

IN THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT  
IN AND FOR SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MICHAEL T FLYNN,  
Plaintiff,

v.

CASE NO. 2023 CA 004264 NC  
DIVISION C CIRCUIT

JIM STEWARTSON,  
RICK WILSON,  
MEIDASTOUCH LLC,  
Defendant.

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**ORDER CANCELLING TRIAL  
AND DIRECTING CLERK TO UPDATE CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

1. **Canceling trial.** Based on the Plaintiff's/Petitioner's motion, the Court cancels:

Pre-Trial Conference:	n/a at 9:45 a.m.
Docket Sounding:	n/a at 8:45 a.m.
Trial Period:	10/06/2025 at 9:00 a.m.

The Clerk is directed to update the Case Management System to reflect that each of these events is cancelled. The reason for the cancellation is:

- Additional discovery needed.
- One or more attorneys of record trying case in another court.
- Unanticipated personal matter of attorney or party.
- Parties ready. Insufficient judicial resources to try this case.
- Other (*none if blank*): **Per Judge Haworth's Order granting continuance.**

2. **Future hearings.**

- The Court will enter a separate Order scheduling a new trial period and describing the discovery permitted, if any.
- The Court will enter a separate Order scheduling a Case Management Conference and describing the discovery permitted, if any.
- The parties are directed to set a Case Management Conference.

3. **Dilatory conduct.**


If checked, the Court finds this continuance was caused by the dilatory conduct of an attorney or party or both. Specifically, the Court finds:

The Court reserves on the issuance of sanctions.

The Court imposes sanctions as follows:

**4. Additional Court instructions (none if blank):**

DONE AND ORDERED in Sarasota County, Florida, on October 08, 2025.

  
10/8/2025 1:13 PM 2023 CA  
004264 NC  
e-Signed 10/8/2025 1:13 PM 2023 CA 004264 NC

**HUNTER W CARROLL**  
Circuit Judge

**SERVICE CERTIFICATE**

On October 08, 2025, the Court caused the foregoing document to be served via the Clerk of Court's case management system, which served the following individuals via email (where indicated). On the same date, the Court also served a copy of the foregoing document via First Class U.S. Mail on the individual who do not have an email address on file with the Clerk of Court.

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**ORDER**  
**(1) RESETTING JURY TRIAL; AND**  
**(2) RESETTING CASE MANAGEMENT DEADLINES**

IT IS ORDERED:

1. **Provisions of prior Order still operative.** All provisions of the prior Order establishing case management deadlines and trial period remain unless expressly altered by this Order.

2. **Trial Period.** The Court resets this case for JURY as follows:

**Pretrial Conference: 01/16/2026 at 9:45 a.m.**

**Docket Sounding: 03/12/2026 at 8:45 a.m.**

**Trial Period Begins: 03/23/2026 at 9:00 a.m.**

**Length of Trial Period: 3 weeks.**

**Courthouse Location: Lynn N. Silvertooth Judicial Center - 2002  
Ringling Blvd. - Sarasota - FL 34237**

**Courtroom: 6-C**

3. **Scope of permitted additional discovery.** The Court directs that:

- No additional discovery.** No additional discovery is permitted without Court permission.
- Expert discovery only.** Only additional expert discovery is permitted without Court permission.
- No restriction on discovery.** There is no restriction on additional discovery; however, the parties must still comply with Case Management deadlines in this Order.
- Only identified discovery permitted.** Only the following specifically identified discovery is permitted without Court permission: .

4. **Scope of permitted additional motion practice.** The Court directs that:

- No additional motion practice.** No additional motion practice is permitted, including the setting of hearings for pending motions or the filing of new motion without Court permission. (A party may file a motion seeking additional motion practice.)
- Only set pending motions.** A party may set for hearing motions that predate this Order. No additional motions may be filed without Court permission. (A party may file a motion seeking additional motion practice.)
- No restriction on additional motion practice.** There is no restriction on additional motion practice; however, the parties must still comply with Case Management deadlines in this Order.
- Only identified motion practice permitted.** Only the following specifically identified motion practice is permitted without Court permission:

5. **Court ordered deadlines.** The Court imposes the following case management deadlines:

- Exhibit 1.** Exhibit 1 attached to this Order contains multiple Court ordered deadlines for the trial period set by this Order. The parties are directed to follow these deadlines.

