil cases and motions before the Court. These rules are intended to enable the just and efficient resolution of cases, reduce delay, and ensure the readiness of cases for pretrial, hearing, trial, and other proceedings required by the Court. These rules may be amended or supplemented from time to time as the Court deems necessary.

(B) Copies of all correspondence addressed to the Court by any person concerning a case shall be furnished by the writer to all other counsel and unrepresented parties in the case, and the correspondence to the Court shall disclose to whom it was furnished. The Court may disregard correspondence not in compliance with this Rule, return it to the sender, and/or forward copies to all parties or counsel.

(C) Any attorney who wishes to discuss an issue in a pending case with the Judge or Magistrate may, with notice to all opposing counsel and unrepresented parties, request a conference with the Judge or Magistrate, which conference shall include all parties and attorneys.

Rule 10.02 Trial Dates

The Court shall make all assignments of cases for trial at least two weeks prior to the date set for trial, unless counsel otherwise agree. The order or notice of assignment for trial shall be filed with the Clerk of Courts and immediately delivered to all counsel and self-represented parties by e-mail, U.S. Mail, or other means of delivery.

Rule 10.03 Motion Practice; Oral Hearings

(A) Motions shall be scheduled for non-oral consideration unless a written request for an oral hearing is made by the party submitting or opposing the motion. Where oral argument is requested, the motion shall be set for oral hearing unless the Court dispenses with argument. The Court may schedule a motion for a remote hearing as provided elsewhere in these Rules.

(B) Oral argument on civil motions shall be limited to fifteen (15) minutes per side unless the Court, for good cause, grants additional time.

(C) Unless otherwise provided in this Section, a written response to a motion shall be filed and served within fourteen (14) days after service of the motion, and a reply in support of the motion may be served within seven (7) days after service of the response. A courtesy copy of any reply filed before a scheduled hearing or non-oral submission date shall be directed to the courtroom. Motions for default judgment and for summary judgment filed simultaneously in the same case shall be heard and considered together.

Rule 10.04 Motions for Summary Judgment

Motions for summary judgment shall generally be set for hearing or non-oral submission approximately forty-five (45) days after filing. A written response, if any, shall be filed and served within twenty-eight (28) days after service of the motion, and any written reply shall be filed and served within seven (7) days after service of the response.

Motions for default judgment and for summary judgment filed simultaneously in the same case shall be heard and considered together.

Rule 10.05 Motion to Revive a Dormant Judgment

A motion to revive a dormant judgment shall be placed on the motion docket after a response has been filed or after the time for response has elapsed.

Rule 10.06 Reference of Civil Matters to a Magistrate

The scheduling and referral of civil matters to a Magistrate, and the scope of a Magistrate's authority over such matters, are governed by Section 9 (Magistrates) of these Rules.

Rule 10.07 Case Management Conference

(A) In a civil action, an initial pretrial and case management conference shall generally be held after the action is filed and service is complete and the time for answer has lapsed. Additional case management conferences may be scheduled as needed. These conferences will normally be conducted by video conference using the Court's Zoom or TEAMS platform; the meeting identification and passcode provided for the initial conference shall remain the same for any video participation throughout the pendency of the case and shall be included in the initial scheduling order. Counsel and unrepresented parties participating by video shall log in at least three (3) minutes before the scheduled conference time.

(B) At the case management conference, counsel and any unrepresented parties shall be prepared to:

- (1) Identify disputed and undisputed issues, including possible stipulations of fact;
- (2) Discuss mediation, arbitration, and any other possible settlement alternatives;
- (3) Discuss issues and set deadlines for appraisals or expert identification and evaluation;
- (4) Discuss the time required for a final hearing in the case;
- (5) Establish a schedule for discovery consistent with Civ.R. 26;
- (6) Set dispositive motion deadline; and
- (7) Be prepared to have the case concluded within the case-time-standard guidelines established by the Ohio Supreme Court.

(C) Following the case management conference, the Court will issue a scheduling order for the case.

(D) Discovery procedure, motions to compel discovery, and expert-witness disclosure requirements in civil cases are governed by Section 14 (Discovery and Experts) of these Rules.

Rule 10.08 Final Pretrial of Civil Cases

(A) Attendance. Final pretrials of civil cases shall be set at the discretion of the Court. The parties, trial counsel of record, and any insurance representative with settlement authority shall attend the final pretrial in person, unless excused by the Court in advance. Case management conferences and initial pretrials will generally be conducted by video conference but may be conducted in open court at the Court's discretion. Only counsel who have entered an appearance, have been actively involved in the case, and are fully familiar with the action may participate in the conference; the Court will not recognize an attorney retained for a limited, local appearance in place of counsel of record.

(B) Final Pretrial Statements. A final pretrial statement by each party shall be filed with the Court and opposing parties and counsel at or before a final pretrial hearing. If no final pretrial hearing is scheduled, the final pretrial statement shall be filed at least ten (10) days before the final hearing and shall include:

- (1) A brief statement that counsel have discussed the issues in depth prior to the pretrial, and whether offers of settlement were made and refused;
- (2) A brief statement of the facts giving rise to the claim, defense, and/or counterclaim;
- (3) A brief statement of the issues involved;
- (4) A brief statement of the applicable law and authorities relied upon;
- (5) A list of the names and addresses of witnesses expected to testify for the party, with a short statement of the substance of their anticipated combined testimony;
- (6) A list of demonstrative evidence or exhibits to be offered at trial, with a copy of each proposed exhibit submitted to the Court, numbered or lettered, with an index cover sheet;
- (7) A demand or offer for settlement; and
- (8) An estimate of trial time.

(C) Preparation for Final Pretrial. The Court intends to set the final pretrial date and trial date within approximately fourteen (14) to thirty (30) days of one another; counsel should prepare for the final pretrial with the same diligence required for trial, and shall be prepared to:

- (1) Discuss the factual and legal theories of the case;
- (2) Discuss the necessity or desirability of amendments to the pleadings or the filing of additional pleadings;
- (3) Discuss simplification of the issues;
- (4) Make admissions as to facts and the authenticity of documents and other exhibits not in dispute;
- (5) Identify and eliminate parties unnecessary to the case;
- (6) Provide the names and addresses of witnesses counsel intends to call and the general nature of their testimony. Where the Court so orders, counsel shall not be permitted to call additional witnesses at trial, other than rebuttal witnesses, unless the witness's name, address, and the general nature of the testimony are furnished in writing to opposing counsel and the Court at least five (5) days before trial, or upon leave of Court at trial for good cause shown. Absent good cause, failure to disclose a witness may render that witness's testimony inadmissible at trial;
- (7) Identify the number and nature of exhibits counsel expects to introduce and, if required by the Court, produce them for examination by the Court or the parties. Exhibits shall be presented in both original hard-copy form and in an electronic format compatible with the courtroom's digital presentation equipment, consistent with Section 4 of these Rules;
- (8) Submit authorities on unique or controverted issues, or ensure their submission, at least one week before trial; and
- (9) Discuss any other matters that may expedite the trial or disposition of the case.

(D) Sanctions. Pretrial conferences are governed by Civ.R. 16 and by the Court's inherent authority to manage its docket.

(1) Failure of an attorney to be prepared for a pretrial conference, or failure of a party or attorney to appear or to cooperate in good faith in the conduct of a pretrial conference, may subject that attorney or party, in the Court's discretion, to appropriate sanctions, including an award of reasonable expenses and/or attorney fees to a party prejudiced by the failure.

(2) A failure relating to discovery, including a failure to make required disclosures or to comply with an order compelling discovery, is governed by Civ.R. 37.

(3) If a party fails to appear in person or by counsel at a pretrial conference, the Court may proceed with any matter properly before it at that conference, may transfer the matter to its inactive docket, or, if a defendant fails to appear, may proceed as on default only as permitted by Civ.R. 55. Consistent with Rule 10.13, the Court shall not dismiss an action for the plaintiff's failure to appear or to comply with these Rules or an order of the Court except after notice to the plaintiff's counsel, or to the plaintiff if unrepresented, as required by Civ.R. 41(B)(1), affording an opportunity to explain or correct the failure before dismissal. The notice requirement of Civ.R. 41(B)(1) shall be strictly observed.

Rule 10.09 Motion to Consolidate Civil Cases

(A) Consolidation may be appropriate where two or more cases involve a common question of law or fact. A motion to consolidate in a domestic relations case is governed by Section 12 (Domestic Relations Matters) of these Rules.

(B) In General. Unless otherwise specified in this Rule, a motion to consolidate in a civil case shall be filed in the case that was filed last, and shall be determined by the judge assigned to that case. If the motion is granted, the cases shall be consolidated into the case that was filed first, and subsequent filings shall be permitted only in that case.

(C) Certificate of Judgment Lien Cases. In civil cases involving certificates of judgment liens, a motion to consolidate shall be filed in the case that was filed first, and shall be determined by the judge assigned to that case. If the motion is granted, all relevant cases shall be consolidated into the case that was filed first, and subsequent filings shall be permitted only in that case.

Rule 10.10 Motions for Default Judgment

A motion for default judgment shall be accompanied by an affidavit in support of the requested judgment. If the affidavit is insufficient, the Court may request additional evidence by affidavit or set the matter for hearing. At any such hearing, the moving party shall be prepared to offer testimonial and documentary evidence in support of the claim, and, if the claim includes damages, evidence in support of those damages.

Rule 10.11 Stipulated Extensions of Time to Plead

Consistent with Civ.R. 6(B)(1), the parties may obtain an extension of time in which to move, answer, or otherwise plead, where no prior extension has been granted, by filing

with the Clerk of Courts a written stipulation providing for the extension. The stipulation shall affirmatively state that no prior extension has been granted and must be filed before expiration of the period originally prescribed. A stipulated extension is subject to the limits of Civ.R. 6(B)(1); any further extension of time requires leave of Court upon motion.

Rule 10.12 Judgment Debtor Examinations

(A) A motion for an order for the examination of a judgment debtor shall be filed in accordance with R.C. Chapter 2333 and shall be scheduled for hearing before the Court or Magistrate consistent with Section 9 of these Rules.

(B) The judgment creditor shall notify the judgment debtor of the hearing by ordinary mail addressed to the judgment debtor's last known address, advising of the time and place of the hearing on the motion.

(C) If the judgment debtor fails to appear on the date set and it appears that notice was not returned or refused, the Court may issue an order for appearance for examination. If the judgment debtor fails to appear after having been duly served with such an order, the Court may issue a citation for contempt. If the judgment debtor fails to appear after being personally served with the citation, the Court may issue a body attachment for the judgment debtor, with bond fixed by the Court.

(D) Absent good cause shown to the Court, a judgment debtor examination shall not be sought more than once in any six-month period on the same judgment.

Rule 10.13 Disposition of Cases Called for Trial

If a cause is called for trial and the party prosecuting the cause fails to respond, either in person or by counsel, the Court may dismiss the action, after notice to the party's trial attorney consistent with Civ.R. 41(B)(1), or make such other disposition of the cause as the circumstances require. If the defendant fails to respond, either in person or by counsel, the Court may proceed as on default, provided the notice requirements of Civ.R. 55(A) are met. If neither party responds in person or by counsel, the Court may make such disposition of the cause as it deems appropriate, after notice given in accordance with the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure and these Local Rules.

Rule 10.14 Judgments Upon Warrant of Attorney to Confess (Cognovit Judgments)

(A) A judgment by confession upon a warrant of attorney will not be entered in the absence of the defendant except upon proof, satisfactory to the Court, of the signature of the maker upon the warrant of attorney or other instrument upon which judgment is sought.

(B) As a condition precedent to entering judgment, the original warrant of attorney shall be produced in open Court, and the Court shall satisfy itself that the warning required by R.C. 2323.13(D) appears on the instrument upon which judgment is sought, where the instrument was executed on or after the date required by that section.

(C) Immediately upon entering a judgment by confession upon a warrant of attorney, the Court shall cause a certified letter, return receipt requested, to be sent to the defendant notifying the defendant of the entry of judgment, consistent with R.C. 2323.13(C).

SECTION 11 – CRIMINAL MATTERS

Rule 11.01 Indictments in Criminal Cases

Indictments in criminal cases shall be filed through the Court's e-File system in compliance with these Rules and shall be served on defendants according to the Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure. The County Prosecuting Attorney, any assistants, or any Special Prosecutor is charged with the specific responsibility to monitor and notify the Court if the current scheduling order is likely to violate the speedy trial rights of a defendant.

Rule 11.02 Documents Filed Subsequent to Complaint or Indictment

(A) In accordance with Civ.R. 5 and Crim.R. 49, unless the filer requests service by the Clerk and files the instructions for service required by these Rules, the filer, not the Clerk, shall be responsible for serving all documents filed subsequent to the original complaint on all parties or their attorneys.

(B) When a submission is deemed filed as provided in Section 5 (E-Filing) of these Rules, the e-File system shall generate a Notification of Electronic Filing to the filer and to any other party who is a registered user of the e-File system. For a registered e-filer, the Notification of Electronic Filing constitutes service under Civ.R. 5 and Crim.R. 49.

(C) E-service of documents to registered users of the e-File system, subsequent to the complaint or indictment, is valid and effective service and has the same legal effect as an original paper document.

(D) The filer shall serve a paper copy of the document on all pro se parties who are not registered e-file users of the Court's e-File system, in accordance with Civ.R. 5 and Crim.R. 49.

Rule 11.03 Bond Schedule

The Court does not maintain a standard bond schedule. Each felony matter shall come before the Court for consideration of appropriate bond on a case-by-case basis. The purpose of bail is to ensure the appearance of the defendant at all scheduled hearings and to protect the public.

Rule 11.04 Court Officers as Surety

No attorney at law, officer, or employee of this Court or of the Sheriff's Office, nor any family member of such an individual as defined by the Ohio Ethics Commission, shall be accepted or received as principal, agent, bail, or surety on any undertaking of any kind in this Court, except upon application to, and approval by, the Court. No bond or undertaking shall be approved having the name of any such person on it as surety absent such approval.

Rule 11.05 Bail Receipt and Refund

Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, all monies deposited for bail shall be deposited in and receipted to the person making the deposit, and a refund of same shall be made to that person. The receipt for the money shall clearly delineate to whom the refund will be made. The person posting the bond may specifically agree in writing that the bond posted may be subsequently used to pay the defendant's fees, costs, or fines. The Clerk of Courts shall retain the statutorily permitted portion of each bond.

Rule 11.06 Conditions of Release

(A) If the Court determines a defendant is to be released on the defendant's personal recognizance or an unsecured appearance bond, the release shall be effective upon the signature of the defendant and any other party determined by the Court. The defendant and any sureties shall execute the bond before the Clerk of Courts or a deputy clerk and pay any additional state-mandated fees to the Clerk of Courts. A deputy sheriff may witness the bond and collect any funds in lieu of the Clerk of Courts when a defendant is incarcerated, and shall transmit the same to the Clerk of Courts, except when bail bonds are being established by a surety. The Clerk of Courts shall approve the sufficiency of any surety bail bond prior to release, per Crim.R. 46(J).

(B) If the Court determines a person is to be released, the following shall be considered:

(1) The defendant shall be given the opportunity to post the Crim.R. 46(A)(2) ten percent (10%) feature bond in the defendant's name. No additional surety is required.

(2) The defendant may have another person post a Crim.R. 46(A)(2) ten percent (10%) feature bond, provided that person shows sufficient financial responsibility in the amount of the bond.

(3) In the absence of sufficient financial responsibility, the defendant may have a surety post the full amount of the bond in cash.

(4) The defendant or any surety may post a property bond with property located within the county of sufficient value, being double the full amount of the bond. The defendant or surety is required to deliver the deed and proof of sufficient value, as required by the Clerk of Courts, including a certificate of title search as to the sufficiency of the property to meet the value of the bond.

(5) The defendant may have a professional bail bondsman post surety in the full amount of the bond. The Clerk of Courts shall determine the sufficiency of the surety's financial responsibility. The bondsman must be licensed by the State of Ohio for the sale of surety bonds and provide proof of licensure, and shall provide proof that the underwriter is registered with the State of Ohio and has sufficient assets. In addition to any other requirement of the Clerk of Courts, the bondsman shall provide the Clerk of Courts a copy of the bondsman's personal history data for the defendant and any other party to whom the bonding company holds a claim.

Rule 11.07 Forfeiture

If there is a breach of the conditions of the bond, the Court may declare a forfeiture of the bond. Any surety shall be given notice by ordinary mail, at the address shown on the bond, of a show cause hearing on a date determined by the Court pursuant to R.C. 2937.36. The surety shall produce the defendant, produce cash equal to the full amount of the bond, or show cause why judgment should not be rendered at the hearing. If the bond is secured by property, the Clerk of Courts shall proceed as in execution for the sale of the property to satisfy the bond.

Rule 11.08 Criminal Case Management

This Rule applies to all new criminal cases filed in the Court, with the exception of extraditions and 4-E-1 complaints. The Court, Clerk of Courts, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, and other law enforcement agencies shall fully comply with all victims' rights pursuant to Marsy's Law and its codification. The Clerk shall immediately update the Court and Probation Department of any changes to victim contact information upon receiving such changes.

(A) Bond Settings. The Clerk of Courts shall notify the Court of the filing of complaints, indictments, and bills of information on the day of filing, by telephone, e-mail, or other

means, and Court staff shall also monitor daily filings to identify such filings. Upon the filing of a new criminal case, an arraignment and bond setting hearing will be scheduled as quickly as possible, preferably within twenty-four (24) hours of filing, unless extended for good cause by the Court. Whenever possible, arraignments and bond setting hearings may be conducted by video conference using the Court's Zoom platform or other video application. If a motion for a temporary protection order is filed with the charging document, a timely hearing on that motion shall be conducted as soon as possible.

(B) Arraignment. At the arraignment hearing, or immediately thereafter, the case shall be set for pretrials, motion hearings (if necessary), and jury trial. Arraignments may be conducted by video conference using the Court's Zoom platform or other video application, as ordered by the Court.

(C) Pretrial Motions. Pretrial motions shall be filed within the time limits set forth in Crim.R. 12, or within the time limits otherwise set by the Court. Examples of pretrial motions include motions for intervention in lieu of conviction, motions in limine, and motions to suppress evidence. Generally, motions for intervention in lieu of conviction and any negotiated plea must be filed or completed at least three (3) weeks prior to the initially scheduled jury trial date. Upon filing, a pretrial motion shall be considered set for the initially scheduled final pretrial/motion hearing date or, if that date has passed, shall be immediately set by the Court for oral hearing or other appropriate proceeding.

(D) Discovery. To facilitate the timely filing of pretrial motions, discovery shall be exchanged expeditiously. Defense counsel should request discovery as early as practicable after arraignment or appointment, and in any event within the time permitted by Crim.R. 16(M), and the prosecution should provide discovery within ten (10) business days of the request. Expert-witness disclosure requirements under Crim.R. 16(K), and general discovery procedure and disputes, are governed by Section 14 (Discovery and Experts) of these Rules.

(E) Prosecutor Pretrial. Pretrials shall be ordered by the Court and shall be conducted by a representative of the Meigs County Prosecutor's Office with authority to make offers and to consider, accept, or reject counteroffers from defense counsel, generally without Court participation. An entry shall be submitted to the Court after each pretrial setting forth what took place at the pretrial.

Rule 11.09 Criminal Motions

Motions in criminal cases are generally set for oral hearing. Written responses, if any, shall be filed and served on opposing counsel prior to the hearing or non-oral consideration, unless otherwise provided in these Rules. Motions to suppress evidence will be scheduled by scheduling order.

All pretrial motions shall be determined no later than seven (7) days prior to trial, and an entry recording the disposition of the motion shall be prepared and submitted by the prevailing party. Should circumstances prevent or preclude a determination of a timely-filed pretrial motion within this time limit, the party seeking relief by the motion shall be entitled to a continuance, unless the Court determines, in its discretion, that a continuance would greatly prejudice the adverse party, work a denial of substantial justice, or otherwise not serve the interests of justice.

Rule 11.10 Appointment and Withdrawal of Counsel in Criminal Cases

(A) When a defendant is unable to employ counsel, the assigned Judge shall appoint counsel to represent the defendant pursuant to Crim.R. 44. The appointment shall be reflected in an entry. General procedures and compensation for court-appointed counsel are governed by Section 3 (Counsel Issues) of these Rules.

(B) An attorney may not withdraw from representation without the permission of the Court. An attorney who desires to withdraw from representation of a defendant shall file a written motion with the Court. An attorney is not deemed to have withdrawn from representation until the withdrawal is reflected in a judgment entry.

Rule 11.11 Guilty Pleas

Notification that a defendant intends to change a plea shall generally be provided to the Court at least three (3) weeks prior to trial. Upon notice, the Court will schedule a change of plea hearing, which shall be scheduled at least five (5) days in advance of the scheduled trial date, whenever possible.

Rule 11.12 Sentencing

Unless community control is not an option or is not part of the plea negotiations, or unless a pre-sentence investigation report is waived by the State and the defendant, sentencing hearings shall generally be scheduled approximately four (4) weeks from the change of plea or trial date, to permit preparation of the pre-sentence investigation report.

Rule 11.13 Certification of Qualification for Employment

(A) Under R.C. 2953.25, the Court adopts the following procedure to obtain a Certificate of Qualification for Employment (CQE). The Court has established an electronic account with the Division of Parole and Community Services of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) to access the CQE system for the following purposes: to review completed electronic petitions filed with the Court; to receive notices regarding electronic petitions filed with the Court; to provide the individual filing the

petition with information regarding the petition; and to provide the ODRC with information regarding petitions granted or denied by the Court.

(B) Eligible individuals who seek to petition the Court for a CQE must establish an electronic account with the Division of Parole and Community Services of the ODRC and shall follow the administrative rules and regulations adopted under R.C. 2953.25 and the rules and procedures adopted by the Court.

(C) All petitions for a CQE should be completed electronically, through the ODRC website, on the form prescribed by the Division of Parole and Community Services. The Court will accept the paper filing of a petition for a CQE; however, petitioners are encouraged to apply through the ODRC website, www.drccqe.com, for the most efficient processing.

(D) The individual filing the petition (Petitioner) is responsible for removing personal and private information, such as the individual's social security number, from the petition and from any exhibits, addenda, or documents later filed in the proceeding. Personal and private information must instead be submitted on a Disclosure of Personal Identifier form, which is a non-public record; the information will be kept in a separate envelope within the case file, appropriately marked as containing personal and private information, and opened only upon order of the Court.

(E) After the petition for a CQE has been submitted electronically and is determined complete by the ODRC, the Petitioner shall appear at the office of the Clerk of Courts, within thirty (30) days of electronic submission, to complete filing and pay the applicable court cost deposit in accordance with the current [fee schedule](#) maintained by the Clerk of Courts. If the Petitioner fails to complete filing by paying the deposit within thirty (30) days, the Court will dismiss the petition for want of prosecution. If the Petitioner files directly with the Clerk of Courts, the filing fee must be paid upon filing. The petition shall be deemed filed as of the date the Petitioner personally appeared in the office of the Clerk of Courts, signed the petition under penalty of perjury, and paid the filing fee.

(F) Upon the filing of a petition for a CQE, the Clerk of Courts shall notify the Meigs County Community Corrections Program and the Meigs County Prosecuting Attorney of the filing and provide them a copy of the petition. The Community Corrections Program shall determine, to the extent possible, all other courts with records of felony or misdemeanor convictions (other than minor traffic offenses) of the Petitioner, attempt to notify the appropriate court(s) of conviction in writing of the filing of the petition, and solicit written comments regarding the granting of relief.

(G) The Community Corrections Program shall attempt to obtain all pre-sentence investigations and reports, drug and alcohol evaluations, and psychological evaluations of the Petitioner, and any law enforcement report of the crime or crimes of conviction, and

shall notify the assigned Judge of all information it has requested and the results of its notifications and solicitations for comments, and may suggest any other investigation, report, or information that may assist the Court in deciding whether to grant or deny the petition.

(H) All investigation-related documents and information gathered by the Community Corrections Program and the Court in considering a CQE petition shall be considered confidential and not a public record. Such documents and information shall be treated with the same level of confidentiality as a pre-sentence report, shall be kept sealed and transmitted in a sealed condition to the Court of Appeals in the event of appellate review, and shall not be opened except upon order of the Court.

(I) When the Court has completed its investigation and received and assembled all documents and information it requires to consider the petition, the Court will, upon notice from the Community Corrections Program, schedule a hearing to occur within sixty (60) days.

(J) The Meigs County Prosecuting Attorney shall be an associated party to the proceedings on the petition, shall receive notice of any hearing, and shall represent the interests of the people of the State of Ohio on all pertinent issues, particularly whether the Petitioner poses an unreasonable risk to the safety of the public or an individual. The Community Corrections Program shall also receive notice of hearings on such petitions.

(K) The Court shall notify the Petitioner and the ODRC of its decision to grant or deny the petition through the Court's electronic record. In determining whether to grant a petition, the Court may require the Petitioner to undergo psychological testing, drug testing, risk assessment, or other investigation, at the Petitioner's expense.

(L) A Petitioner who has been granted a CQE by the Court has a continuing duty to report, in writing, to the Court any arrest, conviction, or plea of the Petitioner for a felony offense after issuance of the CQE. Such reports must be filed with the Clerk within seven (7) days of the arrest, conviction, or plea.

Rule 11.14 Motions for Expungement and Sealing of Records

All motions for expungement and/or sealing of the record of a conviction, and all applications to seal records of a not guilty finding, dismissal, or no bill, shall be filed with the Clerk of Courts on a fully-completed application in the form required by the applicable section of the Ohio Revised Code. Court-approved application forms may be available online through the Clerk of Courts' website or the Ohio Supreme Court's website. Following the filing of the motion or application, the Meigs County Community Corrections Program shall conduct the necessary investigation of the movant's record, and the Court shall thereafter set the matter for hearing.

Rule 11.15 Extradition Proceedings

(A) When any person is arrested within Meigs County pursuant to R.C. Chapter 2963, the arresting agency shall file with the Clerk of Courts a petition for hearing on extradition. The Clerk of Courts shall assign a case number to the petition.

(B) Once the petition has been filed, the case shall be scheduled for hearing. Pursuant to the Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure and R.C. Chapter 2963, the Magistrate shall conduct the initial hearing, set bond when appropriate, and may accept a waiver of extradition. If extradition is not waived, the Magistrate shall set the case for hearing before the assigned Judge.

(C) Appeals of the Magistrate's decision, and proceedings on a Governor's Warrant, shall be heard before the assigned Judge.

Rule 11.16 Drug Court

(A) Establishment. In order to facilitate efficient and effective treatment of alcohol and drug addiction offenders, the Court has established a specialized docket known as the "Drug Court." [Certification history and dates to be inserted.] The Drug Court accepts the referral of cases identified for the program to the Drug Court Judge, who is, by this Rule, designated to attend to and manage such cases. The Drug Court is currently the only specialized docket operated by the Meigs County Court of Common Pleas.

(B) Purpose. The goals of the Drug Court are to reduce participant jail, prison, and institution days; to reduce the number of Drug Court participants who re-offend following successful completion of the Drug Court program; and to graduate participants successfully from the program, giving participants an opportunity to successfully complete community control earlier than the sentenced term. Drug Court is a post-conviction tool used to give participants an opportunity to address substance dependence and anti-social behaviors while remaining in the community.

