UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

In the matter of:

COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

REPLACES GENERAL ORDER 20-3 UPON EXPIRATION OF THE SEVENTH EXTENSION ON JUNE 30, 2021

GENERAL ORDER 21-1

This General Order is being issued in response to the ongoing public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to further the operations of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Arizona in light of the reduction in COVID-19 related illnesses and increased vaccination rate. Upon consideration of the foregoing, **effective July 1, 2021**:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED as follows:

- 1. All court hearings, unless otherwise ordered or unless otherwise stated herein shall be conducted telephonically or by videoconference. In-person trials or other evidentiary hearings may be conducted, as determined on a case-by-case basis by the presiding judge, and in consultation with the parties, subject to observance of the safety protocols set forth herein. Provisions will be made for a telephonic or videoconference appearance for any Participant, defined as any attorney, litigant or witness, who chooses not to appear in person.
- 2. The following protocols must be observed and followed in any in-person evidentiary hearing or trial:
 - a. All Participants are to observe social distancing rules. No more than one counsel and one client representative may sit at each counsel table at a time.

- b. All Participants are to wear face coverings during the court proceeding. During the proceeding the presiding judge may authorize removal of a face covering for purposes of witness testimony, identification, making an appropriate record or other reasons deemed necessary by the judge, provided that social distancing or other protective measures are followed.
- c. Courtrooms may be modified in accordance with recommendations of health authorities, including by the use of plexiglass shields, modified spaced seating arrangements and limitations on the number of participants in the courtroom.
- d. Enhanced cleaning measures may be employed as necessary.
- 3. All mediations shall continue to be conducted telephonically or by videoconference.
 - 4. All non-case related events are cancelled pending further notice.
 - 5. General Orders 20-4, as amended, and 20-5 remain in full force and effect.
- 6. This General Order does not affect other aspects of Bankruptcy Court operations within the District of Arizona. Parties are advised to closely monitor the Court's website at the following link to stay apprised of future developments impacting Bankruptcy Court operations and case administration: http://www.azb.uscourts.gov.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this General Order will remain in effect through September 30, 2021, unless otherwise rescinded, amended, or extended, as necessary.

Dated this 25th day of May, 2021.

FOR THE COURT:

Benda Mersfel

Honorable Brenda Moody Whinery, Chief Judge