LORRAINE M. KELLY
COUNTY COURT JUDGE
COUNTY CIVIL SECTION 39 / SMALL CLAIMS SECTION 45
Judicial Assistant: JoAn Caffentzis section39@jud6.org
INSTRUCTIONS AND JUDICIAL PRACTICE PREFERENCES

545 1ST Avenue North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Phone (727)582-7822 / Fax (727) 582-7421

HELP FOR PARTIES WITHOUT ATTORNEYS:
The judicial assistant cannot answer your legal questions. Under Florida law she could be prosecuted for a first degree misdemeanor, unlicensed practice of law, were she to give you legal advice. Please do not ask her to answer legal questions.

The judge can only visit with you about your case in the courtroom in the presence of all the parties involved with the case. Please do not call the judge and expect to have a conversation with her or attempt to relay a message to her through the judicial assistant. If you want to bring a matter to the court's attention, put it in writing and file it with the Clerk of the Court under the case number you are calling about. Be sure to send a copy of the information to the opposing party.

HELPFUL LEGAL RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE ATTORNEYS:
https://www.mypinellasclerk.gov/Self-Help
St Petersburg (727)582-7941 or Clearwater (727) 464-5150

Gulfcoast Legal Services: Clearwater (727)443-0657 or St. Petersburg (727)821-0726.
Bay Area Legal Services 1-800-625-2257.

TO SCHEDULE HEARINGS:

Please schedule all hearings in JAWS, "Section 39 – Judge Kelly" calendar.
The website is https://jawspinellas.jud6.org/jaws_attorney/login.aspx

Hearings of 15 or 30 minutes may be scheduled directly online.
For hearings which require additional time, adjacent hearing time slots may be combined to create the amount of time required provided you first e-mail the JA to create the time slot prior to scheduling your hearing.

The scheduling attorney must add ALL associated parties in the JAWS database when scheduling hearings to ensure ALL parties receive emails regarding the scheduling and cancellation of hearings. All hearing dates and times are to be coordinated among the parties prior to scheduling the hearing in JAWS. Any scheduling conflicts should be resolved among the parties.
Please do not include the JA in e-mail threads concerning scheduling hearings.

30 MINUTE ZOOM HEARINGS: please use the following Zoom information for the notice of hearing.
Meeting ID: 822 244 2183
Passcode: 969904
Dial into Zoom meeting by Telephone: 786-635-1003

The notice of hearing must include the Zoom telephone number, Meeting ID number and passcode.
An IN-PERSON HEARING request can be made in the additional notes box.

15 MINUTE TELEPHONIC HEARINGS: If you do not have your own conference line, use the following court conference line (267) 807-9937 and access code 5114511 for the notice of hearing.
After you receive an email confirming your request in JAWS, you may send out the telephonic notice of hearing.
An IN-PERSON HEARING or a ZOOM HEARING request can be made in the additional notes box.

IN PERSON HEARINGS SHALL BE NOTICED FOR THE ST. PETERSBURG COURTHOUSE:
St. Petersburg Judicial Building
545 1st Avenue North
5th Floor (there is no room number)
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

CROSS-NOTICES: If you wish to set a motion companion to or in opposition to a motion already scheduled and confirmed by the judicial assistant, opposing counsel must first agree. Only after agreement with opposing counsel may the cross-noticing party contact the judge's office to request permission to add a motion to the calendar in a time slot reserved by the attorney who initially reserved hearing time.

CANCELLATION OF HEARINGS: Hearings that you schedule in JAWS can also be canceled up to 48 hours prior to the hearing. If the hearing is less than 48 hours away, please contact the JA to cancel your hearing and provide a succinct explanation for the cancellation.

COURTESY COPIES: It is not necessary to send courtesy copies of pleadings to the judge if they have already been e-filed, e.g. Notices of Hearing, Motions or Affidavits. Please bring a copy of any cases or exhibits you intend to use at the hearing for opposing counsel and the court. If you intend to rely upon case law as part of your presentation, please provide only the cases to the judge you intend to refer to in your oral presentation no less than 48 hours before the hearing. Three or fewer cases may be emailed to the judicial assistant (less than 30 pages). A hard copy of anything greater in scope (over 30 pages) should be submitted for the judge's review no less than 72 hours before the hearing date. Hearing materials e-mailed to the Judge's office should be sent as one attachment.

PRETRIAL AND TRIAL PRACTICE & PROCEDURES

SCHEDULING JURY AND NON-JURY TRIALS: When filing a notice to Set Cause for Trial please schedule a 30 minute case management conference (CMC) through JAWS.

For Nonjury Trials please complete a draft of the Order Directing Nonjury Trial form on pages 6, 7 and 8 of this document and e-mail a copy to the Judicial Assistant before the CMC.

County Court - Jury Trial Weeks

2027
April 19th
September 13th
November 8th

PRESENTING MATERIALS VIA ELECTRONIC DEVICES AT JURY TRIALS: If you are presenting materials via a laptop or other device during a Jury Trial, you will need to contact the court's Computer Technology Office for a testing/training session 1-2 weeks prior to the Trial date. You will need to bring all the devices you plan to use at trial with you to the testing/training, so that the Computer Technology Office can test them with the courtroom presentation system. Please contact the Court Technology Office at (727) 453-7928 to schedule the testing/training. This is necessary to assist the court in facilitating Jury Trials without technology delays.

EVICTION HEARINGS: Eviction cases are reviewed by the judge upon submission of the proposed Final Judgment via the JAWS Portal. If a hearing is required, you will be prompted to schedule the hearing via e-mail through the JAWS Portal. Please select a 30-minute zoom hearing spot for Eviction hearings.

