

Sheriff moves forward on drug asset forfeiture

May 18, 2023



Del Norte County Counsel, on behalf of the district attorney, officially requested the court disperse the majority of the drug cash forfeiture that was seized February 18.

Appearing before superior court Judge Darren McElfresh on May 5, counsel Joel Campbell-Blair told the court there have been no claims made for the cash which was discovered by deputies in the trunk of a suspect vehicle. Judge McElfresh also reported his office has received no claims. Campbell-Blair then requested a motion for default on this civil matter.

Here is the background on this matter: Del Norte Deputy Dustin McQuillan pulled over a suspect vehicle this past February when he observed the driver moving very slowly along 101 south near Washington Boulevard.

The driver, Quirate Jimenez, produced an Arizona driver license but failed to produce proof of auto insurance. McQuillan suspected DUI and asked to search the vehicle, where he discovered a small amount of a substance which was later determined to be cocaine.

The deputy called in for assistance and K9 Zuko was dispatched. With Zuko's scent skills, the K9 bee lined to the trunk. Suspect Jimenez granted permission to access the trunk, where deputies discovered hundreds of thousands of dollars in neatly wrapped bundles of cash. Jimenez was charged with a felony of transporting over \$100,000 in cash. The suspect posted bond and was released. To date, the district attorney has not arraigned suspect Jimenez.

The civil matter was calendared three weeks from May 5 in division 1 where the court will hear corroborating evidence from three Del Norte deputies on the vehicle search.

Should the county prevail on this asset forfeiture case, the court could allocate the forfeiture on the following terms:

- Del Norte Sheriff, 65 percent, (\$243,750);
- Attorney General, 25 percent, (\$93,750);
- Del Norte District Attorney 10 percent, (\$37,500).

The matter returns to court Friday, May 26.