

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE**

GENERAL ORDER CONCERNING REMOTE ACCESS TO HEARINGS

General Order No. 23-0001

THIS GENERAL ORDER is issued in response to the recent revision by the Judicial Conference to the “Cameras in the Courtroom” policy (Guide to Judiciary Policy (“Guide”), Vol. 10, Ch. 4; JCUS-SEP 1990, pp. 103-104; JCUS-SEP 1994, pp. 46-47). The policy, as revised, permits a judge presiding over a civil or bankruptcy non-trial proceeding, in the judge’s discretion, to authorize live remote public audio access to any portion of that proceeding in which a witness is not testifying, taking care to include measures, consistent with the parties’ responsibilities, to safeguard any confidential, sensitive, or otherwise protected information. The revised policy also gives the presiding judge the discretion to allow members of the public or media to access some proceedings without physically attending the proceedings by listening to live audio. The revised policy addresses only public access and does not impact a judge’s authority to use tele- and videoconferencing technology to facilitate civil and bankruptcy proceedings in appropriate cases with respect to case participants, including parties, counsel, witnesses, and interpreters. This authority is governed by the Rules of Procedure, statute, case law, and local and circuit policies and rules.

In March 2020, the Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference adopted an exception to the previous “Cameras in the Courtroom” policy that generally prohibited the broadcasting, televising, recording, or photographing of non-ceremonial trial court proceedings. The exception was adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and terminated on September 21, 2023.

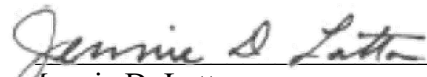
On March 17, 2020, this Court issued its General Order No. 20-0001, “General Order Concerning Hearings,” in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to encourage the use of tele- and videoconferencing to limit the risks of in-person hearings to Court personnel, attorneys, debtors, creditors, and the general public. The Court has found through this experience that the use of tele- and videoconferencing, in appropriate circumstances, is helpful to the Court and to the parties appearing before it.

ACCORDINGLY, the Court issues this general order to conform to the “Cameras in the Courtroom” policy as revised by the Judicial Conference and to make clear that the use of tele- and videoconferencing with respect to case participants, including parties, counsel, witnesses, and interpreters, may continue in the discretion of the presiding judge.

THEREFORE, it is **ORDERED** that effective **Wednesday, November 1, 2023:**

1. General Order No. 20-0001 is superseded by this General Order No. 23-0001.
2. Each of the bankruptcy judges in this district is authorized to devise his or her own policies concerning the routine use of tele- or videoconferencing for bankruptcy hearings. Each judge will use suitable means, including, but not limited to, the court’s website, tnwb.uscourts.gov, to inform the United States Trustee and his/her staff, case trustees and their staffs, attorneys, debtors, creditors, and other parties in interest of his or her preferences concerning the routine use of tele- or videoconferencing.
3. Each of the bankruptcy judges in this district is likewise authorized to entertain non-routine requests for participation by tele- or videoconferencing in bankruptcy hearings in response to appropriate motions made by a party in interest.
4. Each of the bankruptcy judges in this district, when presiding over a non-trial proceeding, may in the judge’s discretion, authorize live remote public audio access to any portion of that proceeding in which a witness is not testifying and may allow members of the public or media to access some proceedings without physically attending the proceedings by listening to live audio.

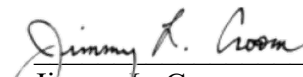
SO ORDERED by the Court effective November 1, 2023.



Jennie D. Latta
Chief Bankruptcy Judge



M. Ruthie Hagan
Bankruptcy Judge



Jimmy L. Croom
Bankruptcy Judge



Denise E. Barnett
Bankruptcy Judge