

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY**

**AMENDED GENERAL ORDER REGARDING COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE
EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

WHEREAS the Centers for Disease Control has directed all employers and places of public accommodation to plan and prepare for operations that help to minimize spread of the Coronavirus that causes COVID-19; and

WHEREAS the District of New Jersey is among those areas with a significant number of identified and projected cases of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS this Court continues to monitor its operations to identify measures that will help slow the spread of COVID-19 by minimizing contact between persons, while at the same time, preserving its core mission of serving the public through the fair and impartial administration of justice;

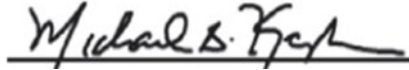
IT IS hereby on this 29th day of December 2021 **ORDERED:**

- 1) The United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of New Jersey will remain open. Clerk's Office staff will continue to be available by mail, email, and through the main phone line in each vicinage. Due to the sharp rise in reported COVID-19 cases, the Clerk's Office front counters will be temporarily closed. If reopened, a counter schedule will be posted on the Court's website. Filings will continue through CM/ECF and limited staff will be available to receive mail and process intake. The public should utilize the Court's services in a manner consistent with state and local health guidelines;
- 2) Unless otherwise directed by the presiding judge, trials will continue in the ordinary course and will be conducted remotely. Parties are directed to contact the presiding judge's chambers for guidance on individual cases. More specific protocols for remote trials have been posted on the Court's website;

- 3) Unless oral argument is requested, on written notice to all parties in interest, all motions and contested matters will be presumed to be heard on the papers. Parties may request oral argument via email to chambers. If permitted by the judge, oral argument must be conducted remotely and presented through a third-party provider. The recording by the third-party provider will constitute the official record of the Court. The Court will also consider and accommodate all reasonable adjournment requests;
- 4) All case trustees will consider and accommodate all reasonable requests for continuance of § 341(a) meetings;
- 5) For purposes of clarity, no deadlines are extended unless otherwise set forth in this Order;
- 6) The exigent circumstances created by COVID-19 warrant the following exceptions:
 - a. Original signature retention requirements for counsel under local and national rules are deferred.
 - b. Parties initiating contested matters under Fed. R. Bank P. 9013 and 9014, may effectuate service through electronic mail. Regular mail service is still required for all parties and counsel for which such means of service is unavailable.
 - c. These exceptions will expire on March 31, 2022 unless otherwise modified by this Court.
- 7) This Order modifies the Court's (i) General Order dated March 16, 2020, (ii) Amended General Order dated March 19, 2020, (iii) Amended General Order dated March 27, 2020, (iv) Amended General Order dated April 6, 2020, (v) Amended General Order dated May 1, 2020, (vi) Amended General Order dated June 1, 2020, (vii) Amended General Order dated July 31, 2020, (viii) Amended General Order dated September 8, 2020, (ix) Amended General Order dated October 30, 2020, (x) Amended General Order dated January 4, 2021, (xi) Amended General Order dated March 31, 2021, (xii) Amended General Order dated

April 26, 2021, (xiii) Amended General Order dated August 27, 2021, and (xiv) Amended General Order dated November 23, 2021.

- 8) The provisions of this Order are effective as of January 4, 2022 and shall remain in effect through and including March 31, 2022. This Order may be revisited at that time and is subject to interim revision as conditions may occur.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael B. Kaplan", written over a horizontal line.

Michael B. Kaplan, Chief Judge
U.S. Bankruptcy Court
District of New Jersey