

Alissa Hudson

From: pwcbbar@mail-list.com on behalf of David Bailey <pwcbbar@mail-list.com>
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2020 11:43 AM
To: pwcbbar-ml@mail-list.com
Subject: [pwcbbar] JDR Docket Status and Procedures for Appointment of Counsel

This message was sent by David Bailey dbailey@vacourts.gov

2020 is drawing to a close, and as we cheer its demise, I thought this would be a good time to update everyone on how things stand in J&DR. At this time, we have no plans to scale back our operations. As those of you who are patiently waiting for trial dates already know, we had previously reduced our dockets on first returns and staggered our docket times to reduce numbers in the courtroom and the hallways. In furtherance of this effort, please ask your clients to leave supportive family, spouses and significant others at home, as well as minors who are not required in the hearing. We should only have litigants and witnesses if humanly possible. Also, while our trial docket is becoming more manageable, we all also know that longer (half-day) hearings are scarce and quite far away. Afternoon hearings (two hours) are more plentiful and much closer in time. Please keep this in mind when scheduling your civil trials.

The Clerk's office has forms to request witness/litigant appearance by video or phone available. This will be brought to the trial judge for action when filed, with appropriate notice to the other side. This should reduce the hearings necessary to consider these requests. Given the Supreme Court's recent decrees, I anticipate these being liberally granted, absent good cause to the contrary, in most civil cases.

We will be meeting with the Prince William County police department and the Commonwealth's Attorney to talk about criminal scheduling and trying to even out our dockets in courtroom 6. Should these discussions end up with any material proposed change to our docketing methods, the Public Defender's office and representatives from the defense bar will be involved in discussing, modifying and implementing any such changes before they go into effect.

Beginning in the new year, the Public Defender's office will be appointed to the bulk of cases, juvenile and adult. There will still be plenty of cases, overflow, conflict, and civil, for the appointed bar. In response to your input, we will be moving to a rotating system of appointment in each affected courtroom (1,3,4 and 6). Each court will have its own rotating list, arranged differently in each room. This will ensure that no one attorney gets the bulk of cases in a day all at once, and that the civil appointments are equitably distributed. We will also be able to update the cards with vacations, special requests and the like. Any such requests, or applications to become an appointed attorney on this level, should be communicated to the Chief Judge (yours truly for now) and Ms. Burnett, the Clerk of Court. Ms. Zadrozny will no longer be coordinating our efforts regarding the list. I will also be reviewing and update the requirements found in our time savers to reflect this new system.

Lastly, I would like to thank Amanda Zadrozny, our most recent coordinator of the appointed lists, for all of her efforts during this transition, not the least of which was gathering and reporting the desires of the bar regarding making the appointed list remain viable. It would not have been possible without her, and we here express our gratitude. I hope you will do the same; Ms. Zadrozny was a direct but diplomatic advocate for your concerns, and they were heard.

Please be safe, and be smart. Despite everyone's best efforts, the outside world will continue to batter at the gates with Christmas lures and holiday parties. The more zealous about precautions all of us are, the more likely we can continue to function into the new year without interruption.

D. Scott Bailey, Chief Judge

Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

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