

CHAPTER 555B

DISPOSAL OF ABANDONED MOBILE HOMES AND
PERSONAL PROPERTY

[P]

See also chapter 555C relating to valueless homes

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555B.1 Definitions.

Unless the context otherwise requires, in this chapter:

1. “*Abandoned*” means abandoned as provided in section 562B.27, subsection 1.
2. “*Claimant*” includes but is not limited to any government subdivision with authority to levy a tax on abandoned personal property. “*Claimant*” also includes a holder of a lien as defined in section 555B.2.
3. “*Demolisher*” means demolisher as defined in section 321.89.
4. “*Junkyard*” means junkyard as defined in section 306C.1.
5. “*Mobile home*” includes “manufactured homes” and “modular homes” as those terms are defined in section 435.1, if the manufactured homes or modular homes are located in a manufactured home community or mobile home park.
6. “*Personal property*” includes personal property of the mobile home owner in the abandoned mobile home, on the mobile home lot, in the immediate vicinity of the abandoned mobile home and the mobile home lot, and in any storage area provided by the real property owner for the use of the mobile home owner.
7. “*Real property owner*” means the owner or other lawful possessor of real property upon which a mobile home is located.

88 Acts, ch 1138, §1

C89, §562C.1

C93, §555B.1

93 Acts, ch 154, §6, 7; 94 Acts, ch 1110, §21, 24; 99 Acts, ch 155, §1, 14; 2001 Acts, ch 153, §16

555B.2 Removal — notice to sheriff.

1. A real property owner may remove or cause to be removed a mobile home and other personal property which is unlawfully parked, placed, or abandoned on that real property, and may cause the mobile home and personal property to be placed in storage until the owner of the personal property pays a fair and reasonable charge for removal, storage, or other expense incurred, including reasonable attorney fees, or until a judgment of abandonment is entered pursuant to section 555B.8 provided that there is no lien on the mobile home or personal property other than a tax lien pursuant to chapter 435. For purposes of this chapter, a lien other than a tax lien exists only if the real property owner receives notice of a lien on the standardized registration form completed by a tenant pursuant to section 562B.27, subsection 3, or a lien has been filed in state or county records on a date before the mobile home is considered to be abandoned. The real property owner or the real property owner’s agent is not liable for damages caused to the mobile home and personal property by the removal or storage unless the damage is caused willfully or by gross negligence.

2. The real property owner shall notify the sheriff of the county where the real property is located of the removal of the mobile home and other personal property.

a. If the mobile home owner can be determined, and if the real property owner so requests, the sheriff shall notify the mobile home owner of the removal by restricted certified mail. If the mobile home owner cannot be determined, and the real property owner so requests, the sheriff shall give notice by one publication in one newspaper of general circulation in the

county where the mobile home and personal property were unlawfully parked, placed, or abandoned. If the mobile home and personal property have not been claimed by the owner within six months after notice is given, the mobile home and personal property shall be sold by the sheriff at a public or private sale. After deducting costs of the sale the net proceeds shall be applied to the cost of removal, storage, notice, attorney fees, and any other expenses incurred for preserving the mobile home and personal property, including any rent owed by the mobile home owner to the real property owner in connection with the presence of the mobile home on the real property. The remaining net proceeds, if any, shall be paid to the county treasurer to satisfy any tax lien on the mobile home. The remainder, if any, shall be retained by the county treasurer. A sheriff's sale transfers to the purchaser for value, all of the mobile home owner's rights in the mobile home and personal property, and discharges the real property owner's interest in the mobile home and personal property, and discharges the tax lien on the mobile home. If the purchaser acts in good faith the purchaser takes free of all rights and interests even though the real property owner fails to comply with the requirements of this chapter or of any judicial proceedings.

b. If the real property owner removes the mobile home and personal property but does not request that the sheriff notify the mobile home owner, the real property owner shall proceed with an action for abandonment as provided in sections 555B.3 through 555B.9.

88 Acts, ch 1138, §2

C89, §562C.2

C93, §555B.2

93 Acts, ch 154, §8, 9; 94 Acts, ch 1110, §22, 24

555B.3 Action for abandonment — jurisdiction.