(C) Placement in Drug Court. A case may be referred by the Prosecutor, Assistant Prosecutor, or Defense Attorney for screening by the Chief Probation Officer or designee to determine appropriateness for placement. The pre-screening process collects information pertaining to the offender prior to placement, including criminal history, residency, the instant offense and contributing factors, and a comprehensive drug and/or alcohol use assessment to determine whether the individual fits the criteria for admission. An individual may also be referred for screening by contacting the Chief Probation Officer, including by a defense attorney assisting a candidate with a judicial release motion. Upon receipt of a referral, the Chief Probation Officer or defense attorney will provide the candidate with a copy of the program handbook and an application screening

form to be completed and returned to the Chief Probation Officer prior to screening by the Drug Court Treatment Team.

(D) Eligibility.

(1) Legal Eligibility. Referral to the Drug Court under this Rule requires that: the case is Community-Control-eligible and alcohol and/or drug use was directly or indirectly related to the offense; the offender is a resident of Meigs County, Ohio; the offender has been assessed and diagnosed as chemically dependent by an approved alcohol and/or drug treatment provider; the offender is determined to be high-moderate to very high risk in the substance abuse domain using the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS); and the offender is mentally competent and has the developmental capacity to adhere to the participation requirements.

(2) Clinical Eligibility. Referral also requires that: the offender has a history of alcohol/substance use or abuse; the offender completes an alcohol/drug assessment; the offender is diagnosed with substance dependence; and the offender has the developmental capacity to complete the Drug Court requirements.

(3) Disqualification. An offender is disqualified from participation if any of the following apply: the offender is charged with an offense for which a prison term is mandatory; the offender is actively working as a police informant; the offender is mentally incompetent or has a mental health disorder that would prevent or interfere with successful completion of the requirements; the offender is an integral part of a distribution or manufacturing network, or is actively engaged in crime to benefit a gang; the offender has a conviction for a felony offense of violence, a firearm-related offense, or a sexually oriented offense; or the offender resides outside Meigs County, Ohio.

(E) Placement Decision. Once an offender is determined to have met the legal and clinical eligibility criteria, the Chief Probation Officer will review all collateral information gathered and relay that information to the presiding Judge, who will determine placement. The Drug Court Judge has final authority regarding placement of an offender in the Drug Court and termination of an offender's placement.

(F) Drug Court Management. The Drug Court is a specialized docket established to assist chemically dependent offenders on their path to recovery by providing services and programming to address their specific needs, as more specifically outlined in the Drug Court description, handbook, and participant agreement. Services may include, without limitation: residential treatment; intensive outpatient treatment; individual treatment sessions; gender-specific programming; family therapy; medication and medication monitoring; ongoing mental health treatment; case management; education; vocational training; employment services; transportation; anger management; batterer intervention treatment; criminal thinking programming; moral reconnection therapy; housing assistance;

parenting classes; domestic violence programming; and physical, mental, and dental health services.

(G) Termination from Drug Court. The Drug Court Judge has discretion to determine probable cause for termination from the program based on: ongoing non-compliance with treatment or resistance to treatment; a new conviction for a felony offense of violence, a firearm-related offense, or a sexually oriented offense, which will result in termination; any serious specialized-docket infraction or series of infractions; or a serious probation violation or series of probation violations. Before a participant is terminated from the Drug Court program, the participant shall receive written notice of the grounds for termination and an opportunity to be heard. A participant terminated from the Drug Court program is subject to the imposition of penalties or incarceration by the Drug Court Judge only in accordance with Crim.R. 32.3, which provides that no prison term shall be imposed, and community control shall not be continued or modified, for a violation of the conditions of community control except after a hearing at which the participant is present, represented by counsel as provided in Crim.R. 32.3(B), and apprised of the grounds on which action is proposed. A terminated participant is ineligible for placement in the Drug Court for a period of five (5) years, unless a special exception is made at the discretion of the Drug Court Judge.

SECTION 12. DOMESTIC RELATIONS MATTERS

RULE 12.01. SCOPE AND GENERAL PLEADING REQUIREMENTS.

(A) All pleadings, motions, forms, service, filing, and fee provisions set forth generally in these Local Rules apply to domestic relations cases as if fully rewritten in this Section, except as this Section provides otherwise.

(B) All documents required to be simultaneously filed under this Section must be filed together, or the Court may refuse to permit the filing. All documents must be accurately and fully completed, in typewritten or computer-generated form, and financial affidavits must be checked for mathematical accuracy prior to filing. Counsel and self-represented parties have an ongoing duty to update any affidavit that becomes inaccurate while the action is pending. The Court may hold any pleading requiring notarization that is not properly notarized and shall notify the filer that the document must be corrected and refiled.

(C) The following documents, when generated by the Court in the course of a case, shall be delivered directly to Court staff in addition to filing with the Clerk of Courts: requests for and proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law; requests for and proposed statements of evidence; motions for a non-oral hearing date; objections to a magistrate's decision and responses thereto; documents, affidavits, or supplemental information

ordered or requested by the Court; Civ.R. 75 motions concerning temporary orders; and motions to set aside a settlement memorandum.

(D) All new and reactivated case filings must contain the full legal names, current physical and mailing addresses, and direct telephone numbers and direct email addresses of all parties (for a party other than the filer, if known), as described in Rule 7.13(A), subject to the protections of Rule 7.13(C). Where a filing requires the Court's approval before service (e.g., temporary orders, injunctions), the Clerk shall route the case file to the Court for review after docketing but before service.

(E) Any party who changes their mailing address, email address, or telephone number during the pendency of an action shall promptly file written notice of the change with the Clerk of Courts and provide the same notice to opposing counsel or any self-represented opposing party.

RULE 12.02. INITIAL PLEADINGS — DIVORCE, ANNULMENT, AND LEGAL SEPARATION ACTIONS.

A divorce, annulment, or legal separation action shall be commenced by filing the Complaint together with all of the following documents/affidavits. The parties are not permitted to mutually waive preparation, notarization, or submission of these mandatory forms.

- (1) Affidavit(s) of Plaintiff supporting the Complaint;
- (2) Instructions for service of the Complaint and other pleadings;
- (3) Case Designation Sheet;
- (4) Domestic Relations Case Information (DRH) Form;
- (5) Uniform Domestic Relations Form (UDRF) Affidavits of Basic Information, Income and Expense, with proof of income (pay stubs and/or tax returns);
- (6) UDRF Affidavit of Property and Debt;
- (7) UDRF Health Insurance Affidavit;
- (8) Personal Identifier Information Form;
- (9) UDRF Parenting Proceeding Affidavit, if the parties have children;
- (10) Child Support Computation Worksheet and ODJFS IV-D Form 7076;
- (11) Proposed Temporary Orders and Mandatory Disclosure Order;

(12) UDRF Motion and Affidavit for Temporary Orders, if the Plaintiff seeks temporary orders;

(13) Waiver of Paternity Testing and Legal Rights, if the parties have children; and

(14) Mediation referral order, if the action involves a parenting issue (including parenting time, companionship, or visitation), unless good cause is alleged in the motion as to why a mediation referral should not be made.

RULE 12.03. PERSONAL IDENTIFIER INFORMATION; CONFIDENTIAL FAMILY FILE.

(A) Personal Identifiers. Pursuant to Sup.R. 11.13, it is the responsibility of the filing party to omit or redact personal identifiers — Social Security numbers (except the last four digits), and financial account, debit card, credit card, and employee identification numbers (except the last four digits) — from all case documents, unless the Court orders otherwise. Personal identifiers required by the Court shall instead be provided on the Personal Identifier Form. The Personal Identifier Form shall be filed with each Complaint, Petition, Answer, Counterclaim, and post-decree motion, and the non-moving party shall also file one. The Clerk shall docket its filing, maintain it electronically with access limited to Court and Clerk staff, and thereafter destroy the original paper form, if any.

(B) Confidential Family File. The Clerk of Courts shall maintain a Confidential Family File within each case, separate from the public case file, for the following categories of documents in every domestic relations case: financial disclosure affidavits and attachments; tax returns; reports of psychological, psychiatric, or custody evaluations; medical reports; reports of supervised parenting time or supervised exchanges; reports of a home study evaluator or Guardian ad Litem; reports of medical or drug testing; Title IV-D applications; letters to the Court from the parties, the child(ren), or other individuals; poverty affidavits; qualified domestic relations orders and division-of-property orders; genetic testing results; vital statistics forms; and any other document the Court directs be maintained confidentially.

(C) Parties and counsel are responsible for marking documents within the categories listed in division (B) as "CONFIDENTIAL" before presenting them to the Clerk for filing. In place of the confidential document, the public file shall contain a Notice of Filing stating that a described document was filed on a stated date and is maintained in the Confidential Family File.

(D) The Confidential Family File may be inspected by the parties, an attorney who has entered an appearance in the case, or CSEA counsel or its representative, upon request to

the Court. It is otherwise available only to Court personnel, Guardians ad Litem, and attorneys of record for the parties, with the Court's permission, in the performance of their duties, or as the Court may direct.

RULE 12.04. AUTOMATIC MUTUAL RESTRAINING ORDER.

(A) Upon the filing of any Complaint for Divorce, Annulment, or Legal Separation, the Court shall, without the necessity of a motion, issue a Mutual Restraining Order, reciprocally binding upon both parties, restraining each party from:

- (1) Threatening, harassing, abusing, annoying, or interfering with the other party or the parties' child(ren);
- (2) Incurring or creating any new debt, including credit card debt, in the name of the other party or the parties jointly, or causing a lien or loan to be placed against any real or personal property of the parties;
- (3) Selling, transferring, disposing of, encumbering, or dissipating any asset, real or personal, including bank accounts, investment or retirement accounts, tax refunds, and money other than in the ordinary course of business or for the necessities of life, without the written agreement of the other party or further order of the Court;
- (4) Removing household goods or furnishings from the marital residence without the agreement of the other party or an order of the Court;
- (5) Canceling, changing the beneficiary of, or failing to renew or maintain any existing health, life, home, automobile, or other insurance coverage in effect for the benefit of the other party or the child(ren);
- (6) Changing the child(ren)'s school placement or established residence, or removing the child(ren) from the State of Ohio, without the written agreement of the other party or an order of the Court; and
- (7) Claiming the parties' child(ren) as dependents for income tax purposes in a manner inconsistent with the parties' most recent filing practice, without the agreement of the other party or an order of the Court.

(B) This Order shall not prevent either party from paying ordinary and necessary living and business expenses in the ordinary course. The Mutual Restraining Order shall be issued on the Court's standard form, shall be accepted by the Plaintiff upon filing the Complaint, and shall be served on the Defendant with the summons. By filing the Complaint, the Plaintiff is deemed to have notice of, and to be bound by, the Mutual Restraining Order.

(C) The Mutual Restraining Order issued under this Rule may not be used to obtain custody or an allocation of parental rights and responsibilities on an ex parte basis. As to the parties' children, only the prohibitions in division (A)(6) apply; any request for ex parte relief affecting the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities must be sought under Rule 12.32. An attorney's attempt to use this Order to circumvent that requirement may result in sanctions against the attorney.

RULE 12.05. THIRD-PARTY, SPECIAL, AND EXCLUSIVE-OCCUPANCY RESTRAINING ORDERS.

(A) Third-Party or Special Restraining Orders. A party who believes a third-party or special restraining order is necessary and authorized under Civ.R. 75(I) shall bring to the Court's attention, before the Court is asked to sign the order, that the requested order is a third-party or special restraining order.

(B) Exclusive Occupancy. When one party has voluntarily vacated the marital residence and established a residence elsewhere, the party remaining in the marital residence may request a restraining order prohibiting the other party from re-entering the marital residence except by Court order. A request for exclusive occupancy must be supported by a separate affidavit and may not be used where the other party has left the residence only temporarily. An exclusive-occupancy order may not be used to obtain custody on an ex parte basis; as to the children, only the prohibition against removing them from the Court's jurisdiction or changing their school placement is permitted absent further order. An attorney's attempt to use this Order to circumvent that limitation may result in sanctions.

RULE 12.06. MOTIONS; HEARING NOTICE; NON-ORAL HEARINGS; EX PARTE MOTIONS.

(A) Content of Motions. All motions, other than those for relief agreed to by opposing counsel, shall be accompanied by a brief, affidavit, or memorandum in support of the motion(s) stating the grounds and any supporting authority, or the motion may be stricken.

(B) Notice of Hearing. Each motion requiring a hearing shall include a notice of hearing, obtained from the Assignment Commissioner, unless waived by the Court, Magistrate, or Court Administrator. Where opposing counsel has appeared, the moving party shall make a reasonable effort to coordinate the hearing date with opposing counsel's availability before filing.

(C) Non-Oral Hearings. Except for temporary orders hearings, a matter not requiring an oral hearing may be set for non-oral consideration, with all briefs, responses, and exhibits filed by the day before the non-oral hearing date. No oral hearing date will be set for

objections to a magistrate's decision, motions under Civ.R. 60(B) or 75(I), motions to strike, motions to dismiss, or motions for summary judgment, unless the Court orders otherwise. The Court shall set an evidentiary hearing on a motion under Civ.R. 60(B) that alleges operative facts which, if true, would warrant relief.

(D) Service. The motion and notice of hearing shall be served in accordance with the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure. Consistent with Civ.R. 6(C), the motion and notice of hearing shall be served not later than fourteen days before the hearing, unless the Court, for good cause, fixes a different period or approves the parties' agreement to an earlier date.

(E) Agreed Motions and Entries. A motion and entry may be submitted together where all opposing parties or counsel have approved the entry, indicated by an approval line for each; the Court retains discretion to reject the entry.

(F) Ex Parte Motions Generally. Ex parte orders are discouraged and shall be granted only after the requesting party appears in open court and states the grounds on the record, where possible. A party whose statements in support of ex parte relief are later shown to have been untrue is subject to sanctions, including dismissal, an award of attorney's fees, and costs.

(G) Ex Parte Orders Affecting Children. The Court will issue an ex parte order affecting children only upon a showing, by supporting affidavit, that irreparable harm will occur absent immediate action. The ex parte motion must be filed contemporaneously with a Motion to Reallocate Parental Rights and Responsibilities or a Motion to Modify or Terminate Parenting Time; absent such a motion, the Court will not consider the ex parte request. If ex parte relief is granted, the order shall set a full hearing within fourteen days and shall be served together with the underlying motion.

(H) Discovery Orders. Motions to compel discovery will generally be granted ex parte where the supporting memorandum shows that reasonable efforts to obtain discovery were ignored or neglected and specifically identifies the documents or information withheld. If a party fails to comply with an order compelling discovery, the requesting party shall make a written demand for compliance; if compliance does not follow within seven days, the requesting party may move for sanctions and a show-cause hearing. Absent good cause shown at that hearing, the Court shall impose a sanction consistent with the [fee schedule](#) then in effect.

(I) Intervention. The Court will generally grant unopposed motions to intervene, and issue an ex parte order, without a hearing, where the motion states the basis for and interest of the intervening party.

(J) Hearing Dates. Counsel may obtain hearing dates by contacting the Assignment Commissioners.

RULE 12.07. TEMPORARY ORDERS.

(A) Temporary Support. Any motion for temporary spousal or child support shall be accompanied by accurate and complete financial affidavits, and any request for child support shall include a completed statutory worksheet. The moving party shall file, under seal, the prior year's federal tax return with schedules and W-2 forms, and current wage documentation showing year-to-date earnings; a self-employed party shall verify income under oath. Affidavits shall be on the Court's prescribed forms or contain all information the form requires, and shall be served on the opposing party or counsel as required by the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure.

(B) Accuracy. All financial affidavit information must be accurate; estimated information must be identified as such. Inaccurate, understated, or exaggerated information may result in sanctions, including immediate, retroactive termination of an order based on that information.

(C) Payment of Support. Temporary spousal or child support shall be paid through the Meigs County Child Support Enforcement Agency, subject to the processing charge then in effect, and by wage withholding where employer information is available.

(D) Motion to Vacate the Premises or for Exclusive Occupancy. A motion to vacate the marital premises shall state with particularity the grounds relied upon and shall be supported by affidavit or verified in the Complaint. The Court will not grant the motion absent a showing, at oral hearing, that: physical violence has occurred or is probable; threats of imminent serious physical harm have occurred; abuse of a child has occurred; the opposing party has already vacated; or other grounds justify the relief requested.

(E) Allocation of Expenses. Where the parties continue to reside together, the Court may allocate living expenses and debt service in writing, and the child(ren) shall remain in the home until further order.

(F) Defendant's Response. Unless the Court grants an extension, the Defendant shall have fourteen days after service of the Plaintiff's request for temporary orders to file a responsive request, including a Defendant's UDRF Affidavit for Temporary Orders, UDRF Income and Expense Affidavit with proof of income, UDRF Affidavit of Property, UDRF Health Insurance Affidavit, Personal Identifier Information, UDRF Parenting Proceeding Affidavit (if applicable), a Child Support Computation Worksheet and ODJFS IV-D Form 7076 — even if child support is agreed to be waived or deviated, and a Waiver of Paternity Testing and Legal Rights, if applicable. Failure to submit a worksheet is deemed acquiescence to the Plaintiff's worksheet.

(G) Answer and Counterclaim. The Defendant may file an Answer and/or Counterclaim within twenty-eight days after service of the Complaint.

(H) Issuance of Temporary Orders. Unless the matter is emergent, the Court will hold a non-oral hearing fourteen days after service of the request for temporary orders, or twenty-one days after filing the Complaint, whichever is later, and issue a Temporary Order if requested. The Court will not enter a temporary shared parenting order unless a party has filed a proposed Shared Parenting Plan.

(I) Oral Hearing on Temporary Orders. A party may request an oral hearing on a Temporary Order by filing a written Request for Temporary Order Hearing within fourteen days after the Temporary Order is journalized, specifying the issues to be heard. An untimely request is treated as a motion to modify temporary orders absent good cause.

(J) Motions to Modify Temporary Orders. The Court will not grant a motion to modify a Temporary Order absent a showing of a change of circumstances or other good cause.

RULE 12.08. MANDATORY DISCLOSURES AND FINANCIAL AFFIDAVITS.

(A) In every contested domestic relations matter, whether or not discovery is requested, each party shall, within thirty days of the filing of an Answer or Counterclaim, disclose to the other party, in writing with supporting documentation:

- (1) All pension, profit-sharing, and retirement benefits, including IRAs;
- (2) All COBRA benefits to which the party may be entitled;
- (3) Copies of all real estate deeds and vehicle titles in which any party has an interest;
- (4) Copies of the last three years' income tax returns, with all attachments;
- (5) Documentary proof of current income from all sources, including year-to-date wages for the current year;
- (6) Copies of the most recent statements for all bank accounts, mortgages, credit card accounts, and other debts;
- (7) Completed Income, Property, and Expense Affidavits as required by these Rules;
- (8) A completed withholding order/qualified medical child support order information sheet (IV-D application);
- (9) A statement from the party's employer regarding availability and cost of health insurance for the employee and for the children of the marriage; and

- (10) Where the children receive medical benefits through a state or private program, a copy of the medical card.
- (B) Failure to comply with this Rule may result in sanctions, including a contempt citation, dismissal of claims, restrictions on the submission of evidence, and an order to pay attorney's fees.
- (C) Every disclosed financial affidavit must be complete and accurate; estimated figures must be identified as estimates, and every question must be answered, including "none" or "\$0.00" where applicable. Incomplete, inaccurate, understated, or exaggerated information may result in sanctions, including immediate, retroactive termination of an order based on that information.

RULE 12.09. CASE MANAGEMENT AND PRETRIAL CONFERENCES.

- (A) An initial pretrial and case management conference shall generally be held after an action is filed, service is complete, and the answer period has lapsed; additional conferences may be scheduled as needed. At the case management conference, counsel and self-represented parties shall be prepared to identify disputed and undisputed issues and possible stipulations; discuss mediation, arbitration, and other settlement alternatives; discuss and set deadlines for appraisals and expert identification and evaluation; discuss the time needed for final hearing; establish a discovery schedule consistent with Civ.R. 26; and be prepared to conclude the case within the timelines set by the Ohio Supreme Court. The Court will issue a scheduling order following the conference.
- (B) Final Pretrial. A final pretrial shall be set at the Court's discretion, generally within fourteen to thirty days of the trial date. The parties and trial counsel of record shall attend the final pretrial in person. Only counsel of record who is familiar with all pending matters in the case and who has authority to negotiate and settle those matters will be recognized. The Court will not recognize an attorney sent to court as temporary or local convenience counsel for an attorney who does not wish to travel to the county in which the matter is pending. Each party shall file a final pretrial statement at least five days before the final pretrial addressing: whether settlement was discussed and refused; a brief statement of facts and issues; applicable law and authority; the names, addresses, and expected testimony of witnesses; exhibits to be offered, submitted to the Court numbered or lettered with an index; any demand or offer of settlement; and an estimate of trial time. Counsel shall be prepared to discuss the theory of the case, possible amendments to pleadings, simplification of issues, stipulations as to undisputed facts and exhibits, elimination of unnecessary parties, and disclosure of witnesses and exhibits — including electronic copies of exhibits capable of display in the courtroom via the Court's CaseCenter digital presentation system (Rule 4.07) — and to submit authority on

unresolved legal issues at least one week before trial. All anticipated exhibits, whether paper, audio, or video, must be uploaded to CaseCenter at least seven days before trial.

(C) Sanctions. Pretrial and case management conferences are governed by Civ.R. 16 and by the Court's inherent authority to manage its docket.

(1) Failure of counsel to be prepared for a pretrial conference, failure of a party or counsel to appear or cooperate in good faith at a pretrial conference, or failure to timely upload exhibits to CaseCenter as required by Rule 12.09(B), may result in appropriate sanctions, including an award of attorney's fees and costs to a prejudiced party.

(2) Failure to comply with mandatory disclosure under Rule 12.08, or with any other discovery obligation or order, is governed by Civ.R. 37.

(3) If a party fails to appear in person or by counsel at a pretrial conference, the Court may proceed ex parte on issues properly before it, subject to Civ.R. 75, or may transfer the matter to its inactive docket. Consistent with Rule 10.13, the Court shall not dismiss an action or motion for the moving party's failure to appear or to comply with these Rules or an order of the Court except after notice to that party's counsel, or to the party if unrepresented, as required by Civ.R. 41(B)(1), affording an opportunity to explain or correct the failure before dismissal. The notice requirement of Civ.R. 41(B)(1) shall be strictly observed.

(D) Status Conferences. The Court may, in its discretion, schedule periodic status conferences by telephone, video, or in person.

RULE 12.10. UNCONTESTED FINAL HEARINGS.

Where a divorce, annulment, or legal separation proceeds as uncontested, Plaintiff's counsel (or Plaintiff, if self-represented) shall move to set a final hearing date, accompanied by a proposed Magistrate's Order or Judicial Decree. Plaintiff's counsel shall obtain the hearing date from the Court, prepare the hearing notice, and file it with the Clerk more than seven days before the hearing; the Clerk shall mail the notice to the Defendant at least seven days before the hearing.

RULE 12.11. CONTESTED FINAL HEARINGS; EXHIBITS AND WITNESSES.

(A) Contested cases shall be set for final hearing by the Court, with notice served by the Court.

(B) Exhibits and financial documentation intended for use at any hearing shall be exchanged and identified for the Court consistent with the general exhibit and witness-disclosure requirements of these Local Rules, using the Court's CaseCenter digital presentation system (Rule 4.07). Where child or spousal support is at issue, each party

shall provide the other and the Court, at least seven days before hearing, the party's complete prior-year federal income tax return, W-2 forms, pay stubs for the preceding three months, and financial statements for the preceding six months. In any case where child support is at issue, each party shall also provide, at least fourteen days before hearing, a statement of tax filing status, current marital status, itemized deductions claimed or to be claimed, and applicable payroll taxes. A party seeking reimbursement of medical expenses shall provide opposing counsel copies of the disputed bills and an itemized, chronological summary identifying each provider, the date and nature of service, the child receiving care, amounts paid by insurance, and the balance sought.

(C) A physician shall not be subpoenaed or called to testify without prior conference with the calling attorney regarding the subject of testimony, and the calling attorney shall arrange to notify the physician of the approximate time of the physician's required appearance.

RULE 12.12. EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF ATTORNEY'S FEES.

(A) A request for an award of attorney's fees shall be supported by an affidavit of the moving party and an affidavit of that party's attorney itemizing the services rendered, the time expended on each service, and the hourly rate charged for in-court and out-of-court time.

(B) A fee request supported by the affidavits described in division (A) and served on opposing counsel within seven days after the relevant hearing shall be deemed fair and reasonable if no written objection is filed. Absent a timely affidavit or bill, the Court may award fees in its discretion, consistent with any fee-shifting provision applicable to the underlying motion.

RULE 12.13. COURT APPOINTMENT OF VALUATION EXPERTS.

(A) Whenever the value of an asset is genuinely in dispute, the Court may, on motion of a party or on its own motion for good cause shown, appoint an expert to appraise the asset.

(B) The order of appointment shall identify the property to be valued, the appointed expert, the allocation of fees and costs between the parties, and any advance payment to be made to the expert, and shall direct the parties to cooperate fully with the expert.

(C) The Court, in its discretion, shall allocate responsibility for the expert's fees between the parties and may reserve the ultimate allocation for the final hearing, at which the parties may examine the expert regarding the cost of services.

RULE 12.14. DECREES AND JUDGMENT ENTRIES.

(A) Every decree and agreed order shall state the parties' full names, current addresses, and dates of birth, subject to Rule 7.13(C); the identity of each party's employer, payroll address, and pay cycle, or the identity of the relevant financial institution and the last four digits of the account number, with the full account number provided on the Personal Identifier Form under Rule 12.03(A); and health, dental, and optical insurance information.

(B) Mandatory and Presumptive Child Support and Cash Medical Support Calculations. Child support and cash medical support shall be calculated using the applicable statutory worksheet required by R.C. 3119.022 or R.C. 3119.023 in every proceeding affecting the support of a minor child, including agreed and uncontested proceedings. Calculation of the guideline amount is mandatory in every such proceeding, regardless of whether the parties contemplate, have agreed to, or request a deviation, waiver, or other variation from the guideline amount. Once calculated, the guideline amount is presumed to be the correct amount of child support and cash medical support owed. This presumption may be rebutted only by a specific finding of the Court that the guideline amount would be unjust or inappropriate and not in the best interest of the child, applying the deviation factors set forth in R.C. 3119.22, 3119.23, and 3119.24. Consistent with R.C. 3119.22, the Court shall enter in the journal entry the guideline amount, its determination that the guideline amount would be unjust or inappropriate and would not be in the best interest of the child, and findings of fact supporting that determination. No decree, agreed judgment entry, or other order affecting a minor child's support shall be approved or journalized without the completed worksheet and the presumptive guideline calculation, even where the parties have agreed in advance to a specific deviation, waiver, or shared-expense arrangement.

(C) Every order addressing child support shall include the mandatory child-support, cash-medical-support, and health-insurance language, worksheet, and notices required by R.C. Chapters 3119, 3121, 3123, and 3125, on the Court's prescribed form, consistent with division (B).

(D) Every decree and agreed order shall designate which party bears Court costs, in what proportion if shared, and shall direct that costs be paid to the Clerk of Courts upon filing unless the Court orders otherwise.

(E) Every decree or post-decree agreed order that may be a final appealable order shall be denoted as such directly beneath the signature lines, together with the Clerk's certification of mailing to counsel of record and the parties.

RULE 12.15. DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE ACTIONS.

(A) A dissolution action shall be commenced by filing a Petition for Dissolution of Marriage with an attached Separation Agreement, together with: separate UDRF Income and Expense Affidavits and Property Affidavits for both parties; Personal Identifier Information; a Case Designation Sheet; a DRH Form; a Waiver of Service of Summons by both parties; a Waiver of Attorney by the unrepresented party, or acknowledgment of representation if only one party is represented; separate UDRF Parenting Proceeding Affidavits, if applicable; a Child Support Computation Worksheet executed by both parties and ODJFS IV-D Form 7076, if applicable, even if child support is contemplated to be deviated or waived; and a Waiver of Paternity Testing and Legal Rights, if applicable.

