

# TOWN OF COTTAGE GROVE MUNICIPAL COURT

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4058 County Road N  
Cottage Grove, WI 53527  
608-839-5021

April Hammond  
Municipal Judge

## Operational Plan for In-Person Court Appearances During COVID-19 Shut Down as Determined by the Wisconsin Supreme Court

### **1. Statement of Collaboration**

The Town of Cottage Grove and the Municipal Court for the Town of Cottage Grove will ensure the safety and health of all individuals attending court in person by working collaboratively to meet and follow the recommendations set forth by the Wisconsin Supreme Court on May 22, 2020.

### **2. Face Coverings Mandatory**

The wearing of a face covering/face mask shall be mandatory for all persons entering the courtroom, including the judge, bailiff, court staff, attorneys, parties, witnesses and members of the public. Any person who refuses to wear a mask shall not be admitted. Individuals will be notified prior to court in writing of a recommendation to provide and wear their own face mask. If resources are available to the court, face masks will be provided to individuals unable to provide their own. If the court is unable to provide face masks due to unavailability of resources and individuals do not have their own, the court will provide one adjourned date for initial appearance. There will be no adjournment of a trial due to a party, attorney or witness refusing to wear a mask. The trial will proceed without that person participating.

### **3. Sanitation**

Prior to in-person proceedings, appropriate sanitation/hygiene cleaning practices will take place in the courtroom and other court-related confined spaces. These same appropriate sanitation/hygiene cleaning practices will take place in the courtroom after the court session has concluded. Hand sanitizer will be available to individuals entering the building. Additionally gloves, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes will be available in the courtroom. Staff will ensure that surfaces that have been touched during transactions or proceedings are wiped down before the next transaction or proceeding (tables, witness stands microphones, etc.).

### **4. Enhanced Barriers**

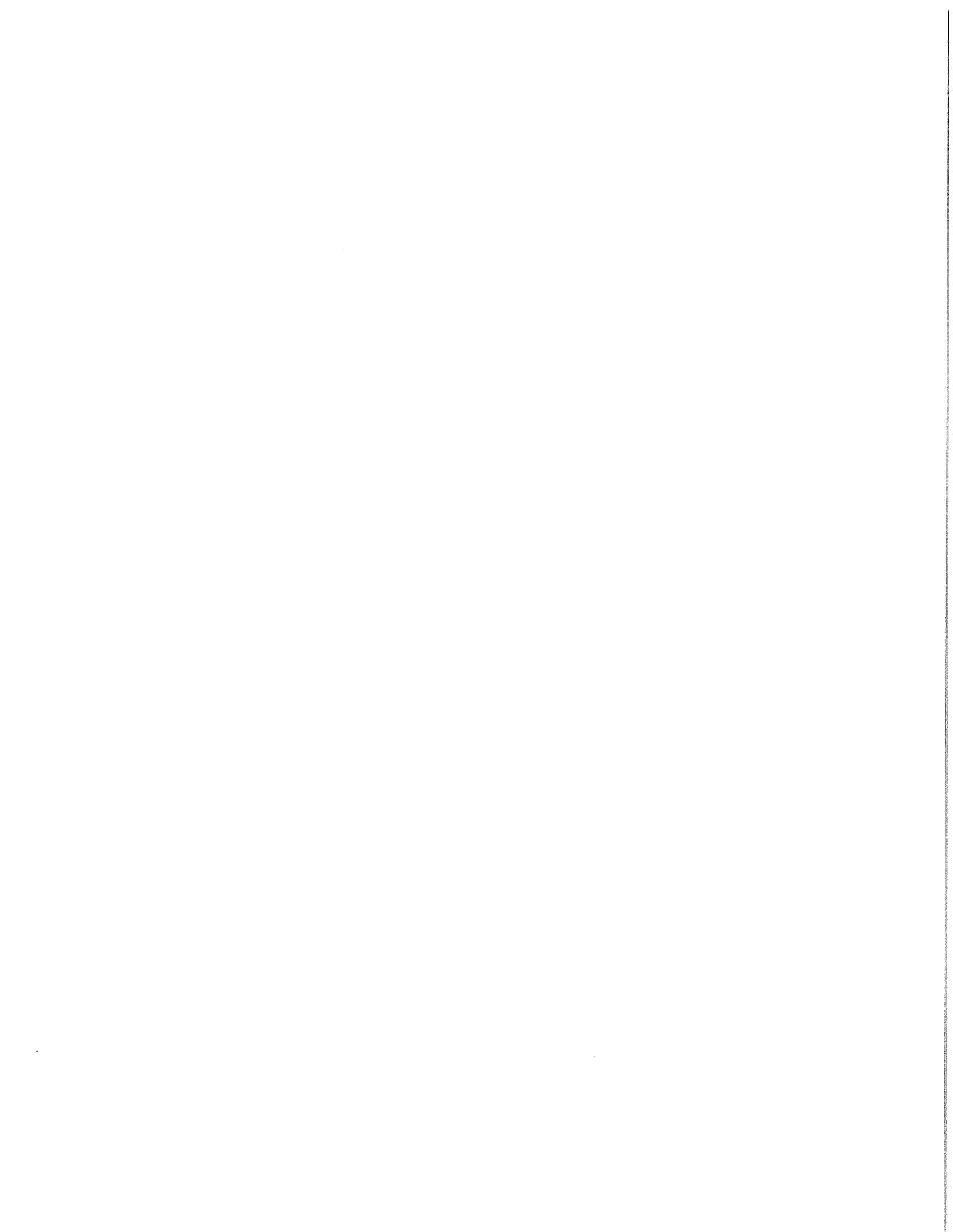
A plexiglass barrier will be erected between the public and court staff conducting direct transactions. Social distancing requirements will be utilized and met in all other situations to protect the judge, court staff, witnesses, parties, reporters and counsel.

