

Real Estate Fraud Prosecution Trust Fund Committee Annual Meeting Minutes: FY 2023/2024

DATE: July 11, 2024

ATTENDEES:

Olivia Byron-Cooper – Director, Department of Health & Human Services
Richard Pesce – Assistant Chief Investigator
Doug Fransham – Deputy District Attorney, District Attorney’s Office
Simon Brown – Investigator, District Attorney’s Office
Kimberly Beal- El Dorado County Association of Realtors
Alison Winter, Principal Management Analyst, CAO’s Office
(voting member-proxy for CAO Tiffany Schmid)
Mike Lensing – Captian, El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office *(voting member-proxy for Sheriff Jeff Leikauf)*
Justene Cline – Administrative Analyst, CAO’s Office
Kerri Williams-Horn – Agency Chief Fiscal Officer, CAO’s Office
Savannah Broddrick – Administrative Technician, District Attorney’s Office
Lisette Suder – Assistant District Attorney, District Attorney’s Office
(voting member-proxy for DA Vern Pierson)

Absent Member(s):

Tiffany Schmid – CAO, El Dorado County (voting member)
Vern Pierson – DA, El Dorado County (voting member)
Jeff Leikauf – Sheriff, El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office (voting member)

CALL TO ORDER: 10:00 A.M.

DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA AND ANNUAL REPORT FY 2023/2024

Assistant District Attorney Lisette Suder welcomed everyone. Roundtable introductions were made.

DISCUSSION / REVIEW OF CASES:

DAI Brown discussed and summarized the 2023-2024 Real Estate Fraud Program statistics:

- As of June 30, 2024, a total of 18 cases have been reported to and investigated by the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office.
- Vacation Rental Scams: DA's office uncovered a trans-national fraud ring that was also involved in Government Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan fraud to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars. One of the bank accounts discovered by search warrants showed over half a million dollars laundered through it over nine months. This information was turned over to the FBI.
- The number of Notice of Default's by homeowners between 7/1/23 and 6/30/24 was 290, an increase of 3% from the 281 reported in FY 2022/23. The number of Notice of Trustee Sales this year was 153 which represents a 8.5% decrease from the 166 reported last year.
- According to the California Association of Realtors, the median price of homes sold in El Dorado County in March of this year was \$677,000. This represents a 9.2% increase from the median price in March 2023. Housing prices increased again this last year as the market deals with low supply and higher inflation and interest rates.

OUTREACH:

- Ongoing outreach and awareness of rental scams continues to produce effective results.
- The District Attorney's Office has continued to do outreach through social media to alert the public to the signs of vacation rental fraud. The District Attorney's Office also had a booth set up at the Cameron Park National Night Out location to raise awareness to real estate fraud.
- Starting with this year, Investigator Brown attended a monthly collaborative meeting with multiple law enforcement agencies and Adult Protective Services, Public Guardian's Office, County Senior Legal Services and Health and Human Services. Investigator Brown also attended quarterly meetings with the same agencies and expanded to private elderly care companies and financial institutions. These meeting have greatly increased the communication and effectiveness in protecting seniors from financial elder abuse involving real estate. These meetings have improved working relationships and have resulted in reporting of many cases directly to our office.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

The El Dorado County District Attorney’s Office, by virtue of the Real Estate Fraud Program, stays committed to its ongoing community outreach efforts to keep the public informed and educated. The El Dorado County District Attorney’s Office continues to work collaboratively with all local, State, and Federal agencies to better serve the citizens of El Dorado County to address their real estate fraud concerns and investigate all cases reported. Moving forward in fiscal year 2023-2024, the El Dorado County District Attorney’s Office will strive to improve its outreach efforts to include the following:

- Continue/increase social media presence to better serve citizens of El Dorado County.
- Continue to develop office protocols to allow real estate funds to bolster other investigations wherein real estate fraud is a component but not the primary focus.
- Work with local Law Enforcement agencies to help them identify and investigate real estate fraud cases.

The El Dorado County District Attorney’s Office hopes that its ongoing community outreach efforts will not only continue to provide education to its citizens but increase the number of real estate fraud related cases reported within the county.

FY 23/24 EXPENDITURE REPORT:

- Discussion: Justene Cline reviewed the FY 23/24 Real Estate Fraud Summary. Total revenue of \$18,980.17 and expenses of \$73,056.25.

Trust Fund Beginning Balance as of July 1, 2023	\$585,864.91
Revenue from Recorded Documents	\$0.00
Interest	<u>\$18,980.17</u>
Total Revenue	\$18,980.17
Total Estimated Expenditures FY 23/24	<u>\$73,056.25</u>
Adjusted Estimated Ending Fund Balance	<u>\$531,788.83</u>

- Vote approving transfer of estimated \$73,056.25 from Trust Fund:
 - Motion by: Olivia Byron-Cooper
 - Second by: Alison Winter
 - Approved by all voting members

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- This Report is scheduled on the Consent Calendar for the Board of Supervisors Meeting on July 30, 2024.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:23 A.M.