(B) Final Hearing. Upon filing, the filing attorney (or the first Petitioner, if both are self-represented) shall obtain a final hearing date, which shall follow the statutory thirty-day waiting period but occur no later than ninety days after filing, and shall notify both parties of the date and time. A Decree of Dissolution signed by both spouses, any related orders (e.g., Shared Parenting Decree, dependent health care order), and a Waiver of Magistrate's Decision shall be submitted at the final hearing.

(C) Conversion to Divorce. Either spouse may convert a dissolution action to a divorce action at any time before a decree of dissolution is granted, by filing a motion to convert, consistent with R.C. 3105.65(C). Conversion requires a motion to convert, a journal entry granting the conversion, and a divorce complaint with service instructions.

(D) A divorce action following a decree of legal separation shall be initiated by filing a new divorce action.

RULE 12.16. MOTIONS FOR CONTEMPT.

(A) A motion for contempt shall be commenced by filing: the motion, with party addresses in the caption; a memorandum or brief in support; a supporting affidavit of the movant and any additional supporting affidavits; an Order to Show Cause and Contempt Summons directing the alleged contemnor to appear on a specified date and time, with instructions for service on the alleged contemnor (service on opposing counsel alone is insufficient) and an explanation of potential penalties; a Case Designation Sheet, if the motion reopens a closed case; and a mediation referral order, if the motion involves a parenting issue, unless good cause is alleged why referral should not be made.

(B) The moving party shall obtain a hearing date from the Court before filing, and that date shall appear in the Order to Show Cause.

(C) Any attorney retained to defend a contempt motion shall promptly enter an appearance, whether or not a responsive pleading is filed.

(D) Any response opposing the motion, with supporting affidavits, shall be filed at least seven days before the first scheduled conference or hearing on the motion, absent good cause.

RULE 12.17. POST-DECREE MOTIONS — CONTESTED AND AGREED.

(A) Contested Post-Decree Motions. A contested post-decree proceeding shall be commenced by filing: the motion, with party addresses in the caption; a memorandum or brief in support; a supporting affidavit and any additional affidavits; a completed UDRF Income and Expense Affidavit, if financial issues or child support are in question; a completed UDRF Health Insurance Affidavit and ODJFS IV-D Form 7076, for any motion involving parental rights and responsibilities or child support; Personal Identifier Information; a completed UDRF Parenting Proceeding Affidavit, in all parenting proceedings; a mediation referral order, if the motion involves a parenting issue, unless good cause is alleged why referral should not be made; a Notice of Hearing or Order to Appear; instructions for service; blank copies of the Parenting Proceeding, Income and Expense, and Health Insurance Affidavits for service on the opposing party, if applicable; and a Case Designation Sheet.

(B) Before filing, the moving party shall obtain a date and time for a case management conference or hearing, to be included in the Notice of Hearing or Order to Appear. Any notice on a motion concerning parenting or support shall include the following language: "TO THE PERSON SERVED WITH THIS DOCUMENT: You are required to file an Income and Expense Affidavit, Health Insurance Affidavit, and Parenting Proceeding Affidavit with the Court at least seven days prior to the hearing/conference scheduled herein. A blank copy of each of those forms has been served upon you with the Motion."

(C) Service shall be made under Civ.R. 75 and Civ.R. 4 through 4.6 unless waived; service by publication shall comply with Civ.R. 4.4.

(D) Any attorney retained in a post-decree proceeding shall promptly enter an appearance, whether or not a responsive pleading is filed, and any opposing response with supporting affidavits shall be filed at least seven days before the first scheduled conference or hearing, absent good cause.

(E) Agreed Post-Decree Proceedings. A written motion, with party addresses in the caption, is required for every agreed post-decree proceeding. If financial matters are involved, the parties shall each file an updated UDRF Income and Expense Affidavit, and, if child support is affected, a signed worksheet and ODJFS IV-D Form 7076, even if deviation or waiver is contemplated. Agreed modifications shall include waivers of notice

of hearing, service of process, the Magistrate's decision period and objections, and counsel (if applicable), and a proposed Judgment Entry signed or approved by both parties or counsel, with signature lines for the Judge and Magistrate.

(F) The Court may, but need not, hold a hearing on an agreed post-decree matter. Where the documentation is in order, appears enforceable, and both parties are represented and have signed the proposed entry, the Court may dispense with an oral hearing. If only one party or neither party is represented, or at the Court's discretion, a hearing will be scheduled and both parties shall appear unless excused; failure to appear may result in dismissal, rejection of the proposed entry, or sanctions.

RULE 12.18. SERVICE REQUIREMENTS; FAILURE OF SERVICE.

(A) All initial filings and any reopening of an action must be served under Civ.R. 4.

(B) Residence Unknown — Divorce, Annulment, and Legal Separation. Where the defendant's residence is unknown, service may be perfected by affidavit filed under Civ.R. 4.4(A)(2), accompanied by three copies of the prepared notice (the responsibility to include an answer date rests with the filing party or counsel). The Clerk shall post the notice, for six consecutive weeks, on the bulletin boards outside the Common Pleas Court office and the Clerk of Courts office at the Meigs County Courthouse, 100 East Second Street, Pomeroy, Ohio, and on the bulletin board at the Pomeroy Public Library, 216 West Main Street, Pomeroy, Ohio, and shall otherwise comply with Civ.R. 4.4(A)(2), including mailing the complaint and summons to the defendant's last known address and noting service on the docket.

(C) Residence Unknown — All Other Domestic Relations Actions. Service shall be by publication under Civ.R. 4.4(A)(1). The filing party or counsel shall file the necessary affidavit and a copy of the prepared publication (including the answer date), shall arrange publication in a qualifying newspaper of the party's choosing, and shall file proof of publication and the invoice with the Clerk; publication costs are paid directly to the newspaper and are not included in the cost deposit.

(D) Failure of Service. A post-decree motion for which service has not been obtained within forty-five days of filing shall be set for a status review by the Court. At the status review, the Court may order alternate service or other steps to perfect service consistent with Civ.R. 4 through 4.6, and shall not dismiss the motion for failure of service except as permitted by the Civil Rules, including Civ.R. 4(E). The Clerk shall notify counsel or the party of any failure of service on a pleading or motion with an oral hearing date; counsel must then notify the Assignment Commissioner within seven days that alternate service instructions have been filed, or the hearing will be canceled.

RULE 12.19. REQUIREMENTS FOR PARENTING ORDERS; SHARED PARENTING PLANS.

(A) General Requirements. Every parenting order, whether agreed or contested, shall specifically address parenting time by including or attaching a specific schedule; a statement that parenting time shall be "as the parties agree" is not a specific schedule and will not be approved absent good cause shown in the proposed entry. The Court's Standard Parenting Time Order (Rule 12.23) may be used where the parties have no agreed schedule, but the general division of time should be customized to the developmental stage of the child(ren) and the geographic proximity of the parents. Parents are encouraged to consult the Ohio Supreme Court's publication, Planning for Parenting Time: Ohio's Guide for Parents Living Apart. Every parenting order shall include the required statutory best-interest findings, any findings required for modification of a prior order, and the mandatory child support, cash medical support, and dependent health care language required by Rule 12.14, even where support is contemplated to be deviated or waived.

(B) Shared Parenting Plans. Every Shared Parenting Plan, including an amended plan, shall state the names of the parents and children and the children's dates of birth; state that each parent believes the other to be fit, that the parents wish to share legal responsibility as set forth in the Plan, and that shared parenting is in the children's best interest; address all required statutory factors, including physical living arrangements, the school-placement and public-assistance parent designations, child support (even if deviated or waived), cash medical support, dependent health care, tax exemptions, and school placement, and may address education, religious upbringing, childcare, out-of-state removal, the child's name, each parent's specific authority, and dispute resolution; designate both parents as residential parents and legal custodians while designating one as residential parent for school purposes and, if applicable, for public assistance purposes; and include a statement immediately before each signature that the party has reviewed and understands the Plan, has signed voluntarily, and requests the Court adopt it as the Court's order.

(C) Amendment. A Shared Parenting Plan may be amended only by motion, an Amended Plan, and a proposed Amended Shared Parenting Decree adopting it; it may not be amended by judgment entry alone, except as to support matters.

RULE 12.20. PARENTING OR CO-PARENTING EDUCATION CLASS.

(A) In any divorce, legal separation, or dissolution action involving minor children, or any post-decree action involving parenting time or the reallocation of parental rights and responsibilities, the Court may order the parties to successfully complete a parenting or co-parenting education course before the case is heard on the merits.

(B) A party ordered to complete such a course must do so in a timely manner, and no action or motion shall proceed to final hearing until compliance is shown, except that non-compliance by a parent who has not entered an appearance and does not contest the action shall not delay the final hearing. A parent who fails to complete an ordered course may be found in contempt, or the case may be dismissed. Compliance shall be verified at a pretrial hearing.

(C) A parent ordered to complete a course shall be provided the information necessary to enroll by the Assignment Commissioner, upon request.

RULE 12.21. GUARDIAN AD LITEM.

(A) Appointment. Counsel requesting appointment of a Guardian ad Litem shall notify the Assignment Commissioner. The Assignment Commissioner and all counsel shall keep the Guardian ad Litem apprised of all proceedings; counsel shall serve the Guardian ad Litem with all pleadings, notices, entries, and other necessary documents, and any additional expense the Guardian ad Litem incurs (including transcript costs) due to counsel's failure to do so shall be charged to the responsible party. Unless a mandatory appointment is required by rule or statute, appointment in an allocation-of-parental-rights case is discretionary. The Court may appoint a Guardian ad Litem for a specific issue or issues, in which case the order of appointment shall state the issue(s) and relieve the Guardian ad Litem of duties under Sup.R. 8.03(D) that do not apply. A Guardian ad Litem shall be appointed only to represent the child's best interest and shall not also serve as the child's attorney. Appointment terminates upon the final entry in the case unless the entry provides otherwise, though the Guardian ad Litem may still move for fees after termination. The Court should consider reappointing the same Guardian ad Litem for a specific child in any subsequent case.

(B) Fees. A Guardian ad Litem may be compensated hourly for reasonable and necessary time. At appointment, the Court shall order a deposit, of not less than the amount set by the current [fee schedule](#), to be paid by one or both parties, subject to waiver or modification if the Court finds the parties unable to pay; fees and expenses shall be billed against the deposit. A Guardian ad Litem may move for payment at any time and shall move for payment upon conclusion of duties, itemizing time, duties performed, and costs. Absent a hearing requested within fourteen days of the motion, the Court shall issue an order on the fee request. If fees exceed the deposit or installment payments made, the Court may enter a lump-sum judgment against the responsible party, enforce payment through contempt proceedings, or use any other lawful enforcement method.

(C) Responsibilities and Duties. A Guardian ad Litem shall provide the Court a best-interest recommendation, which may be inconsistent with the child's or another party's wishes; maintain independence, objectivity, and fairness, with no ex parte

communication with the Court on the merits; act with respect and courtesy; attend all hearings relevant to the appointment; promptly notify the Court in writing, with notice to the parties, if the Guardian ad Litem's recommendation differs from the child's wishes; request timely Court review when necessary; if an attorney, file pleadings and examine witnesses as appropriate; and be available to testify. Unless relieved by the Court, a Guardian ad Litem shall become informed about the facts and contact all relevant persons; observe the child with each parent, guardian, or physical custodian; interview the child, if age-appropriate, outside the presence of a parent, guardian, or physical custodian; visit the child's residence or proposed residence; ascertain the child's wishes and concerns; interview the parties and other relevant individuals, if necessary outside the presence of others (with counsel permitted to be present upon request); interview relevant school, medical, mental-health, and child-protective-services personnel and obtain relevant records; review pleadings and other case documents; review relevant criminal, civil, educational, mental-health, medical, and administrative records; request evaluations or assessments the Guardian ad Litem deems necessary; and take any further steps necessary to make an informed recommendation.

(D) Identification. A Guardian ad Litem shall immediately identify themselves as such when contacting individuals, and explain the role, the scope of the appointment, and that information obtained may become part of the court record.

(E) Confidentiality. A Guardian ad Litem shall make no disclosures about the case except to the parties and counsel, in reports to the Court, or as necessary to perform the role, including as a mandated reporter, and shall maintain the confidentiality of personal identifiers under Sup.R. 11.13 and of addresses in cases involving domestic violence or safety risk. The Court may, on application, order disclosure necessary to challenge information from a confidential source, subject to conditions protecting the source from harm. Communications between the child and the Guardian ad Litem are not privileged.

(F) Timeliness and Record-Keeping. A Guardian ad Litem shall act promptly, and shall maintain accurate records of time, services, and expenses, filing an itemized statement monthly with the Court and copies to counsel and self-represented parties.

(G) Conflicts of Interest. A Guardian ad Litem shall avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest and shall promptly notify the Court in writing upon becoming aware of one.

(H) Training, Certification, and Fees. A Guardian ad Litem shall meet the qualifications and pre-service and continuing education requirements of Sup.R. 8.04 and 8.05 (twelve hours pre-service; six hours annually thereafter), and shall provide documentation of compliance to the Court Administrator. A Guardian ad Litem who does not complete six annual continuing-education hours is ineligible for new appointments until the requirement is satisfied, though the Court may allow existing appointments to continue.

On or before March 1 of each year, each individual on the Guardian ad Litem list shall certify to the Court Administrator that they are unaware of any disqualifying circumstance, report completed training, and confirm good standing with the Ohio Supreme Court, and shall immediately notify the Court Administrator in writing of any arrest, indictment, or conviction involving child abuse or neglect, a violation of R.C. 2919.25, or a sexually oriented offense involving a child, any pending professional discipline, any other disqualifying ground, or being named a respondent in a civil protection order action or charged with domestic violence. Filing fees and Court costs are waived as to Guardians ad Litem filings.

(I) Reports. A Guardian ad Litem shall prepare a written final report with recommendations, affirmatively stating that responsibilities have been met and detailing the activities performed, hearings attended, persons interviewed, documents reviewed, and experts consulted, filed not less than seven days before the final hearing unless the Court modifies the deadline. Every report shall include the following warning: "The Guardian ad Litem Report shall be provided to the Court, unrepresented parties, and legal counsel. Any other disclosure of the report must be approved in advance by the Court. Unauthorized disclosure or distribution of the report may be subject to court action, including penalties for contempt, which include fine and/or incarceration." A Guardian ad Litem shall be available to testify and may supplement the report orally at the hearing, and may file an interim report at any time.

(J) Responsibilities of the Court. The Court Administrator shall coordinate the application and appointment process, maintain the files and records required by Sup.R. 8.00 through 8.07, maintain information on training opportunities, and accept and consider written comments and complaints regarding a Guardian ad Litem's performance, providing a copy to the subject Guardian ad Litem and, where appropriate, forwarding the matter to the Judge, with prompt disposition and notice to the person making the comment or complaint and to the Guardian ad Litem, and maintaining a written record of the disposition in the Guardian ad Litem's file.

RULE 12.22. COURT-APPOINTED COUNSEL IN DOMESTIC RELATIONS MATTERS.

(A) The Domestic Relations Division does not provide court-appointed counsel at Court expense for domestic relations matters generally. The sole exception is set forth in division (B): where a party in a contempt proceeding faces the possibility of incarceration if found in contempt, the Constitution requires that indigent party be afforded appointed counsel.

(B) Where the Court finds that a respondent in a contempt proceeding is indigent, faces a potential sentence of incarceration if found in contempt, and has not waived the right to counsel, the Court shall appoint counsel to represent the respondent.

(C) A party requesting court-appointed counsel under this Rule shall complete and return a notarized Affidavit of Indigency no later than seven days before any hearing at which the party may be entitled to representation. Failure to timely return the affidavit may be treated as a waiver of counsel absent good cause shown.

(D) Appointment, compensation, and fee-application procedures for counsel appointed under this Rule are governed by Section 3 (Counsel Issues).

RULE 12.23. STANDARD PARENTING TIME ORDER.

(A) Preamble and Considerations. This Court recognizes and appreciates the importance of preserving a healthy and ongoing relationship between children and both parents. The best parenting plans are created by agreement and tailored to a family's specific needs. Parents are encouraged to thoughtfully consider: the developmental needs and age of each child; each child's psychological attachments; any special needs of the child; the distance between the parents' homes; the parents' ability to cooperate and communicate; preservation or development of a close relationship with each parent; the importance of a consistent, predictable schedule; each child's temperament and ability to handle change; the parents' work schedules and career demands; the ability to adapt the plan as the children's needs change; and any special circumstance — including physical or psychological health, substance abuse, or violence — that would jeopardize a child's physical or emotional wellbeing. Parents are encouraged to consult Planning for Parenting Time: Ohio's Guide for Parents Living Apart, published by the Ohio Supreme Court. If the parents cannot reach agreement, the Court will determine parenting time in the children's best interest. The schedule below is the Standard Parenting Time Order required by R.C. 3109.051(F)(2), and applies when incorporated by reference into a decree or order conferring "reasonable parenting time" on the non-residential parent, or when the parties cannot otherwise agree. Throughout this Rule, "Parent 1" means the first parent listed in the caption of the action, and "Parent 2" means the second parent listed in the caption of the action; this designation applies uniformly in divisions (B), (C), and (D) below.

(B) Local Parenting Time (Parties Residing Within a Four-Hour Drive, One Way). This schedule applies where the parties reside within a four-hour drive, one way, of each other.

(1) Regular Parenting Time — the parties shall select one of the following options, or the Court will designate one:

Option A: The children shall reside equally with both parents on an alternating weekly basis, transitioning each Friday at 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise agreed. The parent not exercising weekly parenting time shall have one weekday evening, Wednesday from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. unless otherwise agreed, with that parent responsible for transportation.

Option B: Weekends alternate from Friday at 6:00 p.m. to Monday at 6:00 p.m., unaffected by holiday, birthday, summer, or vacation parenting time. During the week, one parent has the children from Monday at 6:00 p.m. to Wednesday at 6:00 p.m., and the other from Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. to Friday at 6:00 p.m.

Option C: Parent 1 shall have alternate weekends from Friday at 6:00 p.m. to Sunday at 6:00 p.m., expanded to include an adjoining holiday when Parent 1's weekend falls next to one. Parent 1 shall have mid-week parenting time on Wednesday from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., which, at Parent 1's discretion and if Parent 1 is able to deliver the child to school or to Parent 2 by 9:00 a.m. Thursday, may extend overnight.

(2) Holidays and Days of Special Meaning:

Mother's Day and Father's Day shall always be spent with the respective parent, from 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. absent agreement, regardless of the regular schedule. If the parents are the same gender, Parent 1 shall have parenting time on Father's Day and Parent 2 shall have parenting time on Mother's Day, absent agreement otherwise.

The children's birthday shall be spent with Parent 1 in even-numbered years and Parent 2 in odd-numbered years, with one week's notice of intent to exercise this time; absent agreement, the time shall be 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on a non-school, non-work day, or 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. otherwise. This provision takes precedence over all other parenting time, and siblings may attend the birthday event.

Each parent's own birthday shall include parenting time from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (non-school days) or 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (school days); if both parents share a birthdate, they alternate, with Parent 1 receiving odd-numbered years.

Trick-or-treat shall alternate, with Parent 1 in odd-numbered years and Parent 2 in even-numbered years if both households observe the same night, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. or one hour before to one hour after trick-or-treat,

whichever is longer; if the households' nights differ, each parent has the children on that parent's respective night for the same duration.

Independence Day shall be with Parent 1 in odd-numbered years and Parent 2 in even-numbered years, from 6:00 p.m. July 3 to 9:00 a.m. July 5.

Holidays take precedence over the regular weekend schedule; other days of special meaning, including religious holidays and school days off, shall be shared by agreement, or the regular schedule applies absent agreement. The alternating weekend schedule continues throughout the year even where interrupted by a holiday, which may result in one parent having up to three consecutive weekends; this equalizes over time.

(3) Extended Holiday Periods:

Thanksgiving Break: Wednesday before Thanksgiving, 6:00 p.m., to the Friday after, 6:00 p.m., with Parent 1 in odd-numbered years and Parent 2 in even-numbered years.

Spring Break: 6:00 p.m. on the last day of school before break to 6:00 p.m. the day before school resumes, determined by the school-placement parent's district if the child is not yet school-age, with Parent 1 in even-numbered years and Parent 2 in odd-numbered years.

(4) Winter Break: In even-numbered years, Parent 1 (and in odd-numbered years, Parent 2) shall have parenting time from 6:00 p.m. on the last day of school before Winter Break until 2:00 p.m. on December 25; the other parent shall have parenting time from 2:00 p.m. on December 25 until 6:00 p.m. on January 1, reversing in odd-numbered years. If the child is not yet school-age, the school-placement parent's district determines the dates.

(5) Summer Parenting Time: Commencing the Friday at 6:00 p.m. following the close of school, each parent shall exercise parenting time in one-week blocks beginning each parent's normal alternating-weekend Friday and continuing to the following Friday at 6:00 p.m. A parent may take vacation with the children during that parent's scheduled week, providing the other parent a general itinerary — dates, locations, addresses, and telephone numbers — at least thirty days in advance. Holiday and birthday parenting time shall not be missed on account of a scheduled vacation. The summer schedule concludes the last Friday before school resumes, at which point the regular schedule resumes.

(6) Transportation: The parent exercising mid-week parenting time is responsible for that transportation. For all other parenting time, the receiving parent, or a

designated driver satisfying Rule 12.23(F)(6), shall pick up the children at the beginning of that parent's parenting time.

(C) Long-Distance Parenting Time (Parties Residing More Than a Four-Hour Drive, One Way, Apart). The intent of long-distance parenting time is the same as local parenting time — to maintain contact between the children and both parents — and both parents are encouraged to be as flexible as possible. This division is drafted on the assumption that Parent 1 is the parent residing farther from the child(ren). Where the parties' actual living arrangements do not align with the caption-order designation of Parent 1 and Parent 2 set forth in division (A), the decree, agreed judgment entry, or Shared Parenting Plan shall expressly state which party is entitled to the Parent 1 provisions of this division.

(1) Extended Holiday Periods — Parent 1 shall have: Thanksgiving, from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday to 6:00 p.m. Sunday; Spring Break, from 6:00 p.m. the last day of school before break to 6:00 p.m. the day before school resumes; and Winter Break, from 3:00 p.m. December 25 to 6:00 p.m. the last day before school resumes after New Year's Day. If the child is not yet school-age, the school-placement parent's district determines Spring and Winter Break dates.

(2) Summer Parenting Time: Parent 1 shall have seven weeks of summer parenting time, exercised at Parent 1's discretion in two blocks of no more than four weeks each, separated by at least two weeks, with notice to Parent 2 by April 15. During the summer, Parent 2 shall have reciprocal weekends where round-trip travel time is less than six hours. A school-age child shall be returned to Parent 2 at least one week before school resumes, except where Parent 2's own vacation is controlled by a mandatory employer shutdown.

(3) Additional Vacation Time: Where round-trip travel time does not exceed six hours, Parent 1 may exercise one three-day-weekend period each year during a holiday otherwise designated for Parent 1, from 4:30 p.m. the day before through 8:30 p.m. of the last day, on thirty days' notice. If Parent 1 travels to the children's area, Parent 1 may exercise parenting time under division (B)(2), except that Mother's/Father's Day and Parent 1's birthday shall be 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and the children's birthday shall be 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (non-school days) or 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (school days), on fourteen days' notice. Unless the decree specifies otherwise, Parent 1 bears the transportation cost for parenting time exercised under this division.

(4) Transportation: The parties shall divide the hours and expense of transportation as evenly as possible.

(D) Parenting Time with Infants (Birth to Eighteen Months). The Court recognizes that parenting time with an infant raises special considerations due to the infant's care needs,

and encourages frequent, shorter periods of parenting time at the outset, increasing in frequency and duration as the infant grows and the comfort level of the infant and parent increase. The parties are again encouraged to review the Ohio Supreme Court's Planning for Parenting Time: Ohio's Guide for Parents Living Apart, located at <https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/Publications/JCS/parentingGuide.pdf>.

(1) Birth to Twelve Months: Parent 1 shall have parenting time from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Wednesdays each week.

(2) Twelve to Eighteen Months: Parent 1 shall have parenting time from 6:00 p.m. Saturday to 6:00 p.m. Sunday, and 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, each week.

(3) After Eighteen Months: The regular parenting time schedule applies.

(4) Special Situations: If either parent believes this infant schedule is inappropriate to the family's circumstances, either parent may request an oral hearing, scheduled for thirty minutes with fifteen minutes allotted to each parent, to establish a reasonable schedule.

(E) General Rules Applicable to All Parenting Time Orders.

(1) Notice. Parents have a right to parent their children, and children have a right to expect contact with each parent. Notice of intent not to exercise scheduled parenting time shall be given twenty-four hours in advance, absent an emergency. Neither the children nor the other parent has a duty to wait more than thirty minutes past the scheduled exchange time, absent prior arrangement.

(2) Overnight Absence. When a parent will be away overnight during that parent's scheduled parenting time, the other parent shall be given the opportunity to exercise overnight parenting time.

(3) Telephone or Video Contact. Each parent shall have telephone, video, or similar contact with the children of reasonable frequency and duration while the children are in the other parent's care, and each parent shall provide the other with the contact information necessary to facilitate that contact.

(4) Change of Address. Each parent shall promptly notify the other parent and the Court of any change in residential address, consistent with the Notice of Intent to Relocate required by Rule 12.24 and the Ohio Revised Code.

(5) Access to Records and Activities. Both parents shall have full access to the children's medical, dental, optometric, psychiatric, psychological, and school records, and the right to consult with any treating provider and to participate in parent-teacher conferences, school programs, extracurricular activities, and other

events to which parents are invited, regardless of which parent is designated residential parent or residential parent for school purposes. This is a presumption of the Court and applies unless a specific, contrary finding is made in the decree or order. The parent who first receives a report card, grade report, or similar record shall provide a copy to the other parent within three days of receipt. Both parents shall promptly notify the other of any illness or health concern requiring medical attention. Both parents shall access school information through the school district's parent portal.

(6) Transportation and Supervision While Traveling. No parent shall permit a child to be transported in a motor vehicle during an exchange or period of parenting time except by a sober adult driver who holds a valid operator's license, is covered by valid automobile insurance, and provides an age- and weight-appropriate child restraint or car seat for the child that is properly installed and in good working order.

(7) Clothing. The child's own clothing shall freely travel with the child between the parents' households as part of each exchange; neither parent shall withhold the child's clothing from the other parent, and each parent shall send weather- and activity-appropriate clothing sufficient for the anticipated period of parenting time.

(8) Supervision During a Parent's Scheduled Time. A parent exercising scheduled parenting time is expected to personally supervise the child or arrange appropriate care, and shall not leave the child in the care of a third-party, non-family caregiver for an extended period of time during that parent's designated parenting time. If the parent scheduled to have the child is unable, for any reason, to personally supervise the child, that parent shall, in order of priority: first, attempt to arrange care with a suitable family member; second, if no suitable family member is available, offer the other parent the opportunity to care for the child during that time; and third, only if the other parent is unavailable or unable to do so, arrange care with a suitable third-party, non-parent caregiver. Nothing in this division limits ordinary, reasonable use of childcare, babysitting, or similar short-term care in the course of a parent's usual routine.

(9) Extended Family. The Court encourages and each parent shall support the children's continued contact with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, adult siblings, and other extended family during that parent's parenting time.