A real property owner not requesting notification by the sheriff as provided in section 555B.2 may bring an action alleging abandonment in the court within the county where the real property is located provided that there is no lien on the mobile home or personal property other than a tax lien pursuant to chapter 435. The action shall be tried as an equitable action. Unless commenced as a small claim, the petition shall be presented to a district judge. Upon receipt of the petition, either the court or the clerk of the district court shall set a date for a hearing not later than fourteen days from the date of the receipt of the petition.

88 Acts, ch 1138, §3

C89, §562C.3

C93, §555B.3

93 Acts, ch 154, §10

555B.4 Notice.

1. Personal service pursuant to rule of civil procedure 1.305 shall be made upon the mobile home owner not less than ten days before the hearing. If personal service cannot be completed in time to give the mobile home owner the minimum notice required by this section, the court may set a new hearing date.

2. If personal service cannot be made on the mobile home owner because the mobile home owner is avoiding service or cannot be found, service may be made by mailing a copy of the petition and notice of hearing to the mobile home owner's last known address and publishing the notice in one newspaper of general circulation in the county where the petition is filed. If the mobile home owner's address is not known to the real property owner, service may be made pursuant to rule of civil procedure 1.313 except that service is complete seven days after the initial publication. The court shall set a new hearing date if necessary to allow the ten-day minimum notice required under subsection 1 of this section.

3. If a tax lien exists on the mobile home or personal property at the time an action for abandonment is initiated, the real property owner shall notify the county treasurer of each county in which a tax lien appears by restricted certified mail sent not less than ten days before the hearing. The notice shall describe the mobile home and shall state the docket, case number, date, and time at which the hearing is scheduled, and the county treasurer's right to assert a claim to the mobile home at the hearing. The notice shall also state that

failure to assert a claim to the mobile home is deemed a waiver of all right, title, claim, and interest in the mobile home and is deemed consent to the sale or disposal of the mobile home.

88 Acts, ch 1138, §4

C89, §562C.4

C93, §555B.4

93 Acts, ch 154, §11; 97 Acts, ch 121, §31

555B.5 Change of venue.

In an action under this chapter a change of place of trial may be had as in other cases.

88 Acts, ch 1138, §5

C89, §562C.5

C93, §555B.5

555B.6 Priority of assignment.

An action under this chapter shall be accorded reasonable priority for assignment to assure prompt disposition.

88 Acts, ch 1138, §6

C89, §562C.6

C93, §555B.6

555B.7 Remedy not exclusive.

An action under this chapter may be brought in connection with a claim for monetary damages, possession, or recovery as provided in section 562B.25 or 562B.30 or chapter 648.

88 Acts, ch 1138, §7

C89, §562C.7

C93, §555B.7

555B.8 Judgment.

1. If the court determines that the mobile home and personal property have been abandoned, judgment shall be entered in favor of the real property owner for the reasonable costs of removal, storage, notice, and attorney fees; any other expenses incurred for preserving the mobile home and personal property or for bringing the action; and, if the action is brought in conjunction with one for monetary damages, the amount of monetary damages assessed.

2. If the mobile home owner or other claimant asserts a claim to the property, the judgment shall be satisfied before the mobile home owner or other claimant may take possession of the mobile home or personal property.

3. If no claim is asserted to the mobile home or personal property or if the judgment is not satisfied at the time of entry, an order shall be entered allowing the real property owner to sell or otherwise dispose of the mobile home and personal property pursuant to section 555B.9. If a claimant satisfies the judgment at the time of entry, the court shall enter an order permitting and directing the claimant to remove the mobile home or personal property from its location within a reasonable time to be fixed by the court. The court shall also determine the amount of further rent or storage charges to be paid by the claimant to the real property owner at the time of removal.

88 Acts, ch 1138, §8

C89, §562C.8

C93, §555B.8

555B.9 Disposal — proceeds.

