

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA

FILED
U.S. Bankruptcy Court
of NC

In re:)
)
DEBTOR SIGNATURES ON)
ELECTRONIC FILINGS)
)
_____)

MAR 19 2020

Steven T. Salata, Clerk
Charlotte Division
JLB

ORDER CLARIFYING LOCAL RULE 5005-1 AND THE REQUIREMENT TO OBTAIN
DEBTORS' ORIGINAL SIGNATURES FOR ELECTRONIC FILINGS

This order is being issued in response to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States and the Western District of North Carolina. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic. On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advise that individuals should engage in "social distancing" to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In addition, there are individuals who may be in isolation because they are sick or have been exposed to someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19. Accordingly, to reduce the need for personal contact, there is good cause to clarify the requirement that an attorney obtain a debtor's original signature for an electronic filing.

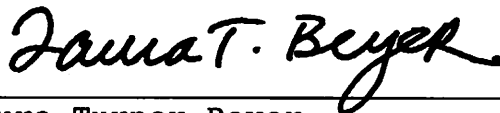
Now, therefore, it is hereby ORDERED that effective March 19, 2020, and until further notice:

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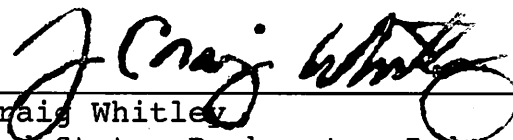
For all documents that require a debtor's signature, the court clarifies that pursuant to Local Rule 5005-1, in addition to securing the debtor's original signature prior to electronically filing such documents, the attorney may alternatively (a) obtain the debtor's digital signature via any commercially available digital signature software that provides signature authentication; or (b) obtain express written permission from the debtor (including by email) to affix the debtor's signature to the document(s). Consistent with Local Rule 5005-1, the attorney is required to retain documents sufficient to authenticate either the debtor's digital signature or the express written permission for a period ending four years after the case is closed. The filing of the document(s) with a debtor's electronic signature constitutes a certification that the attorney either has obtained the debtor's original signature or has complied with the foregoing conditions.

SO ORDERED.

Date: March 19, 2020



Laura Turner Beyer
Chief United States Bankruptcy Judge



J. Craig Whitley
United States Bankruptcy Judge