**BECKHAM COUNTY PRELIMINARY HEARING CONFERENCES**

**PROCEDURES BEGINNING MAY 18, 2020**

Preliminary Hearing Conference Dockets will resume with Judge Jones on May 18, 2020. The following procedures will be implemented (tested) assuming the Beckham County Courthouse is open, at a minimum, to limited access. If not, then all hearings will be via videoconference until further notice.

A videoconference meeting was held on May 6, 2020 with the court clerk, DA office representatives, Defense counsel representatives, BKSO representatives, and Judge Jones. The information below is a summary from that meeting.

1. Attorneys have access to inmates at the jail via Facebook. You will need an apple device in order for this to work. This is the preferred method to visit with your client. However, they will also allow in person visits. Please contact the jail in advance to obtain the procedures. In essence, you cannot just show up unexpected. The contact in the jail is Captain Morris or Lt. Garcia.
2. The District Attorney’s office is working on a procedure for attorneys to have digital access to discovery. Furthermore, they will be making every effort to make recommendations at least one week in advance of the conference date.
3. Defendant’s will be allowed to enter a plea during PHC docket. Inmates will appear via videoconference. The attorneys will be present in the courtroom and will deliver the executed plea paperwork to the Court. Defendants out on bond will appear personally, under the guidelines outlined below.
4. We are going to try to resume proceedings in the courtroom with defendant’s out on bond to the extent possible. If this becomes an issue, then we will reevaluate the situation. Judge Jones will review the docket one week in advance and will devise a staggered schedule. The goal is to have approximately 5 defendants appear in the courtroom at one time to adhere to social distancing and limit the capacity in the courtroom in accordance to the number set by the Governor. The courtroom capacity will be posted on the door of the courtroom. The goal will be to handle the inmates at the beginning of the docket so the jail will not have to remain on videoconference all morning. Attorneys may wait in the courtroom, provided they practice social distancing and do not exceed the number allowed in the courtroom.
5. When setting Preliminary Hearings, the Court will assign a specific time for the hearing. This will help alleviate the congregation of participants in the courtroom.  The defendants will be need to be instructed to remain in their vehicles until their case is called and the attorneys will need to summon them to the courtroom when their case is ready to be heard. The DA’s office will have a system for witnesses as well, either having them stay in their vehicle or a designated waiting area.
6. All bond reduction requests for those cases set on the PHC docket must be in writing and provided to the District Attorney’s office. This will allow the ADA time review the case and prepare for argument (or agreement on the PHC docket. Please keep in mind that the DA will have to comply with Marsy’s law and a bond hearing may not always be possible on the PHC docket.
7. Please refer to AO-2020-4 issued by Judge Weedon on May 4, 2020. This order will answer most questions as it relates to social distancing and the use of masks. Please plan to wear a mask in the courtroom during the PHC docket. You will need to advise your clients that masks are required.
8. If you or a client require special accommodations, please contact the court.

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE COURT WILL ALSO ENTERTAIN ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REQUESTS FOR PRELIMINARY HEARINGS PRIOR TO THE DOCKET. REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES WILL BE NEED TO BE ADDRESSED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS VIA TELECONFERENCE WITH THE PARTIES. I UNDERSTAND CASES WERE CONTINUED DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND YOUR CONTROL. HOWEVER, MY HOPE IS THAT THE PARTIES HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THE UPCOMING CASES TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY.**