



Chambers of  
James C. Babler  
Barron County  
Circuit Judge, Branch 1



Barron County Justice Center  
1420 State Hwy 25 North Room 2601  
Barron, WI 54812-3006  
TEL: (715) 537-6260  
FAX: (715) 537-6269

Laura Fornell Court Reporter  
Bobbette Reinke Judicial Assistant  
Deanne Alsbury Register in Probate  
Shanda Harrington Justice Programs Coordinator

June 16, 2020

**NEWS RELEASE**  
For Immediate Release

The Barron County Circuit Court will allow in-person appearances in all cases beginning July 1, 2020, although still encouraging appearance by Zoom video or telephone. While the Courts and the Justice Center have been always been open, most in-person appearances were suspended by the Wisconsin Supreme Court Order in March. In May, the Supreme Court required that the Court in each county adopt plans to reopen court and conduct Jury Trials and Judge James Babler, Presiding Judge for Barron County, signed an Order Adopting an Operating Plan and Jury Trial Plan in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Supreme Court required that the Presiding Judge in each county consult with justice system partners, mandate face coverings for court proceedings, and set up practices for sanitation and hygiene. At the same time, the Supreme Court also encouraged the local Courts to incorporate recommendations from the Wisconsin Courts COVID-19 Task Force. Judge Babler points out that the Barron County plans adopt the vast majority of the Task Force recommendations for reopening.

“Clerk of Court Sharon Millermon and I have been working on plans to reopen since early April so we were in a good position to safely proceed,” said Babler. The first week of June, Judge Maureen Boyle successfully conducted a three-day Termination of Parental Rights Trial under the new requirements. “We are once again conducting Jury Trials, albeit, in a different and safe manner.”

The new Emergency Order lifts the ban on in-person appearances for non-essential cases on July 1, 2020. However, the Barron County Judges intend to continue to use and encourage Zoom Video and telephone for many of the cases even after July 1. Babler noted that “the COVID-19 pandemic has forced all of us to live and work in different ways, including the Court system. Surprisingly, some of the new methods have worked so well that we anticipate that they will become permanent in the Barron County Court system.”

Some of the major requirements for operation include: face coverings to be worn by everyone entering the Justice Center to do court business; limits on the number of people who may be in each courtroom, with seating clearly marked; limitations on the



Chambers of  
James C. Babler  
Barron County  
Circuit Judge, Branch 1



Barron County Justice Center  
1420 State Hwy 25 North Room 2601  
Barron, WI 54812-3006  
TEL: (715) 537-6260  
FAX: (715) 537-6269

Laura Fornell Court Reporter  
Bobbette Reinke Judicial Assistant  
Deanne Alsbury Register in Probate  
Shanda Harrington Justice Programs Coordinator

number of people who may use bathrooms and elevator at one time; and numerous hand sanitation stations throughout the Justice Center.

Judge Babler urges anyone wishing to conduct business with the Court or Clerk of Court, Register in Probate, or the Court to call ahead to make sure if it is necessary to attend in person because many matters can be completed over the phone or by Zoom Video. Babler reminds attorneys and the public coming to the Justice Center that you must wear a face covering to enter the building and conduct any business.