(10) Designated Adult for Exchanges. Where a parent is unable to personally transport the child for an exchange, that parent may designate another mature adult — such as the parent's spouse, a grandparent, or an adult sibling of either

party — to pick up or return the child. Any adult so designated must be sober, hold a valid operator's license, be covered by valid automobile insurance, operate a safe motor vehicle, and provide an age- and weight-appropriate, properly installed, working child restraint or car seat for the child.

(11) Cancellation. A parent seeking to cancel scheduled parenting time shall give twenty-four hours' notice where possible; time canceled by the non-residential parent is forfeited absent agreement.

(12) Illness. If a child is too ill to travel, the parent with the child shall give twenty-four hours' notice where possible; if more than one day of a parenting time period is missed due to non-emergency illness, the missed time shall be made up as soon as practicable.

(13) Mail and Communication Confidentiality. Written and electronic communication between a parent and a child is confidential between them. Neither parent shall open, read, monitor, or restrict mail, email, or other written communication sent to or from the child by the other parent without the child's consent, except as necessary to protect the child's safety.

(14) No Alienation. Neither parent shall make disparaging remarks about the other parent, or about that parent's family, in the presence of or within the hearing of the child, and neither parent shall attempt to alienate the child's affection for the other parent. Each parent shall encourage the child's love, respect, and relationship with the other parent and shall not use the child as a messenger regarding disputes between the parents.

(15) Religious Upbringing. This order does not restrict either parent's right to expose the child to that parent's religious beliefs and practices. A provision governing the child's religious affiliation or upbringing may be included only by written agreement of the parents incorporated into the Court's order, or upon the Court's finding that a conflict between the parents' religious beliefs or practices is affecting the child's general welfare.

(16) One-Hundred-Mile / Four-Hour Provision. Where the parties come to reside such that the applicable schedule (local or long-distance) no longer reflects the distance between them, either party may petition the Court to modify the parenting time schedule accordingly.

(17) Relocation. A residential parent who intends to move to a residence other than the residence specified in the parenting time order or decree shall file a Notice of Intent to Relocate with the Court, consistent with R.C. 3109.051(G) and Rule 12.24. Upon the filing of the notice, the Court, on its own motion or the motion of the nonresidential

parent, may schedule a hearing with notice to both parents to determine whether it is in the best interest of the child to revise the parenting time schedule. The filing of the notice does not by itself modify this order. A restriction on the geographic area within which a parent may reside with the child may be imposed only by written agreement of the parties incorporated into the Court's order, or upon the Court's finding in a particular case that the restriction is in the best interest of the child.

(F) Willful non-compliance with this Rule or with an order incorporating it may result in a finding of contempt, consistent with R.C. 3109.051, and may result in an award of the moving party's attorney's fees and costs, in addition to any other remedy available to the Court.

For ease of attachment to a decree, agreed judgment entry, or Shared Parenting Plan, the operative terms of this Rule are also reproduced in stand-alone, exhibit-ready form as Appendix A to Section 12. Attaching Appendix A to Section 12 to an order incorporates this Rule 12.23 by reference; in the event of any conflict between the text of Appendix A and this Rule 12.23, this Rule 12.23 controls.

RULE 12.24. NOTICE OF INTENT TO RELOCATE.

(A) A residential parent who intends to relocate to a residence other than that specified in the parenting time order or decree shall file a Notice of Intent to Relocate in advance of the move, consistent with R.C. 3109.051(G), no later than sixty days before the relocation, or as soon as the residential parent becomes aware relocation will occur.

(B) The Clerk shall mail a copy of the Notice to the non-residential parent unless the residential parent moves to withhold it for a reason permitted under R.C. 3109.051(G), including alleged domestic violence or abuse of a child; if the residential parent so objects, the Court shall schedule a hearing with notice to both parents.

(C) Absent an objection, the Court generally will not schedule a hearing on the Notice unless a parent requests one in writing. If either parent believes the relocation requires a change in the parenting time schedule or in residential-parent status, that parent may file a motion to review parenting time, for change of residential parent, or to modify the shared parenting plan.

RULE 12.25. WAIVER OF FILING FEE AND COURT COST DEPOSIT.

A party unable to prepay or secure costs in a domestic relations case shall file a Petition for Waiver of Filing Fee and Court Cost Deposit, with a fully completed and notarized Affidavit in Support (every entry completed, including "\$0.00" or "not applicable" where appropriate). The Court will rule on the Petition after setting it for non-oral consideration.

If the Petition is denied, a deposit shall be made as ordered; failure to pay may result in dismissal of the case.

RULE 12.26. SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT.

In any action commenced against an unrepresented party who is a member of the military service, the Court shall appoint an attorney to represent that party before entering any judgment against the party, as required by the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. 3901 et seq., and may set a fee for that attorney's services. The Court will stay proceedings pending the party's availability for trial; during the stay, the party shall be ordered to cooperate in discovery and to notify the Court upon return, and shall be advised of the right to obtain counsel and directed to respond to any jurisdictional or other pending issue.

RULE 12.27. REGISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF FOREIGN SUPPORT ORDERS (UIFSA).

(A) A child or spousal support order issued by another state or country may be registered in this Court for enforcement or modification under R.C. Chapter 3115.

(B) An action to register a foreign support order is initiated by a verified petition or registration statement stating the remedy sought and including: the name, address, and Social Security number of the obligee, and, if payments are not to be remitted directly to the obligee, the agency or person to receive them; the name, address, and Social Security number of the obligor, the obligor's employer if known, and any non-exempt Ohio property owned by the obligor; the name, address, sex, Social Security number, and date of birth of each child for whom support is sought; a certified copy of the order(s) to be registered, including any modifying order; an affidavit of the party seeking registration, or of the records custodian, stating the amount of any arrearage; a statement notifying the obligor of the right to contest validity or enforcement under R.C. 3115.42(B); and a notice of hearing. Social Security numbers and other personal identifiers required by R.C. Chapter 3115 shall be provided on the Personal Identifier Form under Rule 12.03(A), which shall accompany the petition, and shall be omitted from the petition itself except for the last four digits.

(C) The obligor may contest the validity or enforcement of the registered order at the hearing or as provided by R.C. 3115.43. Modification of a registered foreign child support order is governed by R.C. 3115.48 et seq. Where both parties reside in Ohio, this Court has jurisdiction to enforce or modify the order in a registration proceeding. A certified copy of an out-of-state payment record, provided by the records custodian, is admissible as evidence of payment history, and a party or witness located in another state may testify by telephone, audiovisual, or other electronic means from a location in that

state, under oath administered by an officer physically present with the witness. An obligee who prevails in a petition under this Rule is not required to pay a filing fee or other costs and may be awarded attorney's fees, costs, and necessary travel expenses.

RULE 12.28. UNIFORM CHILD CUSTODY JURISDICTION AND ENFORCEMENT ACT (UCCJEA) REGISTRATION.

(A) A parenting or custody decree from another state may be registered in this Court to enforce or modify orders concerning custody, parenting time, or related matters under R.C. 3127.01 et seq.; monetary obligations, including child support, are not addressed in a proceeding under this Rule.

(B) A verified petition requesting enforcement or modification of another state's parenting decree shall be filed with the Clerk, stating the relief sought and whether a parenting proceeding is pending in any other state, and shall attach a certified copy of the decree, a completed UCCJEA affidavit, and a notice of hearing set not less than twenty days after service.

(C) Notice to the respondent shall comply with R.C. 3127.06, and any motion for relief shall be filed together with the petition for registration unless the Court orders otherwise.

RULE 12.29. INTERVIEW OF CHILD BY COURT.

(A) Any interview of a minor child by the Court shall be conducted under R.C. 3109.04 with the child's best interest in mind.

(B) An in camera interview shall be scheduled separately from the hearing on the underlying issue, unless the assigned Judge or Magistrate directs otherwise, and shall be requested by filing a separate Hearing Request Form; no in camera interview will be scheduled without one.

(C) Parties to custody or parenting time litigation are strongly encouraged not to bring the minor child(ren) to Court on a scheduled hearing date, unless the child is to be called as a witness.

RULE 12.30. EMERGENCY EX PARTE MOTIONS AND ORDERS.

(A) An emergency ex parte order will not be granted absent a showing of extreme emergency by properly executed affidavit describing the alleged emergency with specificity.

(B) Property Issues. The Court may issue an emergency ex parte order, on motion and affidavit, where it appears that a party or third party is about to dispose of or encumber

property so as to defeat a party's interest in spousal support, an equitable division of marital property, or enforcement of a prior Court order.

(C) Children's Issues. The Court may issue an emergency ex parte order, on motion and affidavit, where it appears that: a child is about to suffer irreparable harm, including physical abuse, bodily injury, or domestic violence; a residential parent is unavailable due to hospitalization or other emergency; or a residential parent is about to leave the jurisdiction with the child. This division works together with, and does not replace, the requirements of Rule 12.06(G).

(D) The Court may issue an emergency ex parte order with or without a hearing. Where a hearing is held, the moving party shall make a good-faith effort to give opposing counsel or the unrepresented opposing party immediate notice of the hearing.

(E) An emergency ex parte order remains in force until a hearing on the underlying action, unless the Court orders otherwise. Where relief is granted without a hearing, the matter shall be set for an evidentiary hearing within fourteen business days, so far as practicable given the Court's docket.

(F) The moving party must be available to the Court for immediate examination under oath whenever an ex parte order is requested.

APPENDIX A TO SECTION 12. STANDARD PARENTING TIME ORDER

This Appendix reproduces, in stand-alone form for attachment as an exhibit to a decree, agreed judgment entry, or Shared Parenting Plan, the operative terms of Rule 12.23 of Section 12 (Domestic Relations Matters) of these Local Rules. This Appendix is provided for convenience of attachment only. In the event of any conflict between the text of this Appendix and Rule 12.23, Rule 12.23 controls.

(A) Preamble and Considerations. This Court recognizes and appreciates the importance of preserving a healthy and ongoing relationship between children and both parents. The best parenting plans are created by agreement and tailored to a family's specific needs. Parents are encouraged to thoughtfully consider: the developmental needs and age of each child; each child's psychological attachments; any special needs of the child; the distance between the parents' homes; the parents' ability to cooperate and communicate; preservation or development of a close relationship with each parent; the importance of a consistent, predictable schedule; each child's temperament and ability to handle change; the parents' work schedules and career demands; the ability to adapt the plan as the children's needs change; and any special circumstance — including physical or psychological health, substance abuse, or violence — that would jeopardize a child's physical or emotional wellbeing. Parents are encouraged to consult *Planning for Parenting Time: Ohio's Guide for Parents Living Apart*, published by the Ohio Supreme Court. If the parents cannot reach agreement, the Court will determine parenting time in the children's best interest. The schedule below is the Standard Parenting Time Order required by R.C. 3109.051(F)(2), and applies when incorporated by reference into a decree or order conferring "reasonable parenting time" on the non-residential parent, or when the parties cannot otherwise agree. Throughout this Rule, "Parent 1" means the first parent listed in the caption of the action, and "Parent 2" means the second parent listed in the caption of the action; this designation applies uniformly in divisions (B), (C), and (D) below.

(B) Local Parenting Time (Parties Residing Within a Four-Hour Drive, One Way). This schedule applies where the parties reside within a four-hour drive, one way, of each other.

(1) Regular Parenting Time — the parties shall select one of the following options, or the Court will designate one:

Option A: The children shall reside equally with both parents on an alternating weekly basis, transitioning each Friday at 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise agreed. The parent not exercising weekly parenting time shall have one weekday

evening, Wednesday from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. unless otherwise agreed, with that parent responsible for transportation.

Option B: Weekends alternate from Friday at 6:00 p.m. to Monday at 6:00 p.m., unaffected by holiday, birthday, summer, or vacation parenting time. During the week, one parent has the children from Monday at 6:00 p.m. to Wednesday at 6:00 p.m., and the other from Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. to Friday at 6:00 p.m.

Option C: Parent 1 shall have alternate weekends from Friday at 6:00 p.m. to Sunday at 6:00 p.m., expanded to include an adjoining holiday when Parent 1's weekend falls next to one. Parent 1 shall have mid-week parenting time on Wednesday from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., which, at Parent 1's discretion and if Parent 1 is able to deliver the child to school or to Parent 2 by 9:00 a.m. Thursday, may extend overnight.

(2) Holidays and Days of Special Meaning:

Mother's Day and Father's Day shall always be spent with the respective parent, from 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. absent agreement, regardless of the regular schedule. If the parents are the same gender, Parent 1 shall have parenting time on Father's Day and Parent 2 shall have parenting time on Mother's Day, absent agreement otherwise.

The children's birthday shall be spent with Parent 1 in even-numbered years and Parent 2 in odd-numbered years, with one week's notice of intent to exercise this time; absent agreement, the time shall be 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on a non-school, non-work day, or 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. otherwise. This provision takes precedence over all other parenting time, and siblings may attend the birthday event.

Each parent's own birthday shall include parenting time from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (non-school days) or 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (school days); if both parents share a birthdate, they alternate, with Parent 1 receiving odd-numbered years.

Trick-or-treat shall alternate, with Parent 1 in odd-numbered years and Parent 2 in even-numbered years if both households observe the same night, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. or one hour before to one hour after trick-or-treat, whichever is longer; if the households' nights differ, each parent has the children on that parent's respective night for the same duration.

Independence Day shall be with Parent 1 in odd-numbered years and Parent 2 in even-numbered years, from 6:00 p.m. July 3 to 9:00 a.m. July 5.

Holidays take precedence over the regular weekend schedule; other days of special meaning, including religious holidays and school days off, shall be shared by agreement, or the regular schedule applies absent agreement. The alternating weekend schedule continues throughout the year even where interrupted by a holiday, which may result in one parent having up to three consecutive weekends; this equalizes over time.

(3) Extended Holiday Periods:

Thanksgiving Break: Wednesday before Thanksgiving, 6:00 p.m., to the Friday after, 6:00 p.m., with Parent 1 in odd-numbered years and Parent 2 in even-numbered years.

Spring Break: 6:00 p.m. on the last day of school before break to 6:00 p.m. the day before school resumes, determined by the school-placement parent's district if the child is not yet school-age, with Parent 1 in even-numbered years and Parent 2 in odd-numbered years.

(4) Winter Break: In even-numbered years, Parent 1 (and in odd-numbered years, Parent 2) shall have parenting time from 6:00 p.m. on the last day of school before Winter Break until 2:00 p.m. on December 25; the other parent shall have parenting time from 2:00 p.m. on December 25 until 6:00 p.m. on January 1, reversing in odd-numbered years. If the child is not yet school-age, the school-placement parent's district determines the dates.

(5) Summer Parenting Time: Commencing the Friday at 6:00 p.m. following the close of school, each parent shall exercise parenting time in one-week blocks beginning each parent's normal alternating-weekend Friday and continuing to the following Friday at 6:00 p.m. A parent may take vacation with the children during that parent's scheduled week, providing the other parent a general itinerary — dates, locations, addresses, and telephone numbers — at least thirty days in advance. Holiday and birthday parenting time shall not be missed on account of a scheduled vacation. The summer schedule concludes the last Friday before school resumes, at which point the regular schedule resumes.

(6) Transportation: The parent exercising mid-week parenting time is responsible for that transportation. For all other parenting time, the receiving parent, or a designated driver satisfying Rule 12.23(F)(6), shall pick up the children at the beginning of that parent's parenting time.

(C) Long-Distance Parenting Time (Parties Residing More Than a Four-Hour Drive, One Way, Apart). The intent of long-distance parenting time is the same as local parenting time — to maintain contact between the children and both parents — and both parents are encouraged to be as flexible as possible. This division is drafted on the assumption that Parent 1 is the parent residing farther from the child(ren). Where the parties' actual living arrangements do not align with the caption-order designation of Parent 1 and Parent 2 set forth in division (A), the decree, agreed judgment entry, or Shared Parenting Plan shall expressly state which party is entitled to the Parent 1 provisions of this division.

(1) Extended Holiday Periods — Parent 1 shall have: Thanksgiving, from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday to 6:00 p.m. Sunday; Spring Break, from 6:00 p.m. the last day of school before break to 6:00 p.m. the day before school resumes; and Winter Break, from 3:00 p.m. December 25 to 6:00 p.m. the last day before school resumes after New Year's Day. If the child is not yet school-age, the school-placement parent's district determines Spring and Winter Break dates.

(2) Summer Parenting Time: Parent 1 shall have seven weeks of summer parenting time, exercised at Parent 1's discretion in two blocks of no more than four weeks each, separated by at least two weeks, with notice to Parent 2 by April 15. During the summer, Parent 2 shall have reciprocal weekends where round-trip travel time is less than six hours. A school-age child shall be returned to Parent 2 at least one week before school resumes, except where Parent 2's own vacation is controlled by a mandatory employer shutdown.

(3) Additional Vacation Time: Where round-trip travel time does not exceed six hours, Parent 1 may exercise one three-day-weekend period each year during a holiday otherwise designated for Parent 1, from 4:30 p.m. the day before through 8:30 p.m. of the last day, on thirty days' notice. If Parent 1 travels to the children's area, Parent 1 may exercise parenting time under division (B)(2), except that Mother's/Father's Day and Parent 1's birthday shall be 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and the children's birthday shall be 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (non-school days) or 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (school days), on fourteen days' notice. Unless the decree specifies otherwise, Parent 1 bears the transportation cost for parenting time exercised under this division.

(4) Transportation: The parties shall divide the hours and expense of transportation as evenly as possible.

(D) Parenting Time with Infants (Birth to Eighteen Months). The Court recognizes that parenting time with an infant raises special considerations due to the infant's care needs, and encourages frequent, shorter periods of parenting time at the outset, increasing in frequency and duration as the infant grows and the comfort level of the infant and parent

increase. The parties are again encouraged to review the Ohio Supreme Court's Planning for Parenting Time: Ohio's Guide for Parents Living Apart, located at <https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/Publications/JCS/parentingGuide.pdf>.

- (1) Birth to Twelve Months: Parent 1 shall have parenting time from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Wednesdays each week.
- (2) Twelve to Eighteen Months: Parent 1 shall have parenting time from 6:00 p.m. Saturday to 6:00 p.m. Sunday, and 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, each week.
- (3) After Eighteen Months: The regular parenting time schedule applies.
- (4) Special Situations: If either parent believes this infant schedule is inappropriate to the family's circumstances, either parent may request an oral hearing, scheduled for thirty minutes with fifteen minutes allotted to each parent, to establish a reasonable schedule.

(E) General Rules Applicable to All Parenting Time Orders.

- (1) Notice. Parents have a right to parent their children, and children have a right to expect contact with each parent. Notice of intent not to exercise scheduled parenting time shall be given twenty-four hours in advance, absent an emergency. Neither the children nor the other parent has a duty to wait more than thirty minutes past the scheduled exchange time, absent prior arrangement.
- (2) Overnight Absence. When a parent will be away overnight during that parent's scheduled parenting time, the other parent shall be given the opportunity to exercise overnight parenting time.
- (3) Telephone or Video Contact. Each parent shall have telephone, video, or similar contact with the children of reasonable frequency and duration while the children are in the other parent's care, and each parent shall provide the other with the contact information necessary to facilitate that contact.
- (4) Change of Address. Each parent shall promptly notify the other parent and the Court of any change in residential address, consistent with the Notice of Intent to Relocate required by Rule 12.24 and the Ohio Revised Code.
- (5) Access to Records and Activities. Both parents shall have full access to the children's medical, dental, optometric, psychiatric, psychological, and school records, and the right to consult with any treating provider and to participate in parent-teacher conferences, school programs, extracurricular activities, and other events to which parents are invited, regardless of which parent is designated residential parent or residential parent for school purposes. This is a presumption

of the Court and applies unless a specific, contrary finding is made in the decree or order. The parent who first receives a report card, grade report, or similar record shall provide a copy to the other parent within three days of receipt. Both parents shall promptly notify the other of any illness or health concern requiring medical attention. Both parents shall access school information through the school district's parent portal.

(6) Transportation and Supervision While Traveling. No parent shall permit a child to be transported in a motor vehicle during an exchange or period of parenting time except by a sober adult driver who holds a valid operator's license, is covered by valid automobile insurance, and provides an age- and weight-appropriate child restraint or car seat for the child that is properly installed and in good working order.

(7) Clothing. The child's own clothing shall freely travel with the child between the parents' households as part of each exchange; neither parent shall withhold the child's clothing from the other parent, and each parent shall send weather- and activity-appropriate clothing sufficient for the anticipated period of parenting time.

(8) Supervision During a Parent's Scheduled Time. A parent exercising scheduled parenting time is expected to personally supervise the child or arrange appropriate care, and shall not leave the child in the care of a third-party, non-family caregiver for an extended period of time during that parent's designated parenting time. If the parent scheduled to have the child is unable, for any reason, to personally supervise the child, that parent shall, in order of priority: first, attempt to arrange care with a suitable family member; second, if no suitable family member is available, offer the other parent the opportunity to care for the child during that time; and third, only if the other parent is unavailable or unable to do so, arrange care with a suitable third-party, non-parent caregiver. Nothing in this division limits ordinary, reasonable use of childcare, babysitting, or similar short-term care in the course of a parent's usual routine.

(9) Extended Family. The Court encourages and each parent shall support the children's continued contact with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, adult siblings, and other extended family during that parent's parenting time.

(10) Designated Adult for Exchanges. Where a parent is unable to personally transport the child for an exchange, that parent may designate another mature adult — such as the parent's spouse, a grandparent, or an adult sibling of either party — to pick up or return the child. Any adult so designated must be sober, hold a valid operator's license, be covered by valid automobile insurance, operate

a safe motor vehicle, and provide an age- and weight-appropriate, properly installed, working child restraint or car seat for the child.

(11) Cancellation. A parent seeking to cancel scheduled parenting time shall give twenty-four hours' notice where possible; time canceled by the non-residential parent is forfeited absent agreement.

(12) Illness. If a child is too ill to travel, the parent with the child shall give twenty-four hours' notice where possible; if more than one day of a parenting time period is missed due to non-emergency illness, the missed time shall be made up as soon as practicable.

(13) Mail and Communication Confidentiality. Written and electronic communication between a parent and a child is confidential between them. Neither parent shall open, read, monitor, or restrict mail, email, or other written communication sent to or from the child by the other parent without the child's consent, except as necessary to protect the child's safety.

(14) No Alienation. Neither parent shall make disparaging remarks about the other parent, or about that parent's family, in the presence of or within the hearing of the child, and neither parent shall attempt to alienate the child's affection for the other parent. Each parent shall encourage the child's love, respect, and relationship with the other parent and shall not use the child as a messenger regarding disputes between the parents.

(15) Religious Upbringing. This order does not restrict either parent's right to expose the child to that parent's religious beliefs and practices. A provision governing the child's religious affiliation or upbringing may be included only by written agreement of the parents incorporated into the Court's order, or upon the Court's finding that a conflict between the parents' religious beliefs or practices is affecting the child's general welfare.

(16) One-Hundred-Mile / Four-Hour Provision. Where the parties come to reside such that the applicable schedule (local or long-distance) no longer reflects the distance between them, either party may petition the Court to modify the parenting time schedule accordingly.

(17) Relocation. A residential parent who intends to move to a residence other than the residence specified in the parenting time order or decree shall file a Notice of Intent to Relocate with the Court, consistent with R.C. 3109.051(G) and Rule 12.24. Upon the filing of the notice, the Court, on its own motion or the motion of the nonresidential parent, may schedule a hearing with notice to both parents to determine whether it is in the best interest of the child to revise the parenting time schedule. The filing of the notice

does not by itself modify this order. A restriction on the geographic area within which a parent may reside with the child may be imposed only by written agreement of the parties incorporated into the Court's order, or upon the Court's finding in a particular case that the restriction is in the best interest of the child.

(F) Willful non-compliance with this Rule or with an order incorporating it may result in a finding of contempt, consistent with R.C. 3109.051, and may result in an award of the moving party's attorney's fees and costs, in addition to any other remedy available to the Court.

SECTION 13. REAL ESTATE MATTERS

RULE 13.01. COMMENCEMENT OF ACTION; PRELIMINARY JUDICIAL REPORT.

In every action filed in any division of this Court which demands a judicial sale of real estate, the party requesting the sale shall, not later than fourteen days after filing the Complaint or other pleading requesting the sale, file either a preliminary judicial report or a commitment for an owner's fee policy of title insurance, as required by R.C. 2329.191. The preliminary judicial report or title insurance commitment shall include a legal description of the subject property, shall indicate that the Meigs County Engineer's Office (which includes the County Tax Map Department) has approved the legal description as sufficient for conveyance purposes, and shall state the report's effective date.

RULE 13.02. PROMISSORY NOTE AND MORTGAGE.

(A) A copy of the promissory note that is the subject of a foreclosure action shall be filed with the Complaint as required by Civ.R. 10(D). If a copy of the note is not available at the time of filing, it shall be filed before any motion for summary judgment or default judgment is filed.

(B) A copy of the mortgage securing the promissory note shall be attached to the Complaint as required by Civ.R. 10(D). If the plaintiff is not the mortgagee named in the mortgage, the plaintiff shall file a copy of each assignment of the mortgage with the Complaint, whether or not the assignment has been recorded. Any unrecorded assignment shall be recorded with the County Recorder before any motion for summary judgment or default judgment is filed.

RULE 13.03. DECREE OF FORECLOSURE.

(A) Every decree of foreclosure filed in this Court shall contain: the date and method of service on every defendant, in grid format, and the final judicial report; except in tax foreclosure cases, priority-of-liens language; except in tax foreclosure cases, a signature

line for each counsel of record and each party who filed an answer (signature authority may be obtained by facsimile or telephone); in tax foreclosure cases, a certification by the Prosecuting Attorney that the proposed judgment entry was submitted by mail, facsimile, or email to each counsel of record and each answering party, together with a statement that the Court may approve and file the entry unless written objections are filed within fourteen days of submission; and a full legal description of the real estate, including the parcel number.

(B) If a homeowner's personal liability has been discharged in bankruptcy, the decree shall explicitly so state, and the case caption shall contain the phrase "Judgment in Rem."

(C) Every decree of foreclosure shall be accompanied by: a military affidavit as to each party who signed the mortgage note, or, in a tax foreclosure case, as to the property owner of record; except in tax foreclosure cases, an affidavit as to the remaining balance on the mortgage; and, where the foreclosure is based on default of a mortgage note no longer held by the original mortgagee, an assignment of the mortgage to the current mortgagee.

RULE 13.04. STAY OF PROCEEDINGS.

(A) An order to sell real estate upon foreclosure may be withdrawn only by an entry signed by the Judge. Neither the Clerk of Courts nor the Sheriff is authorized to withdraw property from sale without such an entry, except upon receipt of a notice of stay from a United States Bankruptcy Court.

(B) If a notice of bankruptcy stay is received, the party granted the foreclosure shall present a proposed entry staying the case to the Court within seven business days of the filing of the notice of stay with the Clerk of Courts.

RULE 13.05. FINAL JUDICIAL REPORT.

Before submitting to the Court any order or judgment that orders the sale of real estate, a party who has filed a preliminary judicial report in the action shall file a final judicial report as required by R.C. 2329.191. Proposed orders and entries requiring the Judge's signature shall be submitted directly to the Judge consistent with Rule 8.04 (Electronic Processing); if a file-stamped copy is desired, the submitting party shall provide extra copies together with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope.

RULE 13.06. NOTICE OF SALE.