For Commercial Landlord/Tenant cases with an answer filed, please first submit a proposed "Order to Deposit" (with a blank line for the due date) prior to submitting a proposed Final Judgment of Eviction.

SMALL CLAIMS PRETRIALS:

A Stipulation Invoking the Rules of Civil Procedure and Waiver of Pretrial Conference must be submitted via the JAWS portal 72 hours **PRIOR** to the Small Claims date to ensure that the stipulation will be docketed prior to the hearing. Any documentation reflecting a settlement or affidavit of non-service must be reflected on the docket prior to the pretrial date to be excused from court.

All requests for continuances shall be done in the form of a written motion to the court. Please include in the motion a description of your attempts to contact the opposing party and whether they agree or object to the continuance.

Please review page 5 of this document regarding Judicial Instructions for attorneys in Small Claims Pretrials.

SUBMITTING PROPOSED ORDERS: Please submit proposed orders via the JAWS Portal, Section 39 in PDF format. It is important to make sure that all associated party e-mails are connected to the case in order for everyone to receive a conformed copy of the order. In the event you do not have a pro se litigant's e-mail the conformed order and attachments, such as fact information sheets, need to be mailed and a follow up certificate of service filed through the e-portal.

Final Judgment Orders in collection cases MUST contain the following language:

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED and ADJUDGED that within 5 days from the date of service of this Judgment, the Plaintiff shall:

1. **Furnish a copy of this Judgment to each self-represented party by U.S. Mail, first class, postage paid; and**

2. **Certify that delivery of this Judgment has been made to the defendant.**

If you are submitting an Agreed Order, please make sure "Agreed" is in the title of the order and advise the court that there was no objection by opposing counsel in your cover letter.

In the event that opposing counsel objects to the submission of your proposed order, please submit a HARD COPY of the order along with a cover letter advising the judge that an opposing order will be submitted by opposing counsel.

In cases where a hard copy of a proposed order needs to be submitted to the judge's office please make sure that there are copies for each party along with postage paid envelopes with the sender's return address.

SEND ALL MAIL DIRECTLY TO:
Judge Lorraine M. Kelly
St. Petersburg Judicial Building
545 1st Ave. North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

JUDICIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS IN
PINELLAS COUNTY SMALL CLAIMS COURT PRETRIALS

1. Log into Zoom via computer on a reliable, stable connection. Do not use a phone, tablet, or other device that will limit your ability to prepare or to Zoom chat documents.

2. Be prepared to complete PDF forms on your computer during pretrials, particularly the court Stipulation to Stay Entry of Judgment.

3. Be prepared to Zoom chat documents during pretrials.

4. Be prepared to provide a list of your case numbers by docket time.

5. File your returns of service with the Clerk at least three days before pretrial.

You may download the Pinellas County Stipulation to Stay Entry of Judgment form used at pretrial here:

https://tinyurl.com/SMALLCLAIMSSTIP

You may find the current Zoom information for Small Claims Pretrials on the Pinellas County Clerk's website at https://www.mypinellasclerk.gov/Home/Civil-Court#499145-small-claims

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO. _____

_____,
Plaintiff,
vs.

_____,
Defendant.
_____/

ORDER DIRECTING NONJURY TRIAL

On this date the attorneys appeared before the court at a Pre-Trial Conference, pursuant to Rule 1.2000, Florida Rules of Civil Procedure. The following memorializes the agreement of the parties:

APPEARING FOR PLAINTIFF:

APPEARING FOR DEFENDANT:

1. CONCISE AND NEUTRAL STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

2. ISSUES:

3. ADMISSIONS:

4. STIPULATIONS AND WAIVERS IF ANY:

    A. Use of expert testimony at any time during trial as a result of unavailability at other time.

    B. Waive records custodians for documents produced in discovery to date. This is not the equivalent of a stipulation to the admissibility of the documents in question.

5. _____, 20___- PLAINTIFF AND DEFENDANT SHALL PROVIDE, TO ONE ANOTHER, ALL DOCUMENTS THEY INTEND TO USE AT TRIAL.

6. _____, 20__- PLAINTIFF AND DEFENDANT SHALL EXCHANGE WITNESS AND EXHIBIT LISTS WITH A COPY BEING SENT TO THE CLERK OF COURT.

7. PLEADINGS:
   A list of pleadings upon which the case will be tried, including the date of filing for each.

8. REMAINING MATTERS:
   A list of all remaining matters that require action by the Court, including the dates of filing for any motions:

9. PARTIES AND WITNESSES:
   a) Special needs:
   b) Interpreter:
   c) Limitations on the number of witnesses (e.g. expert witnesses, before and after witnesses, etc.):

10. A LIST OF SPECIAL DAMAGES CLAIMED:

11. ESTIMATED LENGTH OF THE CASE IN CHIEF FOR EACH LITIGANT AND THE ENTIRE TRIAL:

12. MAXIMUM NUMBER OF TRIAL HOURS:

13. SETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES:

14. _____WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTENDANCE OF THE COURT REPORTER.

15. ADDITIONAL MATTERS:

ORDERED AND **ADJUDGED** that the Nonjury Trial is set for _____, 20__, at _____a.m./p.m. before the Honorable Lorraine M. Kelly at 545 First Avenue North, 5th Floor, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701.

Done and Ordered in St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida, this _____ day of _____, 20____.

_____
LORRAINE M. KELLY
COUNTY COURT JUDGE

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the Human Rights Office, 400 S. Ft. Harrison Ave., Ste. 300, Clearwater, FL 33756, (727) 464-4062 (V/TDD) at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

Copies Furnished To:

updated October 2026