### **5. Signage**

Signage will be utilized throughout the courthouse, including at the entrance door to remind individuals to maintain proper social distancing and the requirement to wear a mask while in attendance at court. Floor markings will be used to provide instructions to defendants on where to stand when approaching the bench. Floor markings will be used to ensure proper distancing of seating (by marking chair placement) throughout the courtroom to ensure an appropriate physical distance of each other.

### **6. Social Distancing**

The maximum allowable persons in the courtroom during court sessions will be set by following the current orders and guidelines in Dane County related to gatherings. To ensure we do not exceed the allowable limit, an additional staff



member will be placed at the building entrance to monitor courtroom capacity. Additional persons seeking entrance shall be required to wait outdoors or in parked vehicles until others have left and then will be directed to come inside by court staff. Attorneys and their clients may conduct consultations outside the courtroom at their discretion. Family members and other persons who cohabitate may sit in adjacent chairs.

## 7. Entry Screening

In addition to a sign at the door to remind individuals of social distancing and mask requirements, we will provide a sign that states "Do not enter if you have flu symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) or have recently been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 (coronavirus)." Our staff member at the entrance door will ensure individuals read the notices at the door. Our staff member will provide instructions to any individual who may have symptoms or exposure concerns. Individuals with symptoms or exposure concerns will be provided an adjourned date for their initial appearance.

## 8. Pretrial Hearings

Pretrial hearings shall be conducted by conference telephone call or other electronic means.

## 9. Trial Exhibits

The court will encourage parties to exchange trial exhibits electronically or by mail prior to trial. At time of trial, a table will be designated where marked exhibits shall be placed for inspection by one person at a time. The judge will be provided with copies of trial exhibits by the bailiff for inspection on the bench.

## 10. Ventilation

When practicable, courtroom windows will be open.

## 11. Acceptance of Payment

For anyone anticipating paying a forfeiture in cash, the court will only accept the exact amount. Other payment options are: check, money order or online at GovPayNet using the Town of Cottage Grove payment location code #A000dn.

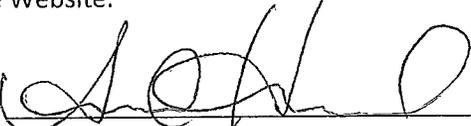
## 12. Accommodations

In conjunction with in-person court, the court has set up and scheduled "Go to Meetings" in an effort to allow defendants to attend court virtually and limit the amount of in-person attendance. Defendants will be notified in writing of the option to attend court virtually, while this accommodation is being provided. The court is also providing and offering a form/document to defendants allowing them to provide pleas in writing also in an effort to limit the amount of in-person attendance.

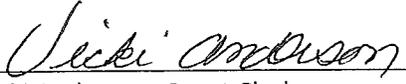
## 13. Distribution

Following approval of this operation plan by the Fifth Judicial District Chief Judge, a copy of this plan shall be posted at the public entrance of the courtroom and on the Town of Cottage Grove Website.

Dated 05/29/2020

  
Judge April Hammond

Dated 05/29/2020

  
Vicki Anderson, Court Clerk