In every action in which a judicial sale of real estate is ordered, counsel for the plaintiff, or such other party requesting the sale, shall promptly mail notice of the time, date, and location of the Sheriff's sale to the record owner(s) of the property and to all other

interested parties not in default for failure to appear, or their counsel of record, at their respective last known addresses. The record owner(s) shall be noticed by mail in all cases, whether or not in default for failure to appear, except where the owner was served with summons solely by publication. No other party in default of answer need be served with notice of sale except by publication as provided by R.C. 2329.26 and 2329.27. Failure to provide timely notice to interested parties is grounds for denying confirmation of the sale.

RULE 13.07. CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE OF NOTICE OF SALE.

Not less than fourteen days before the scheduled sale date, counsel for the party requesting the sale shall file with the Clerk of Courts a certificate of service of the notice of sale, specifying the date and manner of service and the names and addresses of all interested parties who received notice. Failure to timely file this certificate is grounds for denial of confirmation of the sale.

RULE 13.08. WITHDRAWAL OF SALE.

If a sale is withdrawn, or the case is dismissed, additional fees may be required.

RULE 13.09. CONFIRMATION OF SALE.

(A) Upon filing the return of an Order of Sale or Writ of Execution, the Sheriff shall provide a copy of the return to the Judge to whom the case is assigned.

(B) Within fourteen calendar days after the Sheriff's return indicates that property has been sold, counsel for the party requesting the sale shall submit to the Court a proposed order confirming the sale. Before submission, the proposed Confirmation Entry must be circulated by the preparer and shall bear the signed approval of all attorneys of record and the approval of the Meigs County Clerk of Courts, Auditor, Treasurer, Recorder, and Sheriff, each of whom shall review and approve the costs owed to their respective office. An accurate property description shall be attached to every Confirmation Entry before the Court approves it. The Confirmation Entry shall also direct counsel for the party requesting the sale to prepare and deliver to the Sheriff, within seven calendar days after the Confirmation Entry is filed, a deed conveying title to the purchaser. Counsel who fails to timely file the proposed Confirmation Entry with the required approvals may be cited for contempt.

(C) If an amended Confirmation Entry becomes necessary for any reason, the circulation and approval procedure set forth in division (B) — including the signed approvals of all attorneys of record and of the Clerk of Courts, Auditor, Treasurer, Recorder, and Sheriff — shall be repeated for the amended entry before it is presented to the Court.

(D) Within thirty days after the Sheriff's return, the Court shall, consistent with R.C. 2329.31, either approve the order confirming the sale or notify submitting counsel of the changes required before the proposed order may be approved for filing; a revised order incorporating any required changes shall be returned to the Court within seven calendar days.

RULE 13.10. COSTS PRIOR TO CONFIRMATION.

Costs must be paid in full before confirmation of sale. No sale shall be confirmed, nor dismissal entered, until the Clerk has received full payment of all costs, including appraisal fees, publication costs, the costs (including examination fees and premiums) of both the preliminary and final judicial reports, and the costs set aside for the offices listed in Rule 13.09(B).

RULE 13.11. JUDGMENT ENTRY FOR DISTRIBUTION.

(A) The Judgment Entry for Distribution shall contain a legal description of the real estate, including the parcel number, together with the following, set forth in bold print: the amount for which the property sold at Sheriff's sale; the amount of Court costs; the total of (i) taxes and assessments whose lien attaches before confirmation but that are not yet determined, assessed, and levied for the year in which confirmation occurs, apportioned pro rata to the part of the year preceding confirmation, together with any penalties and interest, and (ii) all other taxes, assessments, penalties, and interest whose lien attached in a prior tax year but that remain unpaid as of confirmation; except in tax foreclosure cases, the amount of judgment awarded to the moving party in the decree of foreclosure; except in tax foreclosure cases, the amounts awarded to other lienholders in order of priority; and, except in tax foreclosure cases, the amount awarded to the former property owner(s)/judgment debtor(s), or, if an owner or judgment debtor is in default or cannot be located, a statement directing the Clerk to administer the undistributed balance under R.C. 2329.44.

(B) Where a Judgment Entry directs that excess funds be held until further order of the Court, the Clerk shall hold those funds for thirty days. If no further order issues within that period, the Clerk shall administer the undistributed balance under R.C. 2329.44.

(C) A Judgment Entry for Distribution that does not distribute the full proceeds of the sale shall not be presented to the Court until a hearing on the final distribution has been obtained from the Assignment Commissioner, and the entry shall include language setting that hearing.

(D) Except in tax foreclosure cases, every Judgment Entry for Distribution shall be accompanied by a file-stamped affidavit, signed by counsel of record or a financial officer of the moving party, itemizing on individual lines: the outstanding principal

balance as set forth in the foreclosure documents; interest due and owing; and any amounts advanced for protection of the property, such as taxes, insurance, or property inspection.

RULE 13.12. STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED TAXES DUE.

Every Judgment Entry for Distribution shall be accompanied by a written statement, signed by the Treasurer, Auditor, Clerk of Courts, Recorder, Prosecuting Attorney, and Sheriff of Meigs County, including the Treasurer's estimate of taxes due under R.C. 323.47(B)(1). A written request for the statement of estimated taxes due shall be submitted to the Treasurer on a form the Treasurer approves.

RULE 13.13. SIGNATURES ON DISTRIBUTION ENTRIES.

Every Judgment Entry for Distribution shall contain a signature line for all counsel of record and for the office holders listed in Rule 13.09(B); signatures may be provided by facsimile or attached email authority. In tax foreclosure cases, the Prosecuting Attorney shall certify that the proposed entry was submitted by mail, email, or facsimile to each counsel of record and each answering party, with a statement that the Court may approve and file the entry unless written objections are filed within fourteen days of submission. All entries requiring the Judge's signature shall be sent directly to the Judge's chambers, not to the Clerk of Courts; a party desiring a file-stamped copy shall submit extra copies together with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope.

RULE 13.14. WAIVER OF CONFIRMATION PERIOD.

A purchaser may waive all or part of the thirty-day confirmation period by signing the Confirmation Entry, but no Confirmation Entry not approved by the purchaser shall be filed until that period has expired.

RULE 13.15. DISTRIBUTION OF EXCESS FUNDS.

A defendant claiming an interest in excess funds from a judicial sale must file a motion requesting supplemental distribution, stating the reasons the movant is entitled to the claimed funds. The movant may schedule a hearing on the motion and shall serve the plaintiff and all other parties with a copy of the motion and notice of hearing.

RULE 13.16. WRIT OF POSSESSION.

If a writ of possession is required following confirmation of sale, the party granted the judgment of foreclosure shall file a praecipe for the writ with the Clerk of Courts.

RULE 13.17. RECEIVERS IN FORECLOSURE ACTIONS.

(A) A receiver appointed in a foreclosure case to collect the rents, issues, and profits of the mortgaged premises pending suit shall be a disinterested person as between the parties, unless the Court finds it just and prudent to permit one of the parties to act.

(B) Before such an appointment is made, it must appear by affidavit or other evidence that the conditions of the mortgage have not been performed, and further that the property is probably insufficient to discharge the mortgage, and that the mortgagor is insolvent or a non-resident of the county; or that the property is in danger of being lost or its value materially impaired; or that the mortgage embraces the rents and profits as security; or that the right to possession on default is in the mortgagee.

(C) When appointed, the receiver shall take charge of the property pending litigation, preserve it from waste or destruction, receive the rents and profits, and dispose of them under the Court's direction.

(D) A receiver appointed to take charge of real estate and collect rents in a foreclosure proceeding shall, within sixty days of appointment, file with the Clerk a report of receipts and disbursements, and shall file a like report every three months thereafter unless the Court orders otherwise.

(E) A receiver shall not diminish the fund in the receiver's hands by expenditure for repairs or otherwise without first procuring a Court order for that purpose, except for necessary outlays under the amount set by the current [fee schedule](#), which may be made without prior order but remain subject to the Court's final approval.

(F) Any unpaid back or current taxes or assessments due on the property shall be satisfied before distribution by the receiver.

(G) The receiver shall give bond immediately upon appointment, in the amount the Court requires.

(H) Notice of the receiver's appointment shall be given immediately to all tenants of the property subject to the foreclosure suit.

(I) Vacancies in receiverships shall be brought to the Court's attention by the receiver's counsel as soon as they occur.

(J) No compensation shall be allowed to the receiver or receiver's counsel, or both, except upon written application filed in the case, stating amounts previously received, the amount currently requested, and the services rendered.

(K) Every receiver shall file a final report within thirty days after the receiver's trust and duties are completed and performed.

(L) Exceptions to a receiver's accounts, or to any allowance made to the receiver, must be filed within twenty days after the account is filed or the allowance is made.

RULE 13.18. ATTORNEY FEES — PARTITION ACTIONS.

The attorney (or attorneys collectively) for a plaintiff or plaintiffs in an action in this Court for the partition of real estate under R.C. 5307.01 to 5307.25, who has rendered complete services in connection with the partition litigation, shall be allowed and receive, as full compensation for all ordinary services, a reasonable fee under R.C. 5307.25. Except upon application to and order of the Court, said fee shall not exceed a sum computed at: six percent of the first \$5,000; five percent of the next \$5,000; and three percent of the balance, subject to a minimum fee of \$300.

SECTION 14. DISCOVERY AND EXPERTS

RULE 14.01. SCOPE; FILING OF DISCOVERY.

(A) This Section applies to discovery in civil and criminal matters generally. Discovery in domestic relations matters is governed by Section 12 (Domestic Relations Matters); where Section 12 addresses a discovery topic differently than this Section, Section 12 controls in domestic relations matters.

(B) Requests for and responses to discovery need not be filed with the Court. A Notice of Filing of the request or response is sufficient to advise the Court that discovery has been served, consistent with Civ.R. 5.

(C) Only the relevant portion(s) of any discovery material used to support a motion to dismiss, for judgment on the pleadings, or for summary judgment, or a response to any such motion, shall be filed with the Court.

RULE 14.02. SERVICE OF DISCOVERY REQUESTS AND RESPONSES.

In addition to service otherwise required by the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, interrogatories, requests for production, and requests for admission shall be served with an electronic copy provided to the receiving party on a shareable medium and in an editable format, by email or other means agreed to by the parties. A party unable to provide an electronic copy may seek leave of Court to be relieved of this requirement.

RULE 14.03. CONSULTATION AMONG COUNSEL REQUIRED.

It is the policy of this Court to minimize resort to judicial intervention in the discovery process. No objection, interrogatory, motion, application, or other request related to discovery under Civ.R. 26 through 37 shall be filed with the Court unless counsel, or the

self-represented party, have first made a reasonable, good-faith effort to resolve the dispute without Court involvement. A discovery motion should be filed only where informal, out-of-court efforts to resolve the dispute have proven ineffective.

RULE 14.04. MOTION TO COMPEL DISCOVERY.

(A) A motion to compel discovery under Civ.R. 37(A) shall be accompanied by a supporting memorandum stating the movant's legal basis for the requested order, and by an affidavit of counsel, or of the self-represented party, setting forth the specific extrajudicial efforts made to resolve the dispute consistent with Rule 14.03. The memorandum should be concise, addressing only the relevant issues, and generally should not exceed ten pages.

(B) Absent extraordinary circumstances, the last date for any party to seek the Court's involvement in the discovery process by motion seeking a ruling, order, sanctions, or other Court action is thirty days after the discovery cutoff date established in the case scheduling order.

(C) Voluntary, mutually agreed-upon discovery for the purpose of perpetuating trial testimony, by video recording or otherwise, may continue after the discovery cutoff date, provided it does not delay any other event on the case schedule.

RULE 14.05. EXPERTS.

(A) Parties shall comply with Civ.R. 26(B)(7) and Crim.R.16(K). The Court may exclude the testimony of an expert witness at trial for failure to comply with Civ.R. 26(B)(7) or Crim.R.16(K).

(B) Upon motion, the Court may order that the cost of a medical examination, and the expenses incurred in connection with it, be paid by the party requesting the examination.

RULE 14.06. DISCOVERY PLAN; CIV.R. 26(F) CONFERENCE REPORT.

The parties shall complete and file a Conference Report and Proposed Discovery Plan as required by Civ.R. 26(F) on or before the deadline stated in the case scheduling order.

SECTION 15. JURY ADMINISTRATION

RULE 15.01. SCOPE AND PURPOSE.

Consistent with Sup.R. 3.02, this Section constitutes the Court's Jury Management Plan. It governs the source list, random selection, eligibility, exemption, notification, orientation, and compensation of jurors, and courtroom procedures applicable to jurors,

for both petit (trial) juries and the grand jury. This Section applies to the General Division; the Domestic Relations Division does not convene juries.

RULE 15.02. JURY SOURCE LIST.

(A) The jury source list for this Court shall be obtained from the Board of Elections' list of registered voters.

(B) The jury source list shall be as representative of the adult population of Meigs County as is feasible. The Court shall annually review the jury source list for its representativeness and inclusiveness of the adult population of the County.

(C) Should the Court determine that improvement is needed in the representativeness or inclusiveness of the jury source list, the Court shall take appropriate corrective action.

RULE 15.03. RANDOM SELECTION PROCEDURES.

(A) The Court shall use electronic means to randomly assemble the annual jurors' list by identifying the names of prospective jurors from the master list of all registered voters in the County, consistent with R.C. 2313.06, using a method that provides each eligible and available citizen an equal probability of selection.

(B) The Jury Commissioners appointed by the Court under R.C. 2313.01 shall, on or before the first day of August of each year, select the number of electors residing in the County that the Court orders, whose names shall be placed in the jury wheel for the succeeding court year.

(C) The Jury Commissioners, Sheriff, or Clerk of Courts shall serve a summons by mail, or make personal service of summons if ordered by the Court, in the manner provided by law, on persons whose names have been randomly selected from the wheel.

RULE 15.04. ELIGIBILITY FOR JURY SERVICE.

All persons are eligible for jury service except those who:

Are less than eighteen years of age, except a person age seventeen who is certified by the Board of Elections as eligible to vote;

Are not citizens of the United States and are not residents of Meigs County;

Are not able to communicate in the English language;

Have been convicted of a felony and have not had their civil rights restored; or

Are subject to a disability that the Court cannot reasonably accommodate.

RULE 15.05. TERM OF AND AVAILABILITY FOR JURY SERVICE.

(A) A person called for jury service shall be available for a term of service of two days or the completion of one trial, whichever is longer.

(B) Jurors will be provided a local telephone number to call to hear a recorded message informing them of their obligation for jury service for a particular trial. This information will also be posted on the Court's website.

(C) A person shall not be required to be available for jury service for longer than three weeks, except when necessary due to the length of a single, particular trial.

RULE 15.06. EXEMPTION, EXCUSE, AND DEFERRAL.

(A) Except as provided by R.C. 2313.14 or 2313.15, the Court shall not excuse a person liable to serve as a juror who is drawn and notified, unless it is shown to the satisfaction of the Judge, by the juror or by another person acquainted with the facts, that one or more of the following applies:

- (1) The interests of the public will be materially injured by the juror's attendance;
- (2) The juror's spouse or a near relative of the juror has recently died or is dangerously ill;
- (3) The juror is a cloistered member of a religious organization;
- (4) The prospective juror has a mental or physical condition that causes the prospective juror to be incapable of performing jury service, verified by documentation from a licensed physician showing that the condition renders the prospective juror unfit for jury service for a period of up to twenty-four months;
- (5) Jury service would otherwise cause undue or extreme physical or financial hardship to the prospective juror or a person under that juror's care or supervision, as determined by the Judge or an appropriate Court employee to whom the Judge has delegated that determination; or
- (6) The juror is over seventy-five years of age and requests to be excused.

(B) A person liable to serve who is excused under this Rule may be excused only by the Judge presiding in the case or the Judge's representative. The Jury Commissioners of this Court are designated by journal entry as representatives of the Judge for this purpose, and any approved excuse under this division shall be duly recorded by the Jury Commissioners.

(C) Postponement of jury service for a reasonably short period may be permitted by the Judge presiding in the case, or the Judge's representative, under R.C. 2313.15.

(D) A request for excuse or postponement shall be in writing unless the Judge otherwise permits. Except for a person excused based on being over the age of seventy-five, an excuse shall not extend past one year.

RULE 15.07. NOTIFICATION AND SUMMONING PROCEDURES.

(A) Administration of the jury system is vested in the Chief Deputy Jury Commissioner, under the Judge's supervision.

(B) A summons calling a person to jury service may be combined in a single document, shall be phrased so as to be readily understood by a person unfamiliar with the legal and jury systems, and shall be mailed by ordinary first-class mail prior to the date of appearance. The summons shall clearly explain when the recipient must respond and the consequences of a failure to respond.

(C) The Court shall establish policies and procedures for monitoring failures to respond to a summons and for enforcing a summons to report for jury service. Sanctions may be imposed as warranted.

RULE 15.08. MONITORING THE JURY SYSTEM.

(A) The Court will collect and analyze information regarding the performance of the jury system annually to evaluate: the representativeness and inclusiveness of the jury source list; the effectiveness of summoning and qualification procedures; the responsiveness of individual citizens to jury duty summonses; the efficient use of jurors; and the cost-effectiveness of the jury management system.

(B) The Jury Commissioners are under the general supervision of the Court Administrator, who may require the Jury Commissioners to maintain records necessary to assist in this assessment.

RULE 15.09. JUROR USE.

The Court shall employ the services of prospective jurors to achieve optimum use with a minimum of inconvenience to jurors, and may use a juror answering system, texting, emailing, messaging, or internet website notification to coordinate the services of prospective jurors.

RULE 15.10. JURY FACILITIES.

(A) The Court shall provide an adequate and suitable environment for jurors and shall comply with all applicable Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

(B) Facilities shall be easily identified and appropriately designed to accommodate the daily flow of prospective jurors to the courthouse.

(C) The jury deliberation room shall include space, furnishings, and facilities conducive to reaching a fair verdict, and the safety and security of the deliberation room shall be ensured.

(D) To the extent feasible, juror facilities will be arranged to minimize contact of jurors with parties, counsel, and the public.

(E) Jurors shall comply with all building regulations, including security procedures and the no-smoking policy applicable to all County-owned property.

RULE 15.11. JUROR COMPENSATION.

Persons called for jury service shall receive a fee for their service consistent with the [fee schedule](#) then in effect and to the extent authorized by statute. Fees shall be paid promptly following the juror's time of service.

RULE 15.12. JUROR ORIENTATION AND INSTRUCTION.

(A) The Court shall provide juror orientation designed to increase prospective jurors' understanding of the judicial system, which may be presented using written, oral, or audiovisual materials, or a combination of these.

(B) The trial Judge or Magistrate may: give preliminary instructions to all prospective jurors; give instructions directly following empanelment of the jury explaining the jury's role, trial procedures, the nature of evidence and its evaluation, and the issues to be addressed and relevant basic legal principles; instruct the jury on the law before deliberations begin and on the procedures to be followed during deliberations and for reporting the results of deliberations; and make the Court's instructions available in the jury room during deliberations in a form readily understandable to persons unfamiliar with the legal system.

(C) Before dismissing the jury at the conclusion of a case, the Judge or Magistrate shall advise the jurors of: the release of jurors from their duty of confidentiality; their rights regarding inquiries from counsel or the press; whether they are discharged from service or where they must report; and the Court's appreciation for their service, without approving or disapproving of the result of deliberations.

(D) All communications between the Judge and members of the jury panel, from the time of reporting to the courtroom for voir dire until discharge, shall be in writing or on the record in open court. Counsel for each party shall be informed immediately of any such communication and given an opportunity to be heard.

RULE 15.13. JURY INSTRUCTIONS, INTERROGATORIES, TRIAL BRIEFS, AND VIDEOTAPED DEPOSITIONS.

(A) Proposed jury instructions and jury interrogatories shall be filed with the Court not less than seven days before the start of trial. Proposed instructions based on Ohio Jury Instructions may be listed by reference only. Any special instruction shall include supporting legal authority. All proposed instructions shall also be provided to the Court as an electronic document, in Microsoft Word or a searchable Adobe Acrobat PDF format, with Word preferred.

(B) A videotaped deposition that a party intends to use at trial shall be filed with the Court not less than one week before trial. If the deposition contains objections the parties cannot resolve, those objections shall be brought to the Court's attention by a motion requesting a ruling, filed with the deposition at least one week before trial and accompanied by a written transcript of the videotaped deposition. The party seeking to use the deposition is responsible for providing an edited version for trial that excludes any portion for which an objection was sustained.

(C) The Court does not require trial briefs in every case. Where the Court requires a trial brief, it shall be filed not less than five business days before trial.

RULE 15.14. VOIR DIRE.

(A) Voir dire examination shall be limited to matters relevant to determining whether to remove a juror for cause and to determining the juror's fairness and impartiality.

(B) To reduce the time required for voir dire, basic background information regarding panel members may be made available to counsel for each party before trial.

(C) The trial Judge may conduct a preliminary voir dire examination; counsel shall then be permitted to question panel members for a reasonable period.

(D) The trial Judge will ensure that the privacy of prospective jurors is reasonably protected and that questioning is consistent with the purpose of the voir dire process.

(E) In all criminal proceedings, voir dire shall be held on the record. In all civil proceedings, voir dire shall be conducted on the record unless the parties unanimously waive a record of voir dire.

(F) Voir dire questions should be asked collectively of the entire panel whenever possible.

RULE 15.15. REMOVAL FROM THE JURY PANEL FOR CAUSE.

If the Judge determines that a prospective juror is unable or unwilling to judge the particular case fairly and impartially, that individual shall be excused.

RULE 15.16. JURY DELIBERATIONS.

(A) Jury deliberations shall take place under conditions and procedures designed to ensure impartiality and to enhance rational decision-making, consistent with Ohio law.

(B) A jury will not be required to deliberate after a reasonable hour unless the trial Judge determines that evening, weekend, or holiday deliberations would not impose an undue hardship on the jurors and are required in the interest of justice.

(C) Training will be provided, if necessary, to personnel who escort and assist jurors during deliberation.

RULE 15.17. SEQUESTRATION OF JURORS.

(A) A jury will be sequestered only for good cause, including insulating its members from improper information or influence.

(B) A jury will be sequestered after a capital case is submitted to the jury, consistent with Ohio law.

(C) The trial Judge has discretion to sequester a jury on motion of counsel or on the Judge's own initiative, and is responsible for overseeing the conditions of sequestration, which shall be designed to achieve the purpose of sequestration while minimizing the inconvenience and discomfort of sequestered jurors.

(D) Training will be provided, as needed, to personnel who escort and assist jurors during sequestration.

RULE 15.18. CELL PHONE, TEXTING, AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY JURORS.

(A) The use of cell phones, texting, instant messaging, and communication over electronic social media is prohibited for all jurors during trial.

(B) Sitting jurors are strongly admonished not to discuss or comment on the case being tried before them, by any means including verbal communication, electronic texting, instant messaging, or electronic social media, until after a verdict has been rendered.

(C) Failure to comply with this Rule may subject a juror to contempt proceedings and other financial sanctions, including the cost associated with a mistrial due to juror misconduct.

RULE 15.19. GRAND JURY — COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION.

(A) The grand jury shall consist of nine members, selected and summoned in the same manner as petit jurors under this Section, consistent with R.C. 2939.02.

(B) Before the grand jury is sworn, the Court shall examine the prospective grand jurors under oath regarding their qualifications, consistent with R.C. 2939.03.

(C) The Court shall appoint one member of the grand jury as foreperson and one as deputy foreperson, consistent with R.C. 2939.05. The deputy foreperson shall act in the foreperson's absence or disability.

(D) The grand jury shall be sworn by the Court, consistent with R.C. 2939.04.

RULE 15.20. GRAND JURY — SECRECY AND RECORDS.

(A) Grand jury proceedings, and the deliberations and vote of any grand juror, are secret, consistent with Crim.R. 6(E) and R.C. 2939.24, except as those authorities otherwise permit disclosure.

(B) No grand juror, officer of the Court, interpreter, or stenographer present during grand jury proceedings shall disclose the nature or substance of grand jury deliberations, or the vote of any grand juror, except as required by law or ordered by the Court.

(C) The foreperson or deputy foreperson shall keep, or cause to be kept, a record of the concurrence of the required number of grand jurors in every indictment, consistent with R.C. 2939.20, which record shall not be made public except by order of the Court.

RULE 15.21. GRAND JURY — QUORUM, PROCEEDINGS, AND RETURN OF INDICTMENTS.

(A) Seven or more grand jurors constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, consistent with R.C. 2939.06.

(B) No indictment shall be found without the concurrence of seven or more grand jurors, consistent with R.C. 2939.20.

(C) The grand jury shall inquire into every offense triable within the County of which any grand juror has knowledge, or which is brought to its attention by the Prosecuting Attorney or the Court, consistent with R.C. 2939.08 and 2939.09.

(D) An indictment returned by the grand jury shall be endorsed by the foreperson or deputy foreperson, consistent with R.C. 2939.21, and presented to the Court in open court or as the Court otherwise directs.

RULE 15.22. GRAND JURY — TERM AND RECONVENING.

(A) The grand jury shall convene in regular session once per month, on a date the Court sets, consistent with R.C. 2939.01. The Court may also convene a special session of the grand jury at any time there is an urgent need, in addition to the regular monthly session.

(B) The Court may reconvene a grand jury, or discharge a grand jury and impanel a new one, as the business of the Court requires.

(C) Grand jurors are subject to the same eligibility, exemption, and compensation provisions applicable to petit jurors under this Section, except as otherwise required by law.

SECTION 16. MEDIATION

RULE 16.01. GENERAL INFORMATION.

(A) This Section incorporates by reference R.C. Chapter 2710 (the Uniform Mediation Act) and Rule 6 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio.

(B) Mediation is any process in which a neutral third party helps the parties communicate and negotiate with each other to reach a voluntary agreement regarding their dispute. Statements made by a mediator shall not be construed as legal advice.

(C) Program Summary. The Court does not employ a mediator. The Court refers civil and domestic relations cases to qualified mediators approved by the Court under Rule 16.03, who serve as independent contractors. Mediators are compensated by the parties, where the parties are able to pay for those services, or otherwise through the Court's special projects fund, as provided in Rule 16.10.

(D) Mediation communications are oral or written statements, whether verbal or nonverbal. A statement is a mediation communication if made during a mediation conference, or before or after the conference if made for a purpose connected with the mediation, including considering, conducting, participating in, initiating, continuing, or reconvening a mediation.

RULE 16.02. PRIVILEGE AND CONFIDENTIALITY.

(A) Mediation communications are privileged as described in R.C. Chapter 2710. If the parties believe confidentiality beyond the scope of privilege is necessary, they may sign a

written confidentiality agreement before the mediation. Except where otherwise required by law, the mediator shall keep all mediation communications confidential unless all mediation participants and the mediator have consented to disclosure. All disclosures by the mediator shall comply with R.C. 3109.052 and R.C. 2710.03 through 2710.05.

(B) A mediator shall not be called as a witness, and shall not otherwise be compelled to testify, in any proceeding relating to the dispute that was the subject of the mediation. Any discussion between the mediator and a party, including in a private caucus, is protected and is not subject to discovery by any means.

(C) Exceptions to the mediation privilege are governed by R.C. 2710.05, which is incorporated by reference. This Rule does not enlarge or restrict those exceptions.

RULE 16.03. MEDIATOR QUALIFICATIONS, APPROVAL, AND SELECTION.

(A) A mediator shall meet the minimum qualifications established by the Supreme Court of Ohio, and shall follow the Core Values of Mediation approved by the Supreme Court Commission on Dispute Resolution. A mediator of a domestic relations case shall comply with the Model Standards of Practice for Family and Divorce Mediation. The Court may establish additional minimum qualifications not inconsistent with those established by the Supreme Court of Ohio.

