

CHAPTER 170.

STRAYS AND LOST CHATTELS.

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170.01 Who may take up strays. No stray, except horses and mules, shall be taken up by any person not a resident of the town in which it is found nor unless it is found upon land owned or occupied by him.

170.02 Finder to give notice; penalty. Every finder of a stray shall, within 7 days thereafter, notify the owner thereof, if to him known, and request him to pay all reasonable charges and take such stray away; and if such owner be to him unknown he shall, within ten days, file a notice with the town clerk of the town, who shall transmit a copy thereof to the county clerk. He shall publish notice, if the value of the stray exceeds \$50, as a class 3 notice, under ch. 985, in the county. The notice shall briefly describe the stray by giving its marks, natural or artificial, as near as practicable, the name and residence of the finder, specifying the section and town, and the time when such stray was taken up. For neglect or refusal to publish such notice as required, the finder of such stray shall be liable in double the amount of damages sustained by the owner of such stray. For neglect or failure for one year to publish such notices the finder of such stray shall be liable for its full value, to be recovered by action in the name of the town, and the amount recovered shall be added to the school fund of such town.

History: 1965 c. 252.

170.03 Appraisal. Every finder of a stray of the value of \$10 or more, at the time of such taking up, shall also within one month thereafter cause the same to be appraised by a municipal justice or the town chairman of such town, and a certificate of such appraisal, signed by the municipal justice or chairman, shall be filed in the town clerk's office. The finder shall pay the municipal justice 50 cents for the certificate and 10 cents per mile for each mile necessarily traveled to make the same.

History: 1967 c. 276 s. 39.

170.04 Charges for keeping. The owner or person entitled to the possession of any such stray at any time within one year after such notice is filed with such town clerk may have the same restored to him upon proving his right thereto and paying all lawful charges incurred in relation to the same. If the claimant and the finder cannot agree as to the amount of such charges or upon what should be allowed for the use of such stray either party, on notice to the other, may apply to any municipal justice or the town chairman of such town to settle the same, who for that purpose may examine witnesses on oath. If any amount shall be found due to the finder, over the value of the use of such stray, the same, with the costs, shall be a lien upon such stray, and costs of such adjudication shall abide the decision of the municipal justice. When acting in any case under this chapter a town chairman shall have the same powers as a municipal justice and the law governing municipal justices and municipal courts shall, so far as applicable, apply thereto.

History: 1967 c. 276 ss. 39, 40.

170.05 Sale of stray. If no claimant for such stray shall cause its return to him as before provided and if such stray shall not have been appraised at more than ten dollars the finder shall thereupon become the absolute owner thereof; but if such appraised value exceeds ten dollars such stray shall be sold at public auction by the sheriff or any constable of the county on the request of the finder. Notice thereof shall be given and the sale shall be conducted and the same fees allowed therefor as in case of sales upon a justice's execution. The finder may bid at such sale and shall, at the time of sale, deliver to such officer a statement in writing of his charges, which shall be filed by such officer with

the town treasurer; and after deducting such charges, if just and reasonable, and the costs of the sale the officer shall pay one-half of the remaining proceeds to the finder and within ten days thereafter the other half to the treasurer of such town for its use. If the finder of any such stray shall neglect or refuse to cause such sale to be made when required by law he shall pay to the town the value of such stray, to be recovered in an action by the town.

170.06 Removal of stray; neglect to give notice, etc. If any person shall, without the consent of the finder, take away any stray taken up pursuant to this chapter without first paying all the lawful charges incurred in relation to the same he shall be liable to the finder for the value of such stray; and if any finder shall neglect to give, file or publish the notices or have the appraisal made or do any other act prescribed by this chapter he shall be precluded from acquiring any right of property in such stray and from receiving any charges or expenses relative thereto.

170.07 Lost chattels, notice. If any person shall find any money or goods of the value of three dollars or more and if the owner thereof be unknown, such person shall, within five days after finding such money or goods, give notice thereof in writing to the town clerk of the town in which such property was found and shall also, within said five days, cause a notice thereof to be posted up in two public places in the same town.

170.08 Notice and appraisal. Every finder of lost goods of the value of \$25 or more shall give notice thereof to the clerk of the town wherein found, within 15 days after finding the same and cause a class 2 notice thereof, under ch. 985, to be published in the county. If no person appears to claim the same who may be entitled thereto he shall, within 2 months after finding such goods and before using the same to their injury, procure an appraisal thereof by a municipal justice or the town chairman of his town, which appraisal shall be certified to by such municipal justice or chairman and filed in the town clerk's office of such town.

History: 1965 c. 252; 1967 c. 276 s. 39.

170.09 Restitution. If the owner of such lost money or goods shall appear within one year after notice given to the town clerk as aforesaid and shall make out his right thereto he shall have restitution of the same or the value thereof, upon his paying all the costs and charges thereon, including a reasonable compensation to the finder for his trouble.

170.10 Payment to town. If no owner shall appear within one year then the finder of such lost money or goods shall pay one-half of the value thereof, after deducting all legal charges, to the treasurer of the town; and in case such finder shall neglect to pay the same on demand, after the expiration of the time aforesaid, the same may be sued for and recovered by such town.

170.11 Penalty for neglect. If any finder of lost money or goods of the value of three dollars or upward shall neglect to give notice of the same and otherwise to comply with the provisions of this chapter he shall be liable for the full value of such money or goods, one-half to the use of the town and the other half to the person who shall sue for the same, and shall also be responsible to the owner for such lost money or goods.