**Prior Case Management Dates remain.** All prior case management deadlines identified in the prior Case Management Order remain in effect and are not changed.

**Parties to propose deadlines** Within 10 days, the parties must propose their own deadlines by filing a joint case management report in the Court file **and** providing the Court's Judicial Assistant a completed copy. The form is found [here](#) on the Court's website (go to Sarasota County tab).

The parties must abide by these deadlines, and these deadlines will be strictly enforced by the Court. No deadline may be changed by the parties by mutual consent. Only the Court may alter these deadlines. If the parties wish the Court to consider different deadlines, the parties must use the form Case Management Deadlines found [here](#) on the Court's website (go to Sarasota County tab).

6. **Trials conducted in-person.** All trials are conducted in-person in the Courthouse unless the presiding judge provides otherwise.

7. **Mandatory attendance.** Attendance at both the Pretrial Conference and Docket Sounding are mandatory for attorneys and self-represented litigants. Failure to attend the Pretrial Conference (unless excused) or the Docket Sounding could result in the Court dismissing the action, striking the pleadings, limiting proof or witnesses, or taking other appropriate action. You must appear at both Pretrial Conference and Docket Sounding:

**In person.** You must appear at the Courthouse for the Pretrial Conference and Docket Sounding. You may not appear via Zoom for these hearings.

**By Zoom.** You must appear by Zoom for the Pretrial Conference and Docket Sounding with a working camera. No "in person" appearance at the Courthouse is permitted.

**Hybrid option.** You can decide whether you appear in person or by Zoom for the Pretrial Conference and Docket Sounding. If you appear by Zoom, you must appear with a working camera.

**Zoom Credentials:** Division C Meeting ID: 353 234 4884 / Passcode: 756433

8. **Pretrial Conference.** At the Pretrial Conference, attorneys and unrepresented parties must be prepared to address all matters in Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.200. Parties may be excused from the Pretrial Conference by submitting an agreed Pretrial Conference Order using the form found [here](#) on the Court's website (go to Sarasota County tab) directly to the presiding judge's chambers using the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal proposed order queue at

least 3 business days before the Pretrial Conference. The parties will only be excused if the Court signs the proposed Pretrial Conference Order before the Pretrial Conference.

9. **Docket Sounding.** Lead counsel for each party must attend the mandatory Docket Sounding to address all matters relating to the trial. Counsel must have full authority to enter into stipulations at Docket Sounding. Motions will not be heard at Docket Sounding; all motions were required to be resolved 1 month before trial. Unless stricken through below, the attorneys and unrepresented parties shall confer and prepare a complete, single set of documents to be provided to the Court in electronic format at Docket Sounding:

- an indexed list of each party's trial exhibits together with notations as to stipulations on authenticity and admissibility of each exhibit;
- proposed jury instructions, including any disputed instructions;
- proposed verdict form; and
- the signed Pretrial Conference Order.

10. **Additional Court instructions** (*none if blank*): **Parties must IMMEDIATELY advise the Court if there are any current conflicts by the parties or attorneys. Failure to advise the Court now may result in the Court not trying to account for those purported conflicts.**

11. **Expectations for All Participants Attending Zoom Hearings.** Please see the expectations for all participants on the Twelfth Judicial Court Website [here](#).


12. **Court Reporters.** The Court does not provide a court reporter. If a party wishes to have a court reporter present, that party must arrange for the court reporter's attendance and must notify all other parties before the hearing.