(B) Because the Court does not employ a mediator, an applicant seeking to be added to the Court's list of approved mediators shall also demonstrate all of the following:

- (1) At least five years of experience in the practice of law, including some trial or judicial experience, and current good standing with the Supreme Court of Ohio;
 - (2) Completion of specialized mediation training of not less than twenty hours, in courses designed for mediators in civil litigation, or, for approval to mediate domestic relations cases, training consistent with the Model Standards of Practice for Family and Divorce Mediation;
 - (3) Participation in at least three mediations as a mediator or as counsel for a party, or observation of at least two mediations conducted by a Court-approved mediator;
 - (4) Significant, demonstrated experience in the preparation, presentation, and resolution of disputes on behalf of others through litigation, negotiation, or mediation;
 - (5) Current malpractice insurance covering the applicant's services as a mediator;
- and

(6) Completion of a mediator qualification questionnaire in the form the Court prescribes.

(C) Once approved, a mediator shall maintain good standing with the Supreme Court of Ohio and shall complete not less than three hours annually of continuing legal education devoted to mediation-related training, in addition to any other continuing legal education otherwise required of the mediator.

(D) A person seeking to be added to the Court's list of approved mediators shall submit an application to the Court demonstrating compliance with the qualifications set forth in divisions (A) and (B), together with any supporting documentation the Court requires. The Court shall maintain the list of approved mediators and may remove a mediator from the list for good cause.

(E) When a case is referred to mediation, the parties may select a mediator from the Court's approved list by agreement. If the parties cannot agree on a mediator within a reasonable time set by the Court, the Court shall assign a mediator from the approved list.

RULE 16.04. MEDIATION REFERRAL.

Upon the request of any party, or upon its own motion, the Court may, in its discretion, order the parties in a civil or domestic relations case to participate in mediation. A party may request mediation by filing a motion for mediation and serving the motion on all parties. A motion for mediation may be filed at any time after the commencement of an action, including during post-decree proceedings.

RULE 16.05. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SCREENING.

(A) In referring parties to mediation, the Court shall effectively screen and assess the parties regarding problems involving domestic violence convictions or allegations of domestic violence. If the case proceeds to mediation, screening shall continue throughout the mediation process. The parties and counsel shall cooperate with all portions of the domestic violence screening process.

(B) Mediation will not be scheduled in a case where the person who is or may be a victim of domestic violence is self-represented.

(C) All parties and counsel shall advise the assigned mediator of any domestic violence allegations known to them to exist or to have existed in the past, or which become known to them following referral to mediation but before the conclusion of the mediation proceedings. Where there is a need, the mediator shall provide referrals to legal counsel and other support services for all parties, including victims and suspected victims of domestic violence.

(D) When violence or fear of violence is alleged, suspected, or present, mediation may proceed only when all of the following are satisfied:

- (1) A person who is or may be the victim of domestic violence is fully informed about the mediation process, the right to decline participation, and the option to have a support person, in addition to an attorney, present at the mediation session;
- (2) The parties have the capacity to mediate without fear of coercion or control;
- (3) Appropriate procedures are in place to provide for the safety of the person who is or may be the victim of domestic violence and all other persons present at the mediation;
- (4) Procedures are in place for the mediator to terminate mediation if the mediator believes there is a continued threat of domestic violence or coercion between the parties; and
- (5) Procedures are in place for issuing written findings of fact, as required by R.C. 3109.052, to refer certain cases involving domestic violence to mediation.

(E) Mediation shall not be used: as an alternative to the prosecution or adjudication of domestic violence; in determining whether to grant, modify, or terminate a protection order; in determining the terms or conditions of a protection order; or in determining the penalty for violation of a protection order.

RULE 16.06. MEDIATION ATTENDANCE.

(A) The attorney primarily responsible for each party's case shall personally attend the mediation conference and shall be prepared and authorized to discuss all relevant issues, including settlement.

(B) The parties shall also attend, except that where a party is represented by an insurance company, an authorized representative of the insurer with full settlement authority shall attend.

(C) In a medical malpractice case, the attorneys of record, an authorized representative of the insurance company, and the medical practitioner must all personally attend the mediation conference, regardless of whether the practitioner has consented to settlement discussions.

(D) A guardian ad litem for a child involved in a case subject to mediation has the right to be involved in the mediation process and to attend the mediation conference.

(E) A nonparty may participate in the mediation conference if requested by a party. A party wishing to have an additional individual present shall notify the mediator and the

opposing party or counsel before the scheduled date. If the mediator does not wish to proceed with the nonparty participant present, the mediator may cancel the mediation conference.

RULE 16.07. VIDEO PARTICIPATION IN MEDIATION.

The mediator may permit one or more parties, or an authorized representative required to attend under Rule 16.06, to participate in a mediation conference by video conference. Attendance by telephone alone will not be permitted.

RULE 16.08. MEDIATION PROCEDURES.

(A) At least five days before the mediation conference, the parties shall submit directly to the mediator: responses to the Court's case summary form, available on the Court's website; and any other materials a party believes would be beneficial to the mediator.

(B) During the mediation conference, the mediator shall permit each party, through counsel or otherwise, to orally present the dispute; help refine and prioritize the issue(s) in dispute; and hold separate, private caucuses with any party or counsel as needed.

(C) If a settlement agreement is reached, the mediator, or a party at the mediator's request, may prepare a memorandum of settlement listing the terms of the agreement. A dismissal entry shall be filed by counsel no later than thirty days after the mediation conference; counsel shall notify the mediator when additional time is required. If a dismissal entry is not filed within the allotted time, the Court may set a status hearing or dismiss the case with prejudice after reviewing a signed copy of the memorandum of settlement.

(D) At the conclusion of mediation, the mediator shall report in writing to the assigned Judge that the session was held, who attended, and whether an agreement was reached.

(E) A mediator shall make a reasonable inquiry to determine whether there are known facts a reasonable individual would consider likely to affect the mediator's impartiality, and shall disclose those facts to the parties as soon as practicable.

RULE 16.09. CANCELLATION, CONTINUANCE, AND FAILURE TO PARTICIPATE.

(A) Continuances of a mediation conference are counter-productive and are discouraged absent exigent circumstances. A request for continuance shall include the reasons for the request and shall be directed to the mediator, who may grant one continuance; the Court's approval is required for any further continuance.

(B) If a case settles or is dismissed before the scheduled mediation conference, the parties shall promptly notify the mediator and the Court. Failure to give prompt notice may result in the cost of the mediation being assessed as a cost of the action.

(C) If a party, or a required representative of a party, fails without good cause to attend a scheduled mediation conference, or the conference must be cancelled because a required party or representative is not available, the cost of the mediation may be assessed against that party, in addition to any sanction available under Rule 16.11.

(D) Consistent with R.C. 2710.06, the mediator's report to the Court shall be limited to whether the mediation occurred or was terminated, whether a settlement was reached, and attendance. The mediator shall not make any other report, assessment, evaluation, recommendation, finding, or other communication regarding a mediation to the Court.

RULE 16.10. COMPENSATION OF MEDIATORS; EXTRAORDINARY EXPENSES.

(A) A mediator approved under Rule 16.03 serves as an independent contractor. Mediators are compensated by the parties, where the parties are able to pay for those services, consistent with the [fee schedule](#) then in effect, or otherwise through the Court's special projects fund for mediation.

(B) In a case requiring extraordinary mediation expenses, the Court may order a party to deposit an additional amount, consistent with the [fee schedule](#) then in effect, before the mediation is scheduled.

RULE 16.11. SANCTIONS.

For a violation of this Section, upon motion by a party, the mediator, or upon the Court's own motion, a party or the party's attorney may be subject to appropriate action, including but not limited to contempt, dismissal, default judgment, attorney fees, and costs.

SECTION 17. PROTECTION ORDERS

RULE 17.01. JURISDICTION AND DIVISIONAL ASSIGNMENT.

(A) This Court has jurisdiction over all civil and criminal protection orders available under Ohio law, except protection orders concerning an unmarried minor, which are filed in the Juvenile Division.

(B) Petitions for a Domestic Violence Civil Protection Order and petitions for a Dating Violence Civil Protection Order, both under R.C. 3113.31, are heard and determined in

the Domestic Relations Division of this Court, consistent with R.C. 3113.31 and R.C. 2301.03.

(C) Petitions for a Civil Stalking Protection Order and petitions for a Civil Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Order, both under R.C. 2903.214, are heard and determined in the General Division of this Court.

(D) Criminal Temporary Protection Orders, Post-Conviction No Contact Orders, and all other protection orders arising from a criminal proceeding are issued in the General Division of this Court, in the underlying criminal case.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION — DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND DATING VIOLENCE CIVIL PROTECTION ORDERS

RULE 17.02. COMMENCEMENT AND ASSIGNMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR DATING VIOLENCE CPO CASES.

(A) Any person who qualifies as a family or household member under R.C. 3113.31 may file a petition for a Domestic Violence Civil Protection Order on the person's own behalf or on behalf of any other family or household member. Any person who qualifies as a person in a dating relationship under R.C. 3113.31 may file a petition for a Dating Violence Civil Protection Order. All filings shall use the Ohio Supreme Court approved, or a substantially similar, Domestic Violence Civil Protection Order form.

(B) A parenting proceeding affidavit is required if the petitioner is seeking an order allocating parental rights and responsibilities or if the Petitioner is asking for a child to be a protected party. The Court will make a reasonable effort to determine the existence and terms of any protection order or no-contact order previously issued by another court involving the same parties.

(C) Petitions and accompanying documents are public records and will be provided to the respondent. A petitioner who wishes to keep a home address confidential should provide a safe mailing address on the petition. A petitioner participating in the Ohio Secretary of State's address confidentiality program may use the post office box address provided under that program.

(D) The petitioner must provide the current address of the respondent, or a last known address if the current address is unknown, for service of process; the Court will not assist in locating an address for the respondent. The petitioner must also provide a physical description of the respondent; the respondent's ownership or possession of firearms and ammunition and any concealed-carry permit, if known; and one of the following: the respondent's date of birth, driver's license number, vehicle license number, or Social

Security number. This information will be entered into the National Crime Information Center for law enforcement purposes.

(E) A petition for a civil protection order shall be filed as a separate case and shall not be incorporated, merged, or consolidated into any other case, including a divorce or dissolution.

(F) Petitions for civil protection orders may be heard by a Magistrate, consistent with Section 9 (Magistrates) of these Local Rules and Civ.R. 65.1(F).

RULE 17.03. VICTIM ADVOCATE.

Persons considering a Domestic Violence or Dating Violence Civil Protection Order are strongly encouraged to speak with a victim advocate or a local domestic violence or victim services organization before filing. A victim advocate may accompany the petitioner to a hearing to provide support and assistance, but may not be called as a witness in the proceeding or interfere with the hearing process. The Clerk of Courts shall make available contact information for victim advocacy and domestic violence services operating in or serving Meigs County.

RULE 17.04. EX PARTE HEARING AND SERVICE OF PROCESS.

(A) Under R.C. 3113.31(A)(1)(a), the petitioner must prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, that one or more of the following acts were committed against a family or household member or a person with whom the respondent was in a dating relationship: attempting to cause or recklessly causing bodily injury; threatening to use force to cause another to reasonably believe imminent serious physical harm will result, or committing an act that would constitute menacing by stalking or aggravated trespass; committing an act against a child that would constitute an offense under R.C. Chapter 2919 involving a child victim; or committing a sexually oriented offense.

(B) The Court will conduct an ex parte hearing, without the respondent present, on the same day a petition is filed, if requested by the petitioner, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(D)(1). The petitioner's testimony will be taken under oath. If the Court finds the requirements for ex parte relief are met, the Court will issue an ex parte Domestic Violence or Dating Violence Civil Protection Order granting any relief authorized under R.C. 3113.31(E)(1). If ex parte relief is not requested, or is requested but not granted, the petition will be scheduled for a full hearing.

(C) The respondent must be personally served with the petition, any ex parte order, and accompanying documents, consistent with Civ.R. 65.1(C)(2). Service shall be made by the Sheriff of the county where the respondent resides or by a special process server under Civ.R. 4.1(B). If personal service fails, the respondent may additionally be served

by certified mail or other method under Civ.R. 4 through 4.6, consistent with Civ.R. 65.1(C)(2). After the petition has been served, further service on the respondent in the pending case shall be under Civ.R. 5(B). It is the petitioner's responsibility to ensure that service is completed.

RULE 17.05. FULL HEARING; AVAILABLE RELIEF; CONSENT AGREEMENT.

(A) The Court will schedule a full evidentiary hearing under R.C. 3113.31 following the ex parte hearing. Denial of ex parte relief does not preclude the Court from granting a civil protection order after a full hearing. If exclusive possession of the residence or household was granted to the petitioner on an ex parte basis, the full hearing will be scheduled within seven court days; otherwise, the full hearing will be scheduled within ten court days. If ex parte relief was not requested, the full hearing will be scheduled in a timely manner, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(D)(3).

(B) At the full hearing, the petitioner and respondent will each be given the opportunity to testify, call witnesses, and present evidence, consistent with the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure. The Court will address whether to issue the protection order and any other requested relief, including financial or child support, allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, and counseling. Evidence, including social media posts and text messages, should be presented in printed, documentary form; audio or video evidence must be submitted on a portable storage device. All evidence submitted becomes part of the case record.

(C) If the requirements for a civil protection order are met, the Court shall issue a Domestic Violence or Dating Violence Civil Protection Order, which may include: preventing the respondent from abusing the petitioner; granting exclusive possession of the residence to the petitioner; permitting the respondent to retrieve personal property under supervision; requiring the respondent to stay away from the petitioner's or a protected person's residence, school, or place of employment; ordering child or spousal support; allocating parental rights, responsibilities, and parenting time; requiring the respondent to complete counseling; granting exclusive use of a vehicle to the petitioner; apportioning personal property; requiring surrender of house or vehicle keys; preventing removal of companion animals; prohibiting the respondent's possession or use of drugs or alcohol; prohibiting the respondent's possession or purchase of firearms and ammunition; requiring surrender of deadly weapons to law enforcement; addressing transfer of wireless service; and any other relief the Court considers fair and equitable, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(E)(1). These remedies are in addition to other available civil or criminal remedies.

(D) The petitioner is expected to appear at the full hearing and any other scheduled proceeding; the Court may dismiss the petition if the petitioner fails to appear and no continuance has been requested and granted. A petitioner may dismiss a petition in writing before a full hearing; an oral request to voluntarily dismiss made at a full hearing shall be placed on the record.

(E) At the time of the full hearing, the parties may enter into a Consent Agreement and Domestic Violence or Dating Violence Civil Protection Order, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(E)(1), subject to the Court's approval.

RULE 17.06. NOTIFICATION TO LAW ENFORCEMENT; REPORT OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT.

(A) The Court will complete and file a Protection Order Notice to the National Crime Information Center with every ex parte order, final order, or consent agreement. The Clerk of Courts shall provide the protection order, accompanying documents, and the notice to the County Sheriff and to the law enforcement agency where the petitioner resides and, if requested, where the petitioner works, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(F)(1) and Civ.R. 65.1(C)(1). Upon receipt, the Sheriff shall promptly enter the order into the National Crime Information Center database.

(B) If there is reasonable suspicion of the abuse or neglect of a child, the Judge or Magistrate shall make a report to child protective services, consistent with R.C. 2151.421 and R.C. 3113.31(H).

RULE 17.07. DISCOVERY.

Parties may issue subpoenas to non-parties. Discovery between the parties is permitted only upon order of the Court, consistent with Civ.R. 65.1(D). Any order permitting discovery shall specify the time and place of the discovery; the persons who may be present; and any terms and conditions necessary to protect the safety of the petitioner and the confidentiality of the petitioner's address.

RULE 17.08. CONTINUANCES.

The Court does not favor delay in domestic violence or dating violence cases, and hearings are expected to proceed as scheduled. The Court may continue a full hearing for a reasonable time, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(D)(2)(a), if: the respondent has not been served with the petition and notice of the full hearing; the parties consent to the continuance; the continuance is needed to allow either party to obtain counsel; or the continuance is needed for other good cause.

RULE 17.09. DURATION OF ORDER.

(A) An ex parte Domestic Violence or Dating Violence Civil Protection Order does not expire due to failure of service, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(D)(2)(b), or because the Court grants a continuance. If the respondent has not been served, the ex parte order remains valid for no more than one year, after which the Court will dismiss the petition. The Court may dismiss the petition and terminate the order on its own motion after six months for failure to prosecute, consistent with Civ.R. 41(B)(1), if the petitioner has not actively attempted to obtain service.

(B) A Domestic Violence or Dating Violence Civil Protection Order issued after a full hearing, or a Consent Agreement, expires on the date specified in the order, but not later than five years after issuance, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(E)(3)(a). All orders contained within a protection order expire when the protection order expires.

RULE 17.10. EFFECT OF OTHER COURT CASES.

(A) A civil protection order remains in effect even if the petitioner and respondent later become involved together in another case, such as a divorce, dissolution, or post-decree matter. The parties shall promptly notify the later court of the existence and terms of the civil protection order and, if necessary, request appropriate safety measures in that proceeding.

(B) A party's compliance with orders in a later case allocating parental rights and responsibilities that require contact between the parties — such as attending hearings, mediation, or a custody evaluation — is not, by itself, a violation of an existing civil protection order or no-contact order.

(C) Any term of a civil protection order allocating parental rights and responsibilities, parenting time, or support terminates by operation of law when a later court, in a case involving both the petitioner and respondent, issues an order allocating parental rights and responsibilities or support, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(E)(3)(b). The Court will not revise its protection order or parenting-related terms on its own motion upon learning of a conflicting later order; the parties are responsible for seeking modification or termination as provided in Rule 17.11. Following any such modification or termination, the Court will file an amended or terminated Protection Order Notice with the National Crime Information Center.

RULE 17.11. MODIFICATION, TERMINATION, RENEWAL, AND CONTEMPT.

(A) Generally. Service of a motion to modify, terminate, renew, or hold a party in contempt of a civil protection order shall be made under Civ.R. 4 through 4.6. Motions

will be scheduled for hearing, conducted consistent with the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, at which the petitioner and respondent will each be given the opportunity to testify, call witnesses, and present evidence. Any modification, termination, renewal, or finding of contempt shall be by order of the Court, and the Court will file an amended Protection Order Notice with the National Crime Information Center, with copies to the petitioner, respondent, and law enforcement, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(F)(1).

(B) Modification and Termination. A petitioner or respondent may move to modify or terminate a civil protection order or consent agreement, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(E)(8). The movant must prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, that modification or termination is appropriate because the order or agreement is no longer needed or its terms are no longer appropriate. The Court will consider: whether the petitioner agrees to the change; whether the petitioner still fears the respondent; the parties' current relationship and circumstances, including proximity of home and work and any children in common; whether the respondent has complied with the order or agreement; whether the respondent has ongoing substance abuse issues; whether the respondent has been convicted of an act of violence since the order or agreement; the existence of other protection orders, restraining orders, or no-contact orders involving the respondent; whether the respondent has completed a domestic violence treatment program; the time elapsed since the order or agreement; the respondent's age and health; and the timing of the most recent incident of abuse, threat, or sexually oriented offense, and any other information affecting the safety of the petitioner or other protected persons.

(C) Renewal. A petitioner may move to renew a civil protection order or consent agreement, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(E)(8)(b), which will be renewed using the same procedure as the original order. A motion to renew should be filed at least fourteen days before the order's scheduled expiration; a renewal motion requesting ex parte relief will be heard the same day it is filed if there is insufficient time to schedule a full hearing before expiration. The petitioner must prove renewal is warranted by a preponderance of the evidence. An order not renewed by its expiration date expires.

(D) Contempt. A petitioner or respondent may move for contempt of a civil protection order; the Court may order the accused to appear. The movant must prove a violation by clear and convincing evidence. A respondent found in contempt shall be sentenced to a term of incarceration, community service, or both, with an opportunity to purge the contempt and suspend the sentence; failure to purge may result in an arrest warrant and imposition of the sentence. An arrest warrant may issue at the Judge's direction if a respondent fails to comply with an order to surrender firearms.

RULE 17.12. NATURE OF ORDER; OBJECTIONS; APPEAL.

(A) Under Civ.R. 65.1(F), a Magistrate's denial or granting of an ex parte protection order does not require judicial approval, is effective upon filing, and does not constitute a magistrate's order or magistrate's decision under Civ.R. 53(D)(2) or (3).

(B) A Magistrate's denial or granting of a protection order after a full hearing is not effective unless adopted by the Court, which may adopt, modify, or reject it.

(C) A party seeking to object to a final order arising from a proceeding referred to a Magistrate shall file objections within fourteen days of the order; the filing of objections does not stay the order, consistent with Civ.R. 65.1. If a party files objections, the other party has ten days to file responsive objections. An objecting party must show that an error of law or other defect is evident on the face of the order; that the credible evidence of record is insufficient to support the order; or that the Magistrate abused their discretion in including or omitting specific terms. Objections based on the evidence must be supported by a transcript, or an affidavit of the evidence if a transcript is unavailable, filed within thirty days of the objections; the Court may extend this time for preparation of the transcript or other good cause.

(D) The granting, denial, or dismissal of a civil protection order, the approval or refusal to approve a consent agreement, and an order modifying, terminating, renewing, or finding contempt of a protection order is a final appealable order; however, a party must file objections and the Court must rule on them before an appeal may be filed. Timely objections stay the running of the appeal period. An ex parte order remains in effect until a final order issues.

RULE 17.13. DISMISSAL; ENFORCEMENT; REGISTRATION; ACCESS TO CASE INFORMATION; COSTS.

(A) Dismissal of a petition for a civil protection order is not an adjudication on the merits and does not bar a later petition, consistent with Civ.R. 65.1(H).

(B) A violation of a civil protection order or consent agreement may subject the violator to civil contempt, criminal charges, or arrest. Protection orders are enforceable throughout the United States.

(C) A petitioner may register a Domestic Violence Criminal Temporary Protection Order, a Domestic Violence or Dating Violence Civil Protection Order, or a Consent Agreement issued by another court, for law enforcement purposes, by presenting a certified copy to the Clerk of Courts, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(N).

(D) Domestic violence and dating violence case records are public records; however, there shall be no remote public access to domestic violence or dating violence case

information through the Clerk of Courts' website. If the Court refuses to grant a protection order after a full hearing, the Court shall, on its own motion, order the ex parte case records sealed once the time to appeal has passed without an appeal, or all appellate rights have been exhausted, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(G)(2); sealed records are unavailable to the public, court personnel, parties, or attorneys, except upon order of the Court specifying the terms of access. A case voluntarily dismissed by the petitioner before or at the full hearing may likewise be sealed.

(E) The Clerk of Courts shall not charge or collect a fee or cost from the petitioner in a domestic violence or dating violence case for filing, issuance, registration, modification, enforcement, dismissal, withdrawal, or service of a protection order, consent agreement, or witness subpoena, or for a certified copy of a protection order or consent agreement, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(J)(1). The Court may assess such costs against the respondent, consistent with R.C. 3113.31(H)(2).

GENERAL DIVISION — CIVIL STALKING AND SEXUALLY ORIENTED OFFENSE PROTECTION ORDERS

RULE 17.14. COMMENCEMENT OF CSPO/SOPO CASES.

(A) A person may file a petition for a Civil Stalking Protection Order or a Civil Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Order on the person's own behalf, or a parent or adult household member may file on behalf of a minor, consistent with R.C. 2903.214(C). All filings shall use the Ohio Supreme Court approved, or a substantially similar, Civil Stalking Protection Order or Civil Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Order form.

(B) Petitions and accompanying documents are public records and will be provided to the respondent. A petitioner who wishes to keep a home address confidential should provide a safe mailing address on the petition, and may use the post office box address provided under the Ohio Secretary of State's address confidentiality program.

(C) The petitioner must provide the current or last known address of the respondent for service of process; the Court will not assist in locating an address for the respondent. The petitioner must also provide a physical description of the respondent; the respondent's ownership or possession of firearms and ammunition and any concealed-carry permit, if known; and one of the following: the respondent's date of birth, driver's license number, vehicle license number, or Social Security number, for entry into the National Crime Information Center.

(D) A petition for a Civil Stalking Protection Order or Civil Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Order shall be filed as a separate case. Petitions may be heard by a Magistrate, consistent with Section 9 (Magistrates) of these Local Rules and Civ.R. 65.1(F).

RULE 17.15. EX PARTE HEARING AND SERVICE OF PROCESS.

(A) Under R.C. 2903.214(C), the petitioner must prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the respondent engaged in a violation of R.C. 2903.211 (menacing by stalking), R.C. 2911.211 (aggravated trespass), or a sexually oriented offense as defined in R.C. 2950.01, against the petitioner or a family or household member of the petitioner.

(B) The Court will conduct an ex parte hearing, without the respondent present, on the same day a petition is filed, if requested, consistent with R.C. 2903.214(D)(1). If the requirements for ex parte relief are met, the Court will issue an ex parte order granting relief authorized under R.C. 2903.214(E). If ex parte relief is not requested, or is requested but not granted, the petition will be scheduled for a full hearing.

(C) The respondent must be personally served with the petition, any ex parte order, and accompanying documents, consistent with Civ.R. 65.1(C)(2), by the Sheriff of the county where the respondent resides or by a special process server under Civ.R. 4.1(B), with certified mail or other method under Civ.R. 4 through 4.6 available if personal service fails. Further service after the petition is served shall be under Civ.R. 5(B). It is the petitioner's responsibility to ensure that service is completed.

RULE 17.16. FULL HEARING; AVAILABLE RELIEF; CONSENT AGREEMENT.

(A) The Court will schedule a full evidentiary hearing under R.C. 2903.214 following the ex parte hearing. If exclusive possession of the residence was granted to the petitioner on an ex parte basis, the full hearing will be scheduled within seven court days; otherwise, within ten court days. Denial of ex parte relief does not preclude the Court from granting an order after a full hearing.

(B) At the full hearing, the petitioner and respondent will each be given the opportunity to testify, call witnesses, and present evidence. Evidence, including social media posts and text messages, should be presented in printed, documentary form; audio or video evidence must be submitted on a portable storage device.

(C) If the requirements are met, the Court shall issue a Civil Stalking Protection Order or Civil Sexually Oriented Offense Protection Order, which may include: preventing the respondent from abusing or committing the underlying offense against the petitioner or a protected person; requiring the respondent to stay away from the petitioner's or a protected person's residence, school, or place of employment; granting exclusive possession of the residence to the petitioner, where the parties share a residence; prohibiting the respondent's possession or purchase of firearms and ammunition; requiring surrender of deadly weapons to law enforcement; and any other relief the Court considers equitable, consistent with R.C. 2903.214(E). These remedies are in addition to

other available civil or criminal remedies. Relief allocating parental rights and responsibilities or support is not available under this Rule.

(D) The petitioner is expected to appear at the full hearing; the Court may dismiss the petition if the petitioner fails to appear and no continuance has been requested and granted. At the full hearing, the parties may enter into a Consent Agreement, subject to the Court's approval.

RULE 17.17. DISCOVERY; CONTINUANCES.

(A) Parties may issue subpoenas to non-parties. Discovery between the parties is permitted only upon order of the Court, consistent with Civ.R. 65.1(D), which shall specify the time and place of discovery, the persons who may be present, and any terms necessary to protect the petitioner's safety and address confidentiality.

(B) The Court does not favor delay in these matters, and hearings are expected to proceed as scheduled. The Court may continue a full hearing for a reasonable time, consistent with R.C. 2903.214(D)(2), if the respondent has not been served, the parties consent, either party needs time to obtain counsel, or for other good cause.

