



NICK A. SELVAGGIO, JUDGE

Champaign County Court of Common Pleas, General Division

Scott D. Schockling, Magistrate
Sandi G. Perry, Court Administrator

Janelle L. Bey, Judicial Assistant
Jennifer L. Demarco, Judicial Assistant
Christie L. Harrigan, Judicial Assistant

PRESS RELEASE – MAY 12, 2020 – (2 pages total)

PETIT JURY TRIAL LOCATION TO BE MOVED TO COMMUNITY CENTER

GRAND JURY LOCATION TO REMAIN AT COUNTY COURTHOUSE

HEARINGS OF THE COMMON PLEAS COURT (2ND FLOOR) AND FAMILY COURT (3RD FLOOR) REMAIN AT THE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Judge Nick A. Selvaggio announces that the implications of the COVID-19 virus have caused the Common Pleas Court to order a change in location for felony criminal jury trials from the Champaign County Courthouse to the Champaign County Community Center Auditorium. All other second floor court hearings will remain at the Courthouse.

The first jury trial is scheduled for June 2-4, 2020. A return date for jury trials at the Courthouse has not yet been determined.

The third floor operations of the Champaign County Family Court will remain at the Courthouse and are unaffected by this change in location.

“Governor DeWine’s mandatory and recommended public health protocols provide the Court with the needed guidance to safely conduct a trial by jury in a manner that will give all trial participants access to justice while minimizing their risk of exposure to the virus,” said Judge Selvaggio.

Judge Selvaggio credited the partnership between the Court, the Champaign County Health District, Champaign County Sheriff’s Office and the Board of Champaign County Commissioners to be able to plan for these proceedings.

“Champaign Health District infectious disease staff has conducted a thorough review of the Champaign County Common Pleas Court’s COVID-19 Jury Trial Protocol. Prior to review of the protocol, Judge Selvaggio provided the Champaign Health District with a walkthrough of the layout of the environment in which the Court will take place,” said Champaign County Health Commissioner Gabe Jones.

“Upon completion of the walkthrough and after review and consultation with infectious disease staff on the COVID-19 Jury Trial Protocol, Champaign Health District has found that the guidelines are consistent with the social distancing guidelines set forth in the Ohio Department of Health Director’s Stay Safe Ohio Order,” said Health Commissioner Jones.

“Upon review, we found that Judge Selvaggio was thorough in all considerations when it comes to protecting the health of the public and preventing the spread of contagious or infectious diseases such as COVID-19. We compared the measures written into the COVID-19 Jury Trial Protocol to the Ohio Department of Health’s guidelines, written based upon the facts and the science existing at this time in Ohio concerning prevention of COVID-19, and we found all precautions and measures to be consistent with the state’s recommendations,” said Health Commissioner Jones.

“We are fortunate to have a spacious county-owned facility that can house many public and private events. I’m sure the Commissioners never thought the Auditorium would serve as a courtroom, but the implications of the pandemic require the Court to develop an innovative, pro-active approach to criminal justice,” said Judge Selvaggio.

As a result of “social distancing modifications” to the second floor courtroom, sessions of the Champaign County Grand Jury have continued to be able to be held at the Courthouse.

“We have also conducted a review of the Champaign County Common Pleas Court’s COVID-19 Grand Jury Protocol. We found this protocol to be consistent with the measures required for social distancing outlined in the Director’s Stay Safe Ohio Order, including all other Responsible Protocols,” said Jones.

“The April and May grand jurors answered their duty to citizenship and accepted that the courtroom modifications were made for the health and safety of all involved. The process has gone very smoothly thus far,” said Judge Selvaggio.

END



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Health Commissioner
Gabe Jones, MPH

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Dr. Joshua Richards, MD
Dr. Ahsan Ullah, MD

May 8, 2020

Champaign Health District infectious disease staff has conducted a thorough review of the Champaign County Common Pleas Court's COVID-19 Jury Trial Protocol. Prior to review of the protocol, the Court Staff provided Champaign Health District with a walkthrough of the layout of the environment in which the Court will take place. Upon completion of the walkthrough and after review and consultation with infectious disease staff on the COVID-19 Jury Trial Protocol, Champaign Health District has found that the guidelines are consistent with the social distancing guidelines set forth in the Ohio Department of Health Director's Stay Safe Ohio Order. Upon review, we found that the Court was thorough in all considerations when it comes to protecting the health of the public and preventing the spread of contagious or infectious diseases such as COVID-19. We compared the measures written into the COVID-19 Jury Trial Protocol to the Ohio Department of Health's guidelines, written based upon the facts and the science existing at this time in Ohio concerning prevention of COVID-19, and we found all precautions and measures to be consistent with the state's recommendations.

Furthermore, we have also conducted a review of the Champaign County Common Pleas Court's COVID-19 Grand Jury Protocol. We found this protocol to be consistent with the measures required for social distancing outlined in the Director's Stay Safe Ohio Order, including all other Responsible Protocols.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gabe Jones", written over a white background.

Gabe Jones, MPH
Health Commissioner
Champaign Health District