13. **No Recording Proceedings.** By court rule and court order, you are not authorized to make your own audio or visual recording of a court proceeding. No one may take "screenshots" or other audio or visual depictions of a court proceeding. Recording a court proceeding is strictly prohibited unless approved by the Judge. If you violate these rules, you may be held in contempt of court. Members of the media must comply with Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.450 and the latest administrative order by the Chief Judge regarding media coverage. Please contact the Court's Public Information Officer for further information.

14. **Late entry or Technical Difficulties.** If you are not logged in when the hearing begins, the judge may not interrupt the proceedings to admit you to the hearing. If you have trouble logging in, and you wish to participate in the hearing, contact the Court's judicial assistant immediately.

15. **ADA Notice.** 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 Sarasota County Jury Office, P.O. Box 3079, Sarasota, Florida 34230-3079, (941) 861-8000, at least seven (7) days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than seven (7) days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

DONE AND ORDERED in Sarasota County, Florida, on October 08, 2025.

  
10/8/2025 1:20 PM 2023 CA  
004264 NC  
e-Signed 10/8/2025 1:20 PM 2023 CA 004264 NC

**HUNTER W CARROLL**  
Circuit Judge

### SERVICE CERTIFICATE

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**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR SARASOTA COUNTY, STATE OF FLORIDA  
(Civil Division C)**

**MICHAEL T. FLYNN**  
**Plaintiff,**

vs.

**Case No.: 2023CA4264**

**JON STEWARTSON,**  
**Defendant.**

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**ORDER GRANTING PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR CONTINUANCE**

**THIS CAUSE** came before the court on Plaintiff's Motion for Continuance without a hearing.

Three days before jury selection Plaintiff seeks a continuance due to personal scheduling conflicts. The motion does not offer dates when movant will be available and marginally qualifies as "good cause."

The Florida Supreme Court recently revised rules of civil procedure designed to ensure cases are efficiently processed by trial judges. This is to avoid lawsuits languishing without resolution and making strict enforcement of trial dates the norm. Patterned after federal rules, rule 1.460 states continuances of trial periods should rarely be granted and that successive continuances are "highly disfavored." This necessarily requires litigants to conform their calendars to accommodate the court's requirements.

In due course, the assigned division judge will be issuing a new Pretrial Conference Order including another Docket Sounding. **When received, the parties are ordered to promptly confer to avoid further continuances based on party or witness unavailability, and to request hearing time if future trial dates present a scheduling impasse.**

Docket Sounding was held on September 26, 2025. The Pretrial Conference Order entered August 28, 2025 (DIN 203) directed the parties five days before September 26 to confer and agree, if possible, on trial exhibits, objections related thereto, and to provide a single, joint list identifying each exhibit. Deposition designations were also required.


The Pretrial Conference Order further mandated that the parties prepare and deliver to chambers a set of proposed jury instructions and verdict form no later than Docket Sounding. This was followed by an email to the attorneys from the Judicial Assistant requesting compliance with this requirement by close of business on October 7, 2025. None were forthcoming and the court has not been informed if the requirements of the Pretrial Order have been met.

Upon resetting of the trial, counsel are reminded that The Florida Supreme Court requires mandatory compliance with Pretrial Conference Orders, insists on strict enforcement by judges, and that sanctions may be imposed for willful violation.

The court notes that new standard jury instructions for defamation are under revision by the Florida Supreme Court. Former pattern instructions on defamation are not approved due to unresolved conflicts in the law. However, in preparing their proposed instructions, the parties may find guidance at The Florida Bar website page titled, "Committee on Standard Jury Instructions in Civil Cases proposes adopting jury instructions for use in defamation cases" at [SJI-Civil-Defamation-Instructions-002.pdf](#)

The motion for continuance is **GRANTED**.

**DONE AND ORDERED** at Sarasota, Florida, Sarasota County, this 8th day of October, 2025.



**LEE E. HAWORTH**  
**SENIOR CIRCUIT JUDGE**

COPIES FURNISHED TO:

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