RULE 17.18. DURATION; MODIFICATION, TERMINATION, RENEWAL, AND CONTEMPT.

(A) An ex parte order does not expire due to failure of service or because the Court grants a continuance. If the respondent has not been served, the ex parte order remains valid for no more than one year, after which the Court will dismiss the petition; the Court may also dismiss the petition and terminate the order on its own motion after six months for failure to prosecute, consistent with Civ.R. 41(B)(1), if the petitioner has not actively attempted service.

(B) An order issued after a full hearing, or a Consent Agreement, expires on the date specified, but not later than five years after issuance, consistent with R.C. 2903.214(E)(3)(a).

(C) A petitioner or respondent may move to modify, terminate, or renew an order or consent agreement, and the same factors set forth in Rule 17.11(B) and (C) apply, adapted to the circumstances underlying the stalking or sexually oriented offense order. A petitioner or respondent may move for contempt of the order; the movant must prove a violation by clear and convincing evidence, and the sanctions described in Rule 17.11(D) apply.

RULE 17.19. NATURE OF ORDER; OBJECTIONS; APPEAL; DISMISSAL; ENFORCEMENT; REGISTRATION; ACCESS; COSTS.

(A) The provisions of Rule 17.12 (Nature of Order; Objections; Appeal) and Rule 17.13 (Dismissal; Enforcement; Registration; Access to Case Information; Costs) apply to proceedings under this Rule, substituting R.C. 2903.214 for R.C. 3113.31 and General Division for Domestic Relations Division as the context requires.

(B) Notification to law enforcement and entry into the National Crime Information Center shall be completed consistent with Rule 17.06(A), substituting R.C. 2903.214(F)(1) for R.C. 3113.31(F)(1).

RULE 17.20. MEDIATION OF CIVIL STALKING PROTECTION ORDER MATTERS.

Mediation may be available in a civil stalking protection order matter only in the limited circumstances, and subject to the safeguards, set forth in Sup.R. 6.10, and is otherwise subject to Section 16 (Mediation) of these Local Rules. Mediation is not available in a matter involving a sexually oriented offense, or as an alternative to the prosecution or adjudication of the underlying offense, or to determine whether to grant, modify, or terminate a protection order, its terms, or a penalty for its violation.

CRIMINAL PROTECTION ORDERS AND PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL DIVISIONS

RULE 17.21. CRIMINAL TEMPORARY PROTECTION ORDERS.

The Court shall issue a Criminal Temporary Protection Order in a criminal case involving a victim, upon request and a showing of cause, consistent with R.C. 2919.26 and Crim.R. 38. A Criminal Temporary Protection Order shall be served on the defendant along with all required notices, and shall be entered into the National Crime Information Center consistent with Rule 17.23.

RULE 17.22. POST-CONVICTION NO CONTACT ORDERS.

When a criminal defendant is placed on a term of community control following a conviction involving a victim, the Court shall issue a Post-Conviction No Contact Order, which shall be provided to the defendant along with all required notices.

RULE 17.23. NOTICE OF EXISTENCE OF A PROTECTION ORDER; ENTRY INTO AND REMOVAL FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT DATABASES.

(A) If the Court becomes aware that a party appearing before it is subject to a protection order that has not yet been served on the respondent, the Court shall convey notice of the

existence of that order to the party, and shall immediately complete and return the applicable notice form to the Clerk of Courts, where the action is pending, so the information may be promptly docketed.

(B) Upon issuance of any protection order, the Court shall immediately provide the County Sheriff's Office the required form to enter the order into the National Crime Information Center and other applicable law enforcement databases. If a protection order is terminated for a reason other than expiration of its term, the Court shall immediately notify the County Sheriff's Office to remove the order from those databases.

(C) Upon application and a showing of good cause, an entry terminating a protection order shall include an order directing the Clerk of Courts to serve a copy of the entry on the appropriate law enforcement agencies to remove the order from their records.

RULE 17.24. FIREARMS SURRENDER.

If the Court orders a respondent to deliver all firearms, dangerous ordnance, and ammunition to local law enforcement, that order shall be immediately provided to the appropriate law enforcement agency to facilitate collection or receipt of those items. Upon receipt, the receiving agency shall provide the Clerk of Courts notice of receipt, together with a complete inventory of the items received.

SECTION 18. COURT TECHNOLOGY PLAN

RULE 18.01. ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGY PLAN.

(A) Consistent with Sup.R. 3.03, the Court has adopted and shall maintain a Technology Plan, which includes a comprehensive strategy for implementing and maintaining technology solutions for conducting remote hearings, electronic filing and service, the acceptance of electronic signatures, and any other technology-related solution utilized by the Court, together with procedures for notifying and instructing the public on the use of those solutions and how they comply with applicable accessibility requirements, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.

(B) Because technology needs and available solutions change frequently, the Technology Plan is set forth in Appendix A to Section 18, rather than in the body of this Rule, so that it may be reviewed and updated without amendment of this Rule. The Court shall review the Technology Plan not less than once every three years, and may update it more frequently as circumstances warrant. The current Technology Plan is available at the Meigs County Common Pleas Court office.

(C) Information regarding the Court's information technology infrastructure — including firewalls, storage systems, backups, anti-virus protections, disaster recovery, and

cybersecurity — is maintained separately and is not included in the Technology Plan, consistent with Ohio Court Security Standards.

(D) Accessibility Standard. The Court's technology solutions, including its website, its remote-hearing platform, and other web-based services the Court provides directly or through a vendor, and, in coordination with the Clerk of Courts, the e-File system, shall comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq., and its implementing regulations, 28 C.F.R. Part 35. Web content and mobile applications shall conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, Level AA, as required by 28 C.F.R. Part 35, Subpart H, no later than the compliance date applicable to the Court. Whether or not a technology solution conforms to that standard, the Court shall provide reasonable modifications and appropriate auxiliary aids and services, at no cost to the person requesting them, so that persons with disabilities have equally effective access to the Court's services, programs, and activities.

(E) ADA Coordinator. The Court Administrator, or such other person as the Judge designates by administrative order, shall serve as the Court's ADA Coordinator and compliance officer. The ADA Coordinator shall:

- (1) Receive and respond to requests for reasonable accommodation, including requests under Rule 5.20(K) for an alternative method of filing;
- (2) Receive, investigate, and respond to complaints alleging that the Court has not complied with the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- (3) Monitor the Court's technology solutions for compliance with division (D) of this Rule, and report to the Judge on that compliance not less than annually; and
- (4) Ensure that the ADA Coordinator's name and contact information, and the procedure for requesting an accommodation, are posted on the Court's website and in the Court office.

Requests for accommodation should be made as far in advance as practicable.

RULE 18.02. REMOTE APPEARANCES.

(A) Purpose and Scope. This Rule promotes uniformity in the practices and procedures related to remote appearances in matters where such an appearance is permitted by these Rules, court order, statute, or other rule of court. "Remote appearance" means participation by live, two-way video or audio technology. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Rule, the Judge or Magistrate may order a party's personal appearance for any conference, hearing, or proceeding. Remote appearances by a criminal defendant are subject to Crim.R. 43(A) and Appendix B to Section 18.

(B) Telephone Appearances.

- (1) The Court, on its own motion or on the request of any party, may in its discretion conduct a conference, hearing, or proceeding by telephone with attorneys and unrepresented parties, consistent with the Hearing Management Plan set forth in Appendix B to Section 18.
- (2) An evidentiary proceeding involving a telephone appearance must be recorded and reported to the same extent as if the participants had appeared in person.
- (3) The Court may specify the time, the person responsible for initiating the conference, and any other matter necessary to accomplish or facilitate the telephone appearance.
- (4) Upon convening a conference, hearing, or proceeding involving a telephone appearance, the Court shall state on the record the date, time, case name, case number, the names and locations of the parties and counsel, and the type of proceeding.
- (5) The Court may require personal or video appearance, notwithstanding that a telephone appearance would otherwise be permitted, if the Court determines a personal appearance would materially assist in the determination, effective management, or resolution of the matter, including where that determination is made during the telephone proceeding itself, in which case the Court may continue the matter and require a personal appearance.

(C) Video Conferencing.

- (1) The Court, on its own motion or on the request of any party, may in its discretion conduct a conference, hearing, or proceeding using a live, two-way video conferencing platform with attorneys, their clients, and unrepresented parties, consistent with the Hearing Management Plan set forth in Appendix B to Section 18. The Court currently uses Zoom as its video conferencing platform.
- (2) An evidentiary proceeding involving a video appearance must be recorded and reported to the same extent as if the participants had appeared in person.
- (3) Upon convening a conference, hearing, or proceeding involving a video appearance, the Court shall state on the record the date, time, case name, case number, the names and locations of the parties and counsel, and the type of proceeding.
- (4) The Court may require a personal appearance, notwithstanding that a video appearance would otherwise be permitted, if the Court determines a personal

appearance would materially assist in the determination, effective management, or resolution of the matter, including where that determination is made during the video proceeding itself, in which case the Court may continue the matter and require a personal appearance.

(D) Confidential Attorney-Client Communication. Provision shall be made to preserve the confidentiality of attorney-client communications and privilege during a conference, hearing, or proceeding involving a telephone or video appearance.

(E) Witnesses. A witness may testify by telephone or video conference at the Court's discretion, unless otherwise required by this Rule, statute, or other rule of court.

(F) Technical Standards and Equipment. Equipment and platforms used for a conference, hearing, or proceeding under this Rule must, at minimum: allow all participants to hear and communicate with each other simultaneously; allow all participants to see, hear, or otherwise observe any document, physical evidence, or exhibit presented, whether by video, facsimile, or other medium; allow the Court to generate a verbatim record of the proceeding; accommodate persons with disabilities consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act; and in no way abridge any right of the public.

(G) Hearing Management Plan. The Court's Hearing Management Plan, identifying which proceeding types are ordinarily available in person, by video, by telephone, or by a hybrid combination, is set forth in Appendix B to Section 18. Instructions for participating in a remote hearing using the Court's video conferencing platform are set forth in Appendix C to Section 18.

APPENDIX A TO SECTION 18. TECHNOLOGY PLAN

In accordance with Rule 18.01, this Technology Plan provides an overview of the Meigs County Common Pleas Court's (General and Domestic Relations Divisions) utilization of technology in the delivery of court services and maintenance of judicial operations. This Plan includes public-facing technologies serving litigants, attorneys, members of the public, and other justice system stakeholders, as well as internal technology systems used by judicial officers and Court staff. Information technology infrastructure — firewalls, storage systems, backups, anti-virus protections, disaster recovery, and cybersecurity — is not included in this Plan for security reasons.

The purpose of this Plan is to: define how the Court uses technology to support attorneys, parties, and the public in case management, case filing, recordkeeping, efficient communication, and administrative functions; provide a list of the Court's information technology functions and applications that support serving the public; assist the Court in identifying opportunities for improved efficiency and cost savings through technology; and promote the alignment of information technology initiatives with the goals of the Court.

A. Case Management

CourtView — case management software used by the Clerk of Courts (Equivalent); instructions available through the Clerk's website and vendor training.

eWarrants — keeps arrest warrants current; Court staff receive vendor and Ohio Department of Public Safety training.

Google Calendar — off-site/shared scheduling; Court staff are instructed by other staff.

RePath — GPS monitoring of probationers; Probation staff receive vendor training.

OCSS (Ohio Community Supervision System) — the State's probation supervision system, used to monitor persons on community control; Probation staff receive vendor training.

Fax — used to receive jury excuses; information is provided to the requesting juror by phone or email from Court staff.

Probation Kiosk — used by probationers to check in and provide updates; Probation staff provide instructions and vendor training.

B. Clerk of Court Functions

CourtView — used by the Clerk of Courts to receive, maintain, distribute, manage, duplicate, and generate reports and documents; Clerk staff are trained by the vendor and share knowledge among staff.

eWarrants — keeps arrest warrants current; Court staff receive vendor and Ohio Department of Public Safety training.

C. Detention Center Management

The Meigs County Sheriff, not the Court, operates the system of assigning and utilizing various detention facilities, as Meigs County does not currently have its own jail. The Court and Clerk use the following applications to coordinate with that facility:

Shared spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel) — provides justice partners a list of inmates, the facility holding each inmate, each inmate's next Court appearance, and whether that appearance must be in person or by video; access is limited to justice partners. Sheriff and Court staff are the only users.

Fingerprint Machine — used to submit fingerprints of persons charged with a felony to the Ohio Attorney General's office, as required for compliance; operated by Clerk and Sheriff's Department staff. A comprehensive plan for the timely and complete submission of fingerprints, photographs, and DNA samples is set forth in Section 19 (Reporting to Law Enforcement and Compliance Plan).

D. Dispute Resolution

Contract mediators — the Court refers cases to independent-contractor mediators approved under Section 16 (Mediation) of these Local Rules; the assigned mediator determines whether a session will be conducted in person or online, and provides participants instructions directly.

E. Evidence Management

CaseCenter (nka CaseLines) (Thomson Reuters) — a centralized system for sharing evidence between Court staff, Thomson Reuters, and attorneys, and for presenting evidence during hearings and trials, including to self-represented parties. See also Rule 4.07 (Courtroom Digital Presentation Equipment).

F. Filing

CourtView — allows filings to be submitted electronically rather than by hand delivery of paper documents; instructions and vendor training are provided through the Clerk of Courts.

Online payment portal — allows filing fees, bonds, costs, and sanction fees to be paid by debit or credit card; instructions are provided by the Clerk of Courts.

G. Fiscal

The Court does not use dedicated fiscal or accounting software and does not itself collect or distribute funds. All Court finances are managed through the Meigs County Auditor. Fee and cost collection performed by the Clerk of Courts is described in division (F) above.

H. Hearings

Courtroom digital recording system — digitally records all hearings; operated by Court staff. The Court currently uses "For The Record" for digital recording.

Dropbox — provides backup storage of digital hearing recordings; managed by Court staff and the Court's IT contractor.

Zoom — provides remote video hearing participation for parties and witnesses; Court staff provide participants written instructions with the meeting identification number and password.

CourtView — allows filings to be submitted for use in Court proceedings immediately before, during, or immediately after a hearing, and is accessible in the courtroom through laptops at counsel tables; Clerk of Courts and Court staff provide instructions.

Microsoft 365 (Teams) — used for notes, forms, and meetings, and is available on counsel-table laptops; also used to display typed text on courtroom screens for participants who are hard of hearing.

CaseCenter — used to present exhibits, including photographs, documents, and audio and video recordings; hard copies are also maintained for appellate purposes.

Assistive listening headphones (wireless) — allow parties and jurors who are hard of hearing to hear proceedings; provided by Court staff.

Elmo document camera — allows three-dimensional objects to be displayed on courtroom screens, and allows documents, maps, and sketches to be marked on-screen by a testifying witness and saved with those markings; any physical object or final marked document is preserved for appellate purposes.

Fujitsu ScanSnap desktop scanner — used to scan exhibits for display in CaseCenter or another visual program in the courtroom; hard copies are maintained for appellate purposes.

Courtroom printer — allows parties to prepare agreements, proposed decrees, stipulations, or other documents for presentation to the Court during a hearing.

Courtroom audio/video recording (security system) — serves as a backup to the digital recording system and as part of courtroom security, monitored by the Probation Department, courthouse security, and the Sheriff's Office.

Computers — laptop computers are provided by the Court at both counsel tables, loaded with Microsoft 365 and offering online access for general internet inquiries and for use with the Clerk's case management system, CourtView.

I. Human Resources

The Court does not use dedicated human resources software. Court staff use Microsoft 365 (Excel and Word) informally to calculate earned vacation and sick leave and to prepare and store annual performance reviews and any disciplinary action. A county-wide Human Resources employee, who maintains virtual office hours, is available to assist with formal human resources matters.

J. Interfacing with Other Entities

Ohio Supreme Court IGOR — used to submit required reports, request judicial conflict coverage and other judicial assignments, and report other mandatory matters such as pending murder cases; instructions provided by the Ohio Supreme Court.

CourtView — provides centralized official Court documents accessible to Court and Clerk staff.

Microsoft 365 (Excel, Word, Outlook) — used to track where local inmates are held, their next Court appearance and whether it is in person or by video, and to send documents and communications between departments.

eWarrants — automatically enters and withdraws warrants and civil protection orders in the Sheriff's systems, LEADS, and NCIC; used by Clerk, Department of Public Safety, and Sheriff's Office staff.

OCSS — tracks, monitors, and compiles or collects data on persons on community control required by supervising agencies.

OCN (Ohio Courts Network) — the State's centralized collection of essential court information, including checking for conflicting civil protection orders in other jurisdictions.

Email — used to send and receive communications and attachments, including for remote hearings.

The Court provides information for the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the National Crime Information Center, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway, and the Ohio Law Enforcement Automated Data System through the relevant local law enforcement agency, rather than through a direct Court system integration. Court probation officers have direct access to the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway. The Probation Department receives information from the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the National Crime Information Center, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, and the Ohio Law Enforcement Automated Data System through local law enforcement agencies.

K. Jury Management

The Court does not use a dedicated jury management technology system.

Microsoft 365 (Word) — used to merge and sort address labels for jury summonses and to prepare and distribute jury questionnaires.

Answering machine — keeps prospective jurors informed of whether and when they must appear.

Websites — jury information is available on both the Court's website and the Clerk of Courts' website.

L. Probation

OCSS — the State's probation supervision system, used to track, monitor, and report on persons on community control and to compile data required by supervising agencies.

Probation Kiosk — used by probationers to check in and provide updates.

The Probation Department's use of OCN, Email, CourtView, Microsoft 365, and eWarrants is described in division (J) above.

M. Public Access

CourtView — provides online public access to Court filings, except civil protection order cases, and a calendar of scheduled hearings by date and time, through the Clerk's website.

Zoom — allows members of the community to observe hearings of interest remotely without physically attending.

YouTube channel — records and preserves public Court proceedings, providing an additional means of storage and public transparency, consistent with the Court's media and broadcasting rule in Section 4 (Courtroom Procedures). The Court maintains the Meigs County Common Pleas Court channel.

Courtroom signage loop — a monitor displayed outside the courtroom showing general courthouse information and the daily calendar of scheduled cases.

N. Records Management/Retention

Fujitsu ScanSnap desktop scanner — creates electronic images of documents such as presentence investigation reports, invoices, and meeting sign-in sheets in place of retaining hard copies.

Clerk of Courts — the Clerk of Courts is the official keeper of all the Court's case files.

O. Special Accommodations

Zoom — allows members of the community, and with specific permission litigation participants, to testify or observe without physically attending a hearing.

Assistive listening headphones (wireless) — allow participants who are hard of hearing to hear proceedings.

Courtroom projection screens — allow all participants to simultaneously view exhibits and documents.

Interpreter phone line and video remote interpreting — provide interpretation for participants who do not have English as a first language, consistent with the Ohio Supreme Court's Language Services Program. The Court also provides American Sign Language and hard-of-hearing interpretive services when needed.

P. Victim Services

The Court does not offer a dedicated victim services application. The Court refers victims to victim advocates for assistance, consistent with Rule 17.03 (Victim Advocate).

Q. Website

The Court's website can be found at meigscommonpleascourt.com. The website also offers links to, and Court staff often refer the public to, the Clerk of Courts' website.

FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Using the operational categories set forth above, the Court intends to acquire and/or implement the following over the next five years:

Text message reminders — for upcoming court dates, presentence investigation interviews, meetings, and probation and other Court-related appointments.

Electronic signature pads — in the courtroom, connected to the case management system and the e-filing system.

Scanning of all current and aged records — kept by the Clerk of Courts and the Common Pleas Court, with scanned documents stored in multiple locations, including on-site hardware and cloud-based, off-premises storage.

Virtual help center — the Court will soon join a pilot project with Ohio Legal Help, partnering with several other rural counties to jointly afford and utilize Ohio Legal Help for self-represented litigants.

Additional waiting-area monitors — expanding the courtroom signage loop so the general courthouse information and daily case calendar it displays are visible to a larger waiting-area audience, not only those immediately outside the courtroom.

Check-in kiosk — for parties and witnesses to check in upon arrival, so Court staff can determine in real time when all necessary parties for a hearing have arrived and whether a particular witness is present and waiting.

WISH LIST

Technology solutions the Court may seek to implement in the longer term, as resources allow, to be identified and updated by the Court from time to time.

APPENDIX B TO SECTION 18. HEARING MANAGEMENT PLAN

Consistent with Rule 18.02(G), the Court, in its discretion or on motion of a party, may conduct the following types of conferences, hearings, and proceedings in the manner indicated below, absent good cause shown to proceed otherwise:

Type of Proceeding	In Person	Video	Telephone	Hybrid
Arraignments	X	X		X
Plea Hearings	X	X		X
Pretrial Hearings	X	X		X
Review/Status Hearings	X	X	X	X
Evidentiary Hearings	X	X		X
Sentencing Hearings	X	X		X
Post-Conviction Proceedings	X	X		X
Motion Hearings	X	X		X
Civil Proceedings	X	X		X

In Person: the Court and all participants appear physically in the same location.

Video: the Court and all participants appear remotely using Zoom, the Court's video conferencing platform.

Telephone: the Court and all participants appear using a telephone.

Hybrid: a combination of the above appearance types (e.g., the Court appears in person in the courtroom while other participants appear by video).

Criminal Proceedings. Notwithstanding the table above, any remote or hybrid appearance by a criminal defendant is subject to Crim.R. 43(A). In felony cases, the defendant may appear remotely only by remote contemporaneous video, and only after waiving, in

writing or on the record and with leave of Court, the right to be physically present. Any remote appearance by a defendant shall allow the defendant to see and hear the proceeding and to be seen and heard by the Court and all parties, and shall allow private communication between the defendant and counsel. A proceeding involving sworn testimony subject to cross-examination may be conducted with the defendant appearing remotely only if counsel is present, participates, and consents. A telephone appearance is not available to a criminal defendant for any proceeding at which the defendant's presence is required. A sentencing hearing conducted remotely remains subject to Crim.R. 32(A), including the defendant's right of allocution.

APPENDIX C TO SECTION 18. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN A REMOTE HEARING USING ZOOM

You are scheduled to participate in a remote hearing. This means you will not go to the courthouse, but will participate using a computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone, or other device with a working camera and microphone. The Court uses Zoom for remote hearings. Please dress professionally, speak loudly and clearly, and conduct yourself as you would if you were at the courthouse.

Upon Receiving Notice of a Remote Hearing

Send the Court a telephone number and email address you will use on the day of your hearing: for a civil or domestic relations matter, email amanda@meigscommonpleascourt.com; for a criminal matter, email andrea@meigscommonpleascourt.com; or email brittney@meigscommonpleascourt.com, or call 740-992-6439, extension 1, 2, 3, or 5, and leave a message. Include your name and case number. Contact the Court immediately if your telephone number or email address changes before your hearing date.

If you do not have access to the internet or a device for a remote hearing, contact the Court immediately, and no later than 48 hours before the hearing date, at 740-992-6439.

If you need a special accommodation (for example, an interpreter or an ADA accommodation), contact the Court using the appropriate email address or extension listed above.

If you are not represented by an attorney: submit exhibits (documents and other evidence) to the Court using CaseCenter, a product of Thomson Reuters; instructions for using CaseCenter are available by emailing jesse@meigscommonpleascourt.com. Notify the Court of your witnesses by emailing a witness list to the appropriate address listed above at least ten days before the proceeding.

A Week Before Your Hearing

Test your camera, speaker, and microphone. If you are unable to get your device to work properly, contact the Court immediately, and no later than 48 hours before the hearing date, using the appropriate email address or extension listed above. If you are represented by an attorney, discuss with your attorney how you will communicate with each other privately during the hearing.

The Day Before Your Hearing

Locate the Zoom link that was emailed to you and have it ready; check your junk or spam folder if you do not see it in your inbox.

The Day of Your Hearing

Find an appropriate, quiet, and private place to participate, and limit distractions.

Place your device on a hard, flat surface; do not move it during the hearing. Use headphones to reduce background noise, and keep your device plugged in so it does not unexpectedly disconnect.

Dress as you would if you were appearing in court in person.

Ask others sharing your internet connection to minimize their use so it does not disrupt your connection.

Do not use a virtual background, and keep your camera on for the entire hearing.

Join the hearing at least ten minutes before the scheduled start time to resolve any connection issues.

Join the hearing alone, unless you are with your attorney.

You may be placed in a virtual waiting room until the hearing begins or until all participants have arrived; a participant or the Court may be delayed. Please be patient and do not disconnect.

Keep yourself muted until it is your turn to speak; wait to be called on by the Judge or Magistrate, and do not talk over others, as there may be a brief audio delay.

Do not talk, chat, or consult with anyone other than your attorney during the hearing.

Set your on-screen name to your first and last name, matching what the Court has on file.

Have valid, government-issued identification available.

Do not share the meeting link, meeting ID, or password with others if the hearing is not open to the public.

Do not record the hearing unless expressly permitted by the Judge.

If you need to take a break, raise your hand on screen and wait for the Judge or Magistrate to call on you.

If you are unable to get your device to work properly, contact the Court immediately using the appropriate email address or extension listed above. If you lose your connection during the hearing, try to reconnect immediately; contact the Court if you are unable to rejoin.

SECTION 19. REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE PLAN

RULE 19.01. GENERAL DIVISION REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE PLAN.

(A) The General Division has a duty to ensure complete, accurate, and timely submission of information into the state's computerized criminal history repository at the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), the Ohio Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS), and other law enforcement databases.

(B) The Court, in collaboration with the Clerk of Courts, local law enforcement agencies, and any other applicable justice system partners, has developed a Reporting to Law Enforcement and Compliance Plan.

(C) The Reporting to Law Enforcement and Compliance Plan identifies procedures and timelines for:

- (1) Obtaining and reporting fingerprints as prescribed by the Revised Code and Supreme Court of Ohio rules, including R.C. 109.57(A)(2), 109.60(A), 2923.14, 2929.44(B), and 2945.402(E)(1), and Crim.R. 9(A) and 39;
- (2) Reporting information regarding protection orders as prescribed by the Revised Code and Supreme Court rules, including R.C. 2903.213, 2903.214, and 2919.26, and Crim.R. 38;
- (3) Reporting information to the Ohio Department of Public Safety's Bureau of Motor Vehicles as prescribed by R.C. 4510.03, 4513.37, and 5502.10 and Supreme Court rules;
- (4) Maintaining complete and accurate records in accordance with 18 U.S.C. 922(g), the Revised Code, including R.C. 2923.13, and Supreme Court rules, in the event of an audit by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, BCI, or state or local auditors; and
- (5) Reporting sealed and expunged records to BCI, LEADS, and other law enforcement databases pursuant to the Revised Code, including R.C. Chapter 2953 and R.C. 2903.214 and 2930.171.

(D) The Reporting to Law Enforcement and Compliance Plan is set forth in Appendix A to these Local Rules, and shall be reviewed and updated not less than once every three years from its adoption date, consistent with Rule 19.03.

RULE 19.02. DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE PLAN.

(A) The Domestic Relations Division has a duty to ensure complete, accurate, and timely submission of information into the state's computerized criminal history repository at the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), the Ohio Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS), and other law enforcement databases.

(B) The Court, in collaboration with the Clerk of Courts, local law enforcement agencies, and any other applicable justice system partners, has developed a Reporting to Law Enforcement and Compliance Plan.

(C) The Reporting to Law Enforcement and Compliance Plan identifies procedures and timelines for:

(1) Reporting information regarding protection orders as prescribed by the Revised Code and Supreme Court rules, including R.C. 3113.31 and Civ.R. 65.1; and

(2) Reporting sealed and expunged records to BCI, LEADS, and other law enforcement databases pursuant to the Revised Code, including R.C. 3113.31.

