

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF FORSYTH

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE

20 R 503

FILED

2020 OCT 28 A 10:14

FORSYTH CO., N.C.
BY *Jawad H. Bines*

IN RE: CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19))
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CLOSURE OF THE FORSYTH COUNTY)
HALL OF JUSTICE)
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_____)

The undersigned relying upon good information from the Forsyth County Clerk of Court and Chief District Court Judge, that persons employed at the Forsyth County Hall of Justice have tested positive for COVID-19, a highly contagious communicable disease. The number of persons constitute what's considered to be a COVID-19 cluster.

Based upon a review of information readily available, the following facts are found.

- 1) Employees in different departments that work at the Forsyth County Hall of Justice have reported positive tests for COVID-19.
- 2) The number of employees that have tested positive for COVID-19 constitute what is defined as a COVID CLUSTER.
- 3) These facts came to the attention of the undersigned late on the afternoon of October 27, 2020.
- 4) COVID-19 is highly contagious and can be deadly.
- 5) In similar situations public health officials have advised as a precaution that the affected building be shut down for a deep cleaning prior to re-opening. In the alternative the building shall be shut down for fourteen (14) days for appropriate quarantine.
- 6) As has been the case throughout the Pandemic crisis, this court is faced with making unprecedented decisions concerning the closure of courthouse facilities, which are generally required by law to be open to the public. Such decisions necessarily include a balancing of the imperative and absolute necessity of protecting the public from the possibility of infection, while at the same time protecting the constitutional rights of those having pending civil and criminal proceedings that need to be addressed in a timely manner.

Therefore, based upon the foregoing, it is **HEREBY ORDERED**:

- 1) After consultation with the Forsyth County Health Department and Forsyth County Hall of Justice Stakeholders, the undersigned has determined that the Forsyth County Hall of Justice close with the exception of limited purposes at the close of business on October 27, 2020. The Hall of Justice in conjunction with the Forsyth County Clerk of Court will remain open to hear:
 - First appearances
 - Initial requests for emergency protection
 - Requests for injunctive relief
 - Restraining orders
 - Ten (10) day return hearings
 - Involuntary commitments
 - Child welfare and juvenile delinquency matters
- 2) The Forsyth County Hall of Justice shall re-open for employees on Thursday, November 12, 2020.
- 3) All Courts scheduled shall be cancelled unless otherwise notified.
- 4) Upon the re-opening of the Forsyth County Hall of Justice it is mandated that no employee return to work if experiencing any symptoms of the CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19).

This the 28th day of October 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "L. Todd Burke", written over a horizontal line.

L. Todd Burke
Senior Resident Superior Court Judge