

VIRTUAL AND HYBRID ATTENDANCE

1. Judge Cobb will entertain requests to hold a virtual or hybrid hearing, if a) reasonable grounds exist, and b) the below directives are followed. Reasonable grounds are evaluated on a case-by-case basis but may include the following: reduced expense to the bankruptcy estate, remote location of counsel or other party in interest, the level of intended participation of the participant, and/or undue hardship. It is preferred that an intended virtual hearing be noticed as such at the outset, but a party in interest may also request permission for virtual attendance by reaching out to the Court through Cobb_ChambersCommunications@ohsb.uscourts.gov within a reasonable period prior to the noticed hearing.

2. Zoom Procedures

- a. Zoom instructions. Zoom for Government may be accessed at www.zoomgov.com.

To Join:

BY VIDEO:

Link: <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/16024116685>

Meeting ID: 160 2411 6685

Passcode: 748920

BY PHONE:

Dial In Audio: +1 669 254 5252

Meeting ID: 160 2411 6685

Passcode: 748920

One step dialing: 16692545252,,16024116685#,,748920#

- b. Please join 15-minutes prior to hearing time. Remote participants must be present in the “virtual courtroom” at the time the case is called. Parties ideally should join the conference not less than fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of the hearing.
- c. Joining Hearings Remotely. After entering the appropriate Zoom credentials, participants will be placed into a waiting

room and admitted into the main conference by the video conference host.

- d. Entering a Remote Appearance. Once parties are connected through Zoom, they MUST provide their full names as their “screen names” when entering the Meeting ID to join the hearing. In hearings with a large number of participants, the Court may use the screen names to take the entry of appearances for the record.
- e. Rules for Remote Participation. All parties participating remotely must abide by the following directives at all times. Failure to comply with the Court’s procedures may result in the Court imposing sanctions, including but not limited to, revoking the party’s privilege to participate remotely.
 - i. Basic Prohibitions. Any of the following actions are prohibited while participating remotely: (I) use of a telephone or device while in a vehicle or a public place; (II) conversing with anyone outside of the hearing; (III) failing to keep an audio microphone on “mute” when the participant is not speaking; or (IV) allowing any background noise to interfere or disturb the proceedings. Once a participant’s hearing is called, they must remain seated and stationary at all times.
 - ii. Hearing Attire and Surroundings. Appropriate professional courtroom attire is required. Participants should be mindful of their backgrounds and office décor so as to not distract or detract from the court proceedings. Virtual backgrounds are permitted only if such backgrounds are solid and neutral. Any virtual background must be dignified and respectful. The background may not contain a message that is political, that may influence the witness, or that is otherwise inappropriate. To prevent image distortion, participants should refrain from having a large light source (e.g., windows) directly behind them.
 - iii. Minimization of Noise Interference. Participants must minimize all background noise and shall silence any devices that may make noise (e.g., telephones, cell phones,

messaging and email alerts). All parties are responsible for the quality of their audio connection, and to that end, the Court strongly recommends that participants wear a corded headset with a microphone during hearings. Should participants choose to use a wireless device, such as Air Pods or Bluetooth-enabled devices, they must remain in close proximity to the connection source and avoid movement that would interfere with the signal. The Court cannot rely on a legal argument it cannot hear.

- iv. Recording. Other than the Court, no participant may record any part of the hearing, whether by use of Zoom recording capabilities, third-party applications, photographs, screenshots, or by any other means.

f. Off-Record Discussions Between Parties. Should participants wish to speak with each other or with clients off the record, participants should disconnect from Zoom, speak off the record, and then log back in. The video conference host will then admit returning participants into the main conference.

- 3. Due to the limitations imposed by applicable law and Fed. R. Civ. P. 43(a) (incorporated Fed. R. Bankr. P 9017), absent good cause, the Court requires that all witnesses and any participant questioning such witnesses be present in the Courtroom.
- 4. The ability to participate remotely may be rescinded if a participant fails to comply with Court directives.