

**IN THE MATTER OF WITHDRAWAL  
OF OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR  
PIERCE COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT****ORDER**

WHEREAS, on March 22, 2020, and as amended on April 15, 2020, the Wisconsin Supreme Court suspended, until further order of the court, most in-person proceedings, subject to exceptions for certain matters, if remote technology is not practicable or adequate to protect the constitutional rights of the citizens of Wisconsin.

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ordered each circuit court to submit an operational plan to the chief judge of the applicable judicial administrative district. The operational plan was to include the requirements set forth in the order, and reduce to the greatest extent possible the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19, and promote the health and safety of all those present in the courtrooms and other court-related confined spaces. Supreme Court Orders, *In Re the Matter of the Extension of Orders and Interim rule concerning Continuation of Jury Trials, Suspension of Statutory Deadlines for Non-Criminal Jury Trials, and Remote Hearings during the COVID-19 Pandemic (05/22/20)* and *In Re the matter of the Final Report of the Wisconsin Courts COVID-19 Task Force (05/22/20)*.

WHEREAS, on July 23, 2020, the Pierce County Circuit Court submitted an operational plan to resume in-person court proceedings pursuant to the Wisconsin Supreme Court's May 22, 2020, order which was approved by the chief judge July 27, 2020.

WHEREAS, on November 30, 2020, the Pierce County Circuit Court issued an order to withdraw the July 27, 2020, approved operational plan due to a critically high rate of transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

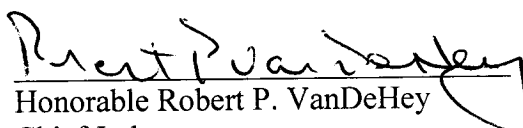
IT IS ORDERED the July 27, 2020, operational plan for the Pierce County Circuit Court is hereby withdrawn.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED the Pierce County Circuit Court shall again be subject to the Wisconsin Supreme Court's orders *In Re the Matter of Remote Hearings During the COVID-19 Pandemic (04/15/20)*, and *In Re the Matter of Jury Trials During the COVID-19 Pandemic (03/22/20)*, and interim rule 20-02 *In the Matter of an Interim Rule Re Suspension of Deadlines for Non-Criminal Jury Trials Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic*.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED Pierce County Circuit Court shall submit a written operational plan subject to chief judge review and approval prior to resuming in-person court proceedings and jury trials.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED the provisions of this order shall be subject to modification or termination by future orders.

Dated this 30th day of November, 2020.

  
Honorable Robert P. VanDeHey  
Chief Judge  
Seventh Judicial Administrative District

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**ORDER TO WITHDRAW OPERATIONAL PLAN**

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Based on the factual data provided in Governor Evers' Executive Orders #90 and #94 Relating to Declaring a Public Health Emergency, and based on the current existing conditions in Pierce County, Wisconsin, as related to the COVID-19 pandemic, this court hereby rescinds and withdraws in entirety its Operational Plan dated July 27, 2020.

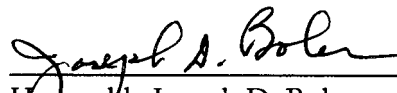
Numerous departments in the Pierce County Courthouse have experienced positive COVID-19 tests resulting in near shut down of offices due to quarantine. The schools are unable to remain open due to staffing shortages created by widespread quarantine and positive tests. Although various departments require meeting by appointment only, Pierce County officials have in the past indicated that the Courthouse will not be closed to the public nor will access be limited or monitored for compliance with masking requirements. Pierce County is at a critically high rate of transmission. It is critical that personal contact be avoided if at all possible in order to prevent further transmission of the COVID-19 virus so that court related offices are adequately staffed with employees in an effort to continue to conduct essential and remote hearings.

The Pierce County Circuit Court is committed to providing open access to our courts and services to the public, and to protecting the health and safety of the litigants, victims, judges, court staff and security, attorneys, jurors and other participants in court proceedings, as well as all other persons in the court facilities. All non confidential hearings will continue to be conducted by remote means if possible. Public access to remote hearings may be facilitated by contacting either the Judicial Assistant or Clerk of Courts Office to obtain Zoom or phone information.

The situation is being closely monitored. The Judge, in consultation with the public health department, will make every effort to reopen and reissue an Operational Plan when the present pandemic numbers cease to steadily rise and a significant downward trend can be identified by public health.

These guidelines are in place to ensure the continuous performance of the court's essential functions and operations and yet seek to mitigate the exposure risk to our employees, attorneys, litigants, and jurors. The guidelines incorporate the use of videoconferencing and teleconferencing to minimize contact, when appropriate; and follow social distancing practices. For specific information on a particular case, call the Judicial Assistant at 715-273-1129 or the Clerk of Court at 715-273-6741.

Dated this 30<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2020.

  
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Honorable Joseph D. Boles  
Circuit Court Judge  
Pierce County, Wisconsin.