1. Pursuant to an order for disposal under section 555B.8, subsection 3, the real property owner shall dispose of the mobile home and personal property by public or private sale in a commercially reasonable manner. If the personal property owner or other claimant has asserted a claim to the mobile home or personal property, that person shall be notified of the sale by restricted certified mail not less than five days before the sale. The notice is deemed given upon the mailing. The real property owner may buy at any public sale, and if the

mobile home or personal property is of a type customarily sold in a recognized market or is the subject of widely distributed standard price quotations, the real property owner may buy at a private sale.

2. A sale pursuant to subsection 1 transfers to the purchaser for value, all of the mobile home owner's rights in the mobile home and personal property, and discharges the real property owner's interest in the mobile home and personal property and any tax lien. The purchaser takes free of all rights and interests even though the real property owner fails to comply with the requirements of this chapter or of any judicial proceedings, if the purchaser acts in good faith.

3. The proceeds of the sale of mobile home and personal property shall be distributed as follows:

a. First, to satisfy the real property owner's judgment obtained under section 555B.8.

b. Second, to satisfy any tax lien for which a claim was asserted pursuant to section 555B.4, subsection 3.

c. Any surplus remaining after the proceeds are distributed shall be held by the real property owner for six months. If the mobile home owner fails to claim the surplus in that time, the surplus may be retained by the real property owner. If a deficiency remains after distribution of the proceeds, the mobile home owner is liable for the amount of the deficiency.

4. Notwithstanding subsections 1 through 3, the real property owner may propose to retain the mobile home and personal property in satisfaction of the judgment obtained pursuant to section 555B.8. Written notice of the proposal shall be sent to the mobile home owner or other claimant, if that person has asserted a claim to the mobile home or personal property in the judicial proceedings. If the real property owner receives objection in writing from the mobile home owner or other claimant within twenty-one days after the notice was sent, the real property owner shall dispose of the mobile home and personal property pursuant to subsection 1. If no written objection is received by the real property owner within twenty-one days after the notice was sent, the mobile home and personal property may be retained. Retention of the mobile home and personal property discharges the judgment of the real property owner and any tax lien.

5. If the real property owner has made a good faith attempt to sell the mobile home and personal property pursuant to subsection 1 but is unsuccessful and elects not to retain the mobile home and personal property pursuant to subsection 4, the real property owner may dispose of the mobile home and personal property to a demolisher or junkyard. Proceeds from the disposition shall be distributed pursuant to subsection 3. If the personal property is a motor vehicle to which section 321.90 applies, the real property owner shall present the order for disposal obtained pursuant to section 555B.8, subsection 3, to the police authority to obtain a certificate of authority to dispose of the motor vehicle pursuant to section 321.90, subsection 2.

88 Acts, ch 1138, §9

C89, §562C.9

C93, §555B.9

555B.10 Limitation on liability.

1. A real property owner who disposes of a mobile home or personal property in accordance with this chapter is not liable for damages by reason of the removal, sale, or disposal of the mobile home and personal property unless the damage is caused willfully or by gross negligence. Upon a motion to the district court and a showing that the real property owner is not proceeding in accordance with this chapter, the court may enjoin the real property owner from proceeding further and a determination for the proper disposition of the mobile home and personal property shall be made. If disposition of the mobile home or personal property has not occurred in accordance with this chapter, the owner thereof has a right to recover from the real property owner, any loss caused by failure to comply with this chapter. The burden of proof shall be upon the mobile home or personal property owner to show that the real property owner has not complied with this chapter in disposing of a mobile home or personal property.

2. The fact that a better price could have been obtained by a sale at a different time or

in a different method from that selected by the real property owner is not of itself sufficient to establish that the sale was not made in a commercially reasonable manner. If the real property owner sells the mobile home and personal property in the usual manner in any recognized market or if the real property owner sells at the price current in the market at the time of the real property owner's sale or if the real property owner has otherwise sold in conformity with reasonable commercial practices among dealers in the type of mobile home or personal property sold, the real property owner has sold in a commercially reasonable manner. A disposition approved in any judicial proceeding shall be deemed conclusively to be commercially reasonable.

88 Acts, ch 1138, §10

C89, §562C.10

C93, §555B.10

93 Acts, ch 154, §12