



Signed: June 3, 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul M. Black". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Paul M. Black

United States Bankruptcy Chief Judge

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA**

IN RE: )  
)  
**COURTROOM REOPENING PROCEDURES** ) Standing Order No. 21-2  
**FOR JUDGE PAUL M. BLACK** )  
**(ROANOKE LOCATION ONLY)** )

In response to the national emergency created by the COVID-19 outbreak, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Virginia suspended in-person hearings. Based upon current circumstances relating to the decrease in COVID-19 cases and the availability of vaccinations in the Western District of Virginia, this Court has determined that it is appropriate to reopen its Roanoke courtroom to in-person hearings. Beginning with Judge Black's standing Chapter 13 hearing date of July 12, 2021 for the Roanoke location only, the following procedures will apply:

1. Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, the Court will hold all initial hearings on any Chapter 13 matters, specifically plan confirmation and non-motion for relief matters, in person, in the courtroom in Roanoke. However, if counsel for any party, the Debtor, or any other interested party wishes to participate in the hearing by video through Zoom for Government, that party must inform Judge Black's Courtroom Deputy, Sabrina Lee, by email at

Sabrina\_Lee@vawb.uscourts.gov or by phone at 540-795-6224, by noon two (2) business days prior to the hearing that the party will be appearing by Zoom for Government. Otherwise, attendance in person by any party or counsel is required.

2. Each initial hearing on any Chapter 13 matter, specifically plan confirmation and non-motion for relief matters, will be treated as an initial scheduling hearing. Even if objections to confirmation of a Chapter 13 Plan are filed or responses are filed to a motion, if the parties reach an agreement to resolve the matter, an order confirming the Chapter 13 Plan or resolving the matter may be tendered to the Court prior to the scheduled hearing. The Court may enter that order prior to the hearing provided any objection deadline has passed and the Court, upon its own assessment, determines that the order is otherwise appropriate.

3. If at the initial hearing on a Chapter 13 confirmation and non-motion for relief matters, it becomes apparent that routine Chapter 13 issues need to be addressed, then the Court at that time will determine whether the future hearing will be held in person or by video through Zoom for Government and whether a scheduling order should be entered. Examples of routine Chapter 13 issues include, but are not limited to, the following: a deadline to file a pre-confirmation affidavit, a deadline to become current on Plan payments, or a deadline to file tax returns. If the matter is resolved prior to the continued hearing, the parties may submit an agreed order for consideration by the Court prior to the scheduled hearing.

4. If at the initial hearing it becomes apparent that a non-routine issue is pending and it is likely the parties will need to present evidence or testimony at a future hearing, then the Court at that time will determine whether the future hearing will be held in person or by video through Zoom for Government and whether a scheduling order should be entered. If the matter is resolved prior to the continued hearing, the parties may submit an agreed order for consideration by the Court prior to the scheduled hearing.

5. If a debtor must appear and show cause at a future hearing for failing to comply with a condition or deadline as provided in a Court order, if the show cause is not activated, the parties can either announce their agreement resolving the matter at the continued hearing date or continue the matter to a future date with any new conditions based on any current issues. If a show cause hearing is required to go forward, in-person appearances will be required by both the Debtor(s) and counsel, if any.

6. Chapter 7 and Chapter 11 dockets shall proceed in person in Roanoke. Requests to appear at the hearing by video through Zoom for Government must be made to Judge Black's Courtroom Deputy, Sabrina Lee, at least two (2) business days in advance, and will be addressed by the Court on a case-by-case basis.

7. Unless otherwise specifically requested in the motion and approved by the Court, the initial hearing on a motion for relief from stay shall be treated as a preliminary hearing. Requests to appear at the hearing by video through Zoom for Government must be made to Judge Black's Courtroom Deputy, Sabrina Lee, at least two (2) business days in advance, and will be addressed by the Court on a case-by-case basis. The Court's standard pre-hearing order, and deadlines set therein, are unaffected by the entry of this Order.

8. Matters set for the Roanoke, Abingdon, and Danville dockets will be heard on the dates calendared for those dockets. However, any party may request that a matter be heard on the date of a different docket, which the Court will address on a case-by-case basis. Such requests must be made to Judge Black's Courtroom Deputy, Sabrina Lee.

9. Until further Order of this Court, Judge Black will continue to hold hearings in the Abingdon and Danville dockets by video through Zoom for Government.

It is so **ORDERED**.

**\*\*End of Order\*\***