(D) The Reporting to Law Enforcement and Compliance Plan is set forth in Appendix A to these Local Rules, and shall be reviewed and updated not less than once every three years from its adoption date, consistent with Rule 19.03.

RULE 19.03. PLAN DOCUMENT; REVIEW; STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION.

(A) Because the Reporting to Law Enforcement and Compliance Plan reflects operational procedures that may change as agency practices, personnel, or technology change, the Plan is set forth in Appendix A to Section 19, rather than in the body of this Section, so that it may be reviewed and updated without amendment of this Section.

(B) Consistent with Sup.R. 3.04, the Plan was developed, and shall be periodically reviewed, in collaboration with the Clerk of Courts, the Meigs County Sheriff's Office, the Meigs County Prosecuting Attorney, and other applicable justice system partners, including any municipal court, juvenile court, or probate court stakeholders whose cooperation is necessary for accurate and timely reporting.

(C) The current Reporting to Law Enforcement and Compliance Plan is available at the Meigs County Common Pleas Court office.

APPENDIX A TO SECTION 19. REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE PLAN

Meigs County Common Pleas Court (General and Domestic Relations Divisions)

This Reporting to Law Enforcement and Compliance Plan has been created for the purpose of ensuring complete, accurate, and timely submission of information into Ohio's computerized criminal history repository at the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), the Ohio Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS), and other law enforcement databases, and in compliance with Rules 3.00 through 3.04 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio.

This Plan was developed in collaboration with:

Clerk of Courts: Samantha Mugrage.

County Sheriff: Scott Fitch.

County Prosecuting Attorney: James K. Stanley.

Other justice system partners: Judge L. Scott Powell; Judge-elect Jeremy Fisher, Meigs County Probate and Juvenile Courts; and Judge Michael Barr, Meigs County Court.

A. Obtaining and Reporting Fingerprinting

(General Division only; the Domestic Relations Division does not order or report fingerprinting.)

1. Law enforcement's process for obtaining fingerprints and generating the related incident tracking number (ITN): Fingerprints are obtained by the arresting or booking law enforcement agency, or by the Meigs County Sheriff's Office, upon arrest, taking into custody, or court-ordered fingerprinting, using the fingerprint machine maintained by the Clerk of Courts and Sheriff's Department, consistent with Rule 18 (Court Technology Plan), Appendix A, Division C.

2. Law enforcement's process for reporting the ITN to the Clerk of Courts: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts.

3. The Court's process for inquiring and ordering fingerprinting at initial appearance or sentencing, including identifying individuals who need to be fingerprinted and the process for incarcerated defendants served with charges by summons: Prosecuting Attorney James K. Stanley.

4. Process for reporting cases with a disposition of dismissed and those where no disposition is expected: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts, and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

5. Process for reporting fingerprints and dispositions when a case is transferred to or from another court: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts.

6. Process for reporting the granting of an application for relief from weapons disability: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts, and Linda R. Warner, Meigs County Common Pleas Court Judge.

7. Procedures for quality assurance and records validation: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts, and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

8. Other: [to be completed with the stakeholder group]

B. Reporting Mental Health Adjudications

Not applicable. Mental health adjudications under R.C. 5122.311 are reported by the Probate Division, which is not part of this Plan.

C. Reporting of Protection Orders

(Applicable to both the General and Domestic Relations Divisions, consistent with Rule 17 (Protection Orders).)

1. The Court's process for sending the Protection Order Notice to NCIC Form (NCIC Form) to law enforcement for entry into LEADS upon issuance, modification, dismissal, or termination of an ex parte order, consent agreement, or full protection order: Consistent with Rule 17.06(A) (Domestic Relations Division) and Rule 17.19(B) (General Division), the Court completes and files a Protection Order Notice to NCIC with every ex parte order, final order, or consent agreement, and the Clerk of Courts provides the order, accompanying documents, and notice to the County Sheriff and the law enforcement agency where the petitioner resides and, if requested, works.

2. Law enforcement's process for entering the NCIC Form information into LEADS for initial entry, and for updating LEADS when the respondent is served with an ex parte order: The Judge-signed NCIC Form is immediately forwarded to the Meigs County Sheriff, who immediately enters the information into all of the Sheriff's systems.

3. Process for notifying the respondent of an unserved ex parte protection order under R.C. 2919.27(D), and for updating LEADS once notice has been given: Consistent with Rule 17.23 (Notice of Existence of a Protection Order), if the Court becomes aware that a party appearing before it is subject to an unserved protection

order, the Court conveys notice of the order's existence to that party and immediately completes and returns the applicable notice form to the Clerk of Courts for prompt docketing.

4. Process for when a misdemeanor case containing a protection order is dismissed for felony indictment, including transfer of the protection order information to the felony case and notice to the municipal court clerk and law enforcement agency once the felony case and protection order are disposed of: Judge Michael Barr, Meigs County Court; Angela Bissell, Meigs County Court Clerk; and Samantha Mugrage, Meigs County Common Pleas Clerk of Courts.

5. Procedures for quality assurance and records validation: Judge Linda R. Warner, Meigs County Common Pleas Court Judge; Samantha Mugrage, Meigs County Common Pleas Court Clerk of Courts; and Scott Fitch, Meigs County Sheriff.

6. Other: [to be completed with the stakeholder group]

D. Reporting to the Ohio Department of Public Safety

(General Division only; the Domestic Relations Division does not report to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.)

1. Process for sending the Bureau of Motor Vehicles the certified abstract of the court record upon conviction or bail forfeiture in cases involving traffic violations and the operation of vehicles, streetcars, and trackless trolleys: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts, and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

2. Process for sending the Bureau of Motor Vehicles the certified abstract of the court record upon conviction in cases involving aggravated vehicular homicide, vehicular homicide, or a felony offense where a vehicle was used: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts, and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

3. Process for reporting convictions of operating a vehicle impaired (OVI/OMVI): Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts, and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

4. Procedures for quality assurance and records validation: Linda R. Warner, Judge; Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts; and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

5. Other:

E. Procedures for Maintaining Reporting Records

1. Staff schedule for regularly validating records that have been reported: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk; Linda R. Warner, Judge; and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

2. Process for correcting inaccurate, incomplete, or rejected reporting submissions: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts, and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

3. Process for gathering and identifying records to be provided to state and federal auditors: Linda R. Warner, Judge; Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts; and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

4. Process for annually checking for updates to state and federal reporting requirements: Linda R. Warner, Judge; Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts; and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

5. Retention schedules for these records: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts, and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

6. Other:

F. Procedures for Sealing and Expunging Records

1. Process for notifying victims under Marsy's Law requirements: Consistent with Rule 11 (Criminal Matters), the Court's Expungement rule.

2. Process for notifying the appropriate law enforcement agencies and BCI when records have been sealed or expunged: Linda R. Warner, Judge; James K. Stanley, Prosecuting Attorney; Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts; and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

3. Process for securing sealed records: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts, and Scott Fitch, Sheriff.

4. Process for removing expunged records from the case management system and backup document storage applications: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts.

5. Process for notifying the court of origin of a sealing or expungement order in a case that has been bound over or transferred: Samantha Mugrage, Clerk of Courts.

6. Other:

G. Additional Information

None at this time.

This Plan was adopted on _____, 2026, and shall be reviewed and updated not less than once every three years.

Administrative Judge

Clerk of Courts

Justice System Partner

Justice System Partner

SECTION 20. LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

RULE 20.01. ADOPTION OF LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN.

(A) Consistent with Sup.R. 3.05, the Court has adopted and shall maintain a Language Access Plan for the purpose of ensuring language access and the effective appointment of interpreters for limited English proficient individuals and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, in case and court functions and ancillary court services.

(B) Because the Language Access Plan reflects operational contacts, resources, and procedures that may change, the Plan is set forth in Appendix A to Section 20, rather than in the body of this Section, so that it may be reviewed and updated without amendment of this Section. The Court shall review the Language Access Plan not less than once every three years, consistent with Sup.R. 3.05, and the Language Access Coordinator identified in the Plan shall review it annually and recommend updates to the Administrative Judge as circumstances warrant.

(C) The appointment of interpreters in a case or court function, and the provision of language services in ancillary court services, is governed by Sup.R. 9.00 through 9.11. Nothing in this Section or the Language Access Plan shall be construed to limit a party's or witness's right to a qualified interpreter under R.C. 2311.14 or R.C. 2930.041.

(D) Assistive listening devices and other technology used to accommodate individuals who are hard of hearing are described in Section 18 (Court Technology Plan), Appendix A to Section 18, Divisions H and O. Those devices are a disability accommodation

distinct from the interpreter services addressed by this Section, and are provided at no cost consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

(E) The current Language Access Plan is available at the Meigs County Common Pleas Court office and on the Court's website.

APPENDIX A TO SECTION 20. LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

MEIGS COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

I. Legal Basis and Purpose

This document serves as the Language Access Plan ("LAP") for the Meigs County Common Pleas Court to provide services to limited English proficient ("LEP") individuals in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 45 C.F.R. Part 80, and 28 C.F.R. Part 42. The purpose of this Plan is to provide a framework for the provision of timely and reasonable language assistance to LEP persons who come in contact with the Court.

This LAP is developed to ensure equal access to court services for LEP persons and for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals are covered under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. 12131-12134, rather than Title VI, but are included in this Plan as part of the Court's policy of ensuring access to justice and equal protection under the law. Consistent with 28 C.F.R. 35.130(f), a deaf or hard-of-hearing individual may not be charged for the cost of an auxiliary aid or service.

Consistent with U.S. Department of Justice guidance, the Court does not charge for interpretation or translation services, or seek recoupment of those costs, as doing so would impair, restrict, or preclude the participation of LEP individuals in the judicial system.

II. Needs Assessment

A. Statewide. According to the American Community Survey released in October 2019 by the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 825,270 people in Ohio over the age of five speak a language other than English at home, most commonly Spanish, followed by Pennsylvania Dutch and other West Germanic languages, Chinese, German, and Arabic. Data compiled by the Supreme Court of Ohio's Language Services Section on statewide use of telephonic interpreters shows Spanish, Nepali, Arabic, French, and Swahili as the most frequently requested remote languages.

B. Meigs County. The most commonly used languages other than English in the Court's jurisdiction are: to be determined by the Language Access Coordinator using resources such as www.lep.gov and data from local school districts, consistent with Section IX(C) below.

III. Language Assistance Resources

A. Language Access Coordinator. The Court has designated a Language Access Coordinator, who reports to the Administrative Judge. The Language Access Coordinator, together with the Court Administrator and the Administrative Judge, ensures that language services are delivered consistent with this Plan and Sup.R. 9.00 through 9.11.

The Court's Language Access Coordinator is [to be completed]

The Coordinator may be reached at [to be completed]

Complaints submitted under Section VIII of this Plan will be addressed by the Language Access Coordinator within [to be completed]

In addition to the responsibilities otherwise described in this Plan, the Language Access Coordinator: identifies qualified interpreters and translators for the Court's use; tracks and collects data regarding interpreter use and the languages needed; outlines measures to ensure quality control of interpreters and translators; and assigns qualified interpreters, translators, and bilingual employees to language assistance functions.

B. Interpreters Used in the Courts. Ohio courts must provide an interpreter in two circumstances: in a case or court function, under Sup.R. 9.00 through 9.10; and in connection with ancillary services, under Sup.R. 9.11. Under R.C. 2311.14, the Court shall provide an interpreter due to a hearing, speech, or other impairment of a party or witness. Under R.C. 2930.041 (Marsy's Law), the Court will provide a qualified foreign language interpreter in all legal proceedings for an LEP victim, and a qualified sign language interpreter in all legal proceedings for a deaf or hard-of-hearing victim, at no cost to the victim. Sup.R. 9.10 requires the Court to appoint an interpreter in a case or court function when an LEP or deaf or hard-of-hearing individual requests one, or when the Court determines an interpreter is necessary for the individual's meaningful participation. A foreign language interpreter is provided at Court expense if the party is indigent; consistent with Title VI guidance, the Court does not charge for interpretation services generally. Sign language interpreters are provided at Court expense for all deaf or hard-of-hearing parties, witnesses, or jurors, consistent with the ADA.

IV. Use of Interpreters

A. Determining the Need for an Interpreter. An LEP or deaf or hard-of-hearing person may request an interpreter. Court personnel and judicial officers may also determine that an interpreter is necessary for a person's meaningful participation, since many people who need an interpreter will not request one. In legal proceedings, the judge or magistrate must decide, on the record, whether an interpreter is needed, consistent with Sup.R. 9.10(A)(2) and (B)(1)(b); in court functions and ancillary services, designated staff may

make that determination. Once a party or witness has been identified as needing an interpreter, the Court will make every effort to appoint an interpreter in all future related proceedings or functions. If no in-person interpreter is available, the Court will grant a continuance or, if appropriate, use a telephonic or video remote interpreter consistent with Sup.R. 9.10 and Sup.R. 9.50 through 9.60. The Court's phone line and video remote interpreting services are described in Section 18 (Court Technology Plan), Appendix A, Division O.

B. Court Interpreter Qualifications. The Supreme Court of Ohio's Language Services Section maintains a statewide roster of qualified court interpreters. Foreign language interpreters on the roster have passed a written examination, completed at least 24 hours of court interpreter training, and scored within a designated range measuring language and interpreting skill. Sign language interpreters meet similar requirements for national certification through the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

C. Appointment of a Court Interpreter. The Court will appoint in-person and telephonic court interpreters consistent with Sup.R. 9.10, and will use a certified court interpreter whenever reasonably available. Consistent with Sup.R. 9.10(C), the Court will make all reasonable efforts to avoid appointing an interpreter who is compensated by a business owned or controlled by a party or witness; a friend or family or household member of a party or witness; a potential witness; Court personnel employed for a purpose other than interpreting; a law enforcement officer or probation department employee; or an individual who would not serve to protect a party's rights or the integrity of the proceedings, or who has an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

D. Language Services Outside the Courtroom. Consistent with Sup.R. 9.11, the Court ensures that LEP individuals and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing have meaningful access to ancillary services outside the courtroom, including by phone or at the counter. When Court staff cannot identify the language a person is speaking, staff will refer to an "I Speak" language identification guide. The Language Access Coordinator is responsible for distributing the guide to all staff, including new staff. For less-common languages, Court staff may use telephonic interpretation or relay services.

V. Translated Forms and Documents

The Court currently has the following forms translated into commonly used languages: none at this time; the Court will assess demographics and translate commonly used forms as resources allow.

When interpreters are engaged for a hearing, they are expected to provide sight translation of corresponding documents to LEP individuals. The Supreme Court of Ohio has also translated a number of court forms into Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Spanish, available on the Supreme Court's website. The Court follows the translation

process described in Appendix J to Interpreters in the Judicial System: A Handbook for Ohio Judges, and relies on the Supreme Court's Language Services Section for consultation and technical assistance.

VI. Local Rule

The Court has adopted a local rule regarding the appointment of interpreters, set forth at Rule 20.01 of these Local Rules, which incorporates by reference Sup.R. 9.00 through 9.11 and adopts this Plan as Appendix A. These Local Rules are available at the Meigs County Common Pleas Court office and on the Court's website.

VII. Training

Court staff who have or may have direct contact with LEP individuals or individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing will receive training on language access, coordinated by the Language Access Coordinator. The Language Access Coordinator will ensure that all staff receive updated training regularly and that new staff are trained at the time of hire, using resources provided by the Ohio Judicial College and the Supreme Court's Language Services Section.

VIII. Complaint Process

A concern that an LEP individual or an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing did not receive language assistance services may be raised with the Language Access Coordinator, or with the Supreme Court of Ohio at 1-888-317-3177 (Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), by email to InterpreterServices@sc.ohio.gov, or by mail to Language Services Section, Complaint Resolution, 65 South Front Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. If the Language Access Coordinator receives a complaint, the Coordinator will document its receipt, notify the supervisor of the affected employee(s), and notify the Supreme Court of Ohio's Language Services Section. The supervisor will promptly review, investigate, and respond to the complaint.

The Court will display, in common areas visible to all Court users, a sign translated into Ohio's most frequently used languages advising that an LEP individual has the right to a court-appointed interpreter, how to request one, and the Supreme Court's complaint line. The Language Access Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the sign remains posted and visible.

IX. Public Notification and Evaluation of the Plan

A. Approval. This Plan has been approved by the Administrative Judge. Future revisions will be submitted to the Administrative Judge for approval. Copies of this Plan will be distributed to all Court staff by the Language Access Coordinator.

B. Notification. The Language Access Coordinator will ensure new staff receive a copy of this Plan. Copies are available to the public upon request and are posted on the Court's website.

C. Evaluation. The Language Access Coordinator will review this Plan annually and recommend changes based on that review, including a review of complaints received, identification of problem areas, development of corrective action strategies, input from Court staff, and, where practical, feedback from LEP and deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals and community organizations. Revisions will be approved by the Administrative Judge and posted on the Court's website, consistent with Rule 20.01(B).

X. Official Designation of Language Access Coordinator and Back-Up Coordinator

Language Access Coordinator

Name: Amanda Reed Faulk

Title: Assignment Commissioner

Phone: 740-992-6439

Email: amanda@meigscommonpleascourt.com

In the event the Language Access Coordinator is unavailable, the Back-Up Language Access Coordinator will serve as the substitute.

Back-Up Language Access Coordinator

Name: Andrea VanInwagen

Title: Court Reporter and assistant Assignment Commissioner

Phone: 740-992-6439

Email: Andrea@meigscommonpleascourt.com

XI. Helpful Resources

Federal interagency website about language access: www.lep.gov

American Bar Association Standards for Language Access in Courts (February 2012)

U.S. Department of Justice Language Access Planning

Supreme Court of Ohio Language Services Section:

www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/courts/services-to-courts/language-services/

XII. Administrative Judge Approval

This Language Access Plan was reviewed and approved by:

Administrative Judge

Signature

Date

XIII. Effective Date

This Plan is effective as of October 1, 2026.

SECTION 21. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

RULE 21.01. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS.

(A) An administrative appeal is reviewed for case management purposes in the month following its filing, takes precedence over other pending civil actions, and is governed by the Administrative Appellate Procedure Act (R.C. 2506.01 et seq.) or the Administrative Procedure Act (R.C. 119.12), as applicable.

(B) Except for a workers' compensation appeal, every appeal from an administrative agency is governed by the same procedure:

- (1) The appellant shall order and cause the proper notice, transcript, and other required information to be filed with the Clerk of Courts, consistent with the applicable provisions of the Ohio Revised Code.
- (2) Within thirty days after a complete transcript of the original papers, testimony, and evidence offered at the administrative hearing is filed with the Clerk, the appellant shall file the appellant's assignments of error and brief.
- (3) Within thirty days after the appellant's brief is filed, the appellee shall file the appellee's brief in opposition, together with any cross-assignment of error.
- (4) Within fifteen days after the appellee's brief is filed, the appellant may file a reply brief.
- (5) Unless the Ohio Rules of Civil or Criminal Procedure or other law otherwise require, the Court may decide the appeal without an oral hearing.

(C) The administrative agency shall initially pay the cost of a complete transcript of the original papers, testimony, and evidence offered at the administrative hearing, and shall certify the cost incurred to the Clerk of Courts, who shall tax that cost as a court cost in the case.

RULE 21.02. APPEALS TO THE FOURTH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEALS.

(A) A notice of appeal from a final order, judgment, or decree of this Court shall be filed with the Clerk of Courts, consistent with App.R. 3 and 4. The Clerk shall promptly transmit a copy of the notice of appeal, together with the required docketing statement, to the Clerk of the Fourth District Court of Appeals, consistent with App.R. 3(D).

(B) The appellant shall file a praecipe with the Clerk of Courts directing the Clerk to prepare and transmit the record on appeal, consistent with App.R. 9 and 10. If a transcript of proceedings is necessary, the appellant shall file a praecipe with the Court's official Court Reporter, and shall make the financial arrangements necessary to obtain the transcript, consistent with App.R. 9(B).

(C) A deposit for the costs of appeal shall be made with the Clerk of Courts, consistent with the [fee schedule](#) then in effect, unless the appellant has filed a poverty affidavit or is otherwise exempt.

(D) A request to stay execution of a judgment or order pending appeal, and any required supersedeas bond, shall be made to this Court in the first instance, consistent with App.R. 7 and Civ.R. 62.

(E) This Rule addresses only this Court's local administrative procedures; the Ohio Rules of Appellate Procedure govern the substantive requirements and deadlines for perfecting an appeal.

RULE 21.03. DOMESTICATION OF FOREIGN JUDGMENTS.

(A) A judgment, decree, or order of a court of the United States or of another state, which is entitled to full faith and credit in this State, may be domesticated in this Court consistent with the Uniform Enforcement of Foreign Judgments Act, R.C. 2329.021 through 2329.027.

(B) A party seeking to domesticate a foreign judgment shall file with the Clerk of Courts an authenticated copy of the foreign judgment, together with an affidavit setting forth the name and last known address of the judgment debtor and the judgment creditor, consistent with R.C. 2329.022 and 2329.023.

(C) Upon filing, the Clerk shall treat the foreign judgment in the same manner as a judgment of this Court, and shall mail notice of the filing to the judgment debtor at the address provided, consistent with R.C. 2329.023.

(D) A foreign judgment filed under this Rule is subject to the same procedures for enforcement, stay, and satisfaction, and the judgment debtor is entitled to the same defenses, as a judgment of this Court, consistent with R.C. 2329.024 through 2329.026.

RULE 21.04. CERTIFICATE OF JUDGMENT; JUDGMENT LIENS.

(A) A judgment creditor seeking to make a judgment of this Court a lien upon the real estate of the judgment debtor shall file a praecipe with the Clerk of Courts requesting a Certificate of Judgment, consistent with R.C. 2329.02.

(B) The Clerk shall issue a Certificate of Judgment setting forth the county, case number, names of the parties, and the amount and date of the judgment. The judgment becomes a lien upon the judgment debtor's real estate in any county from the time a certified copy of the Certificate of Judgment is filed with the Clerk of Courts of that county, consistent with R.C. 2329.02.

(C) A judgment lien continues for five years from the date the Certificate of Judgment was filed in the county where the lien is claimed, and may be continued for additional periods by refile, consistent with R.C. 2329.07.

(D) Upon satisfaction of the judgment, the judgment creditor shall promptly file, or cause to be filed, a satisfaction of judgment or a release of the judgment lien with the Clerk of Courts of each county in which a Certificate of Judgment was filed.

RULE 21.05. RECEIVERSHIPS.

(A) Unless the Court's order of appointment specifically authorizes the receiver to continue operating a business, the receiver shall expeditiously take control of the debtor's assets; give notice of the appointment to all known creditors and afford them the opportunity to present and prove their claims; cause the assets to be inventoried and appraised; determine the validity and priority of creditors' claims; take the steps necessary to reduce the assets to cash; and distribute the proceeds among the creditors according to their priority.

(B) Within thirty days after appointment, the receiver shall submit to the Court, for approval before filing with the Clerk of Courts, an initial report consisting of an inventory and appraisal and an account of receipts and expenditures to date. The Court shall set the report for hearing when necessary; otherwise, the report shall be approved by judgment entry after approval by the receiver and the receiver's counsel.

(C) After the initial report, the receiver shall file consecutively numbered reports, at the interval the Court directs but not less often than quarterly, accounting for all receipts and expenditures during the reporting period and summarizing the receiver's plans for the remainder of the receivership.

(D) A receiver appointed to take charge of property and collect rents or other income may, without prior Court approval, expend funds for insurance, water and utility service, and emergency repairs necessary to maintain the property. The receiver shall apply to the Court for authority to take any other action not conferred by this Rule or the order of appointment.

(E) Before property appraised in excess of the amount set by the [fee schedule](#) then in effect is offered for public or private sale, the receiver shall file with the Court an estimate of the costs of sale, showing the expenditures incurred or to be incurred before the sale.

(F) An application for payment of the receiver's fees or the fees of the receiver's counsel, whether partial or final, shall be filed with the Clerk of Courts for the Court's approval. Written notice of a hearing on an application for fees exceeding the amount set by the [fee schedule](#) then in effect shall be given, personally or by mail, to all creditors or their counsel of record. Unless the Court orders otherwise, the application shall show the time spent on enumerated tasks, amounts collected, disbursed, and on hand, the status of secured and unsecured creditors' claims, and an estimate of the time necessary to complete the receivership.

(G) Whenever appropriate, the Court will appoint a receiver agreed upon by all parties. An attorney of record for a party shall not act as counsel for the receiver unless all parties agree or the Court directs otherwise.

(H) Failure to timely file an inventory, appraisal, account, or other report required by this Rule or by the Court is grounds for removal of the receiver or the receiver's counsel, and for denial of the receiver's or counsel's fees. A person removed as receiver under this division is ineligible for any subsequent appointment as receiver by this Court.

RULE 21.06. PROCESS SERVERS.

(A) One-Time Appointment. A party seeking personal service by a special process server under Civ.R. 4.1 shall file a motion to appoint a special process server, together with a proposed entry. The motion and entry shall state: the name of the person to be appointed; that the person is eighteen years of age or older; and that the person is not a party or counsel for a party in the action.

(B) Standing Appointment.

(1) A person may apply to be designated a standing special process server for cases filed in this Court by submitting an application, supported by an affidavit, stating: the applicant's name, address, and telephone number; that the applicant is eighteen years of age or older; that the applicant agrees not to attempt service of process in any case in which the applicant is a party, counsel for a party, or related to a party by blood or marriage; and that the applicant agrees to follow Civ.R. 4 through 4.6, these Local Rules, and any case-specific instructions for service ordered by the Court.

(2) The applicant shall submit a proposed order captioned "In Re the Appointment of [Name of Applicant] as Special Process Server," stating: "It appearing to the Court that the applicant has complied with Rule 21.06 of these Local Rules, [Name of Applicant] is hereby designated a Standing Special Process Server, authorized to make service of process in all cases filed with this Court for one year from the filing of this Order." The order shall be signed by the Administrative Judge.

(3) The Clerk of Courts shall record the appointment on the Court's general docket and retain the original application, affidavit, and order. Until the order expires, the Clerk shall accept a file-stamped copy of the order as satisfying the designation requirement of Civ.R. 4.1.

(4) An order appointing a standing special process server expires one year from the date it is filed. A person wishing to continue serving as a standing special process server shall submit a new application under division (B)(1).

RULE 21.07. MEDIA RECORDING OF COURT PROCEEDINGS.

(A) Broadcasting, televising, recording, and photographing by news media during a courtroom session, including recesses between sessions, is permitted subject to this Rule. This Rule is separate from, and does not limit, the Court's own recording of proceedings for its official record or for the Court's YouTube channel, consistent with Section 4 (Courtroom Procedures).

(B) A request for permission to broadcast, televise, record, or photograph in the courtroom, or to join an active video hearing, shall be made to the Court in writing as far in advance as reasonably practical, and in no event later than one day before the courtroom session or video hearing, unless the Court orders otherwise. The Court may order case-specific procedures for a case attracting a high level of public interest.

(C) The Court shall approve or deny a request under this Rule by judgment entry, which shall address equipment, personnel, lighting, sound, and any other relevant matter.

(D) If multiple media representatives seek to cover a session, arrangements for "pooling" equipment and personnel shall be made among the media representatives outside the

courtroom, without imposing on the Judge, Magistrate, or Court personnel to mediate a dispute over the appropriate pool representative or equipment.

(E) The Court may summarily revoke permission granted under this Rule if a media representative fails to comply with any case-specific condition prescribed by the Judge or Magistrate, the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio, or this Rule.

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