WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 31D ARTICLE 13

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PART 1. RIGHT TO APPRAISAL AND PAYMENT FOR SHARES.

§31D-13-1301. Definitions.

In this article:

(1) "Affiliate" means a person that directly or indirectly through one or more intermediaries controls, is controlled by or is under common control with another person or is a senior executive. For purposes of subdivision (4), subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred two of this article, a person is deemed to be an affiliate of its senior executives.

(2) "Beneficial shareholder" means a person who is the beneficial owner of shares held in a voting trust or by a nominee on the beneficial owner's behalf.

(3) "Corporation" means the issuer of the shares held by a shareholder demanding appraisal and, for matters covered in sections one thousand three hundred twenty-two, one thousand three hundred twenty-three, one thousand three hundred twenty-four, one thousand three hundred twenty-five, one thousand three hundred twenty-six, one thousand three hundred thirty and one thousand three hundred thirty-one of this article, includes the surviving entity in a merger.

(4) "Fair value" means the value of the corporation's shares determined:

(A) Immediately before the effectuation of the corporate action to which the shareholder objects;

(B) Using customary and current valuation concepts and techniques generally employed for similar businesses in the context of the transaction requiring appraisal; and

(C) Without discounting for lack of marketability or minority status except, if appropriate, for amendments to the articles pursuant to subdivision (5), subsection (a), section one thousand three hundred two of this article.

(5) "Interest" means interest from the effective date of the corporate action until the date of payment, at the rate of interest on judgments in this state on the effective date of the corporate action.

(6) "Preferred shares" means a class or series of shares whose holders have preference over any other class or series with respect to distributions.

(7) "Record shareholder" means the person in whose name shares are registered in the records of the corporation or the beneficial owner of shares to the extent of the rights granted by a nominee certificate on file with the corporation.

(8) "Senior executive" means the chief executive officer, chief operating officer, chief financial officer and anyone in charge of a principal business unit or function.

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(9) "Shareholder" means both a record shareholder and a beneficial shareholder.

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§31D-13-1302. Right to appraisal.

(a) A shareholder is entitled to appraisal rights, and to obtain payment of the fair value of that shareholder's shares, in the event of any of the following corporate actions:

(1) Consummation of a merger to which the corporation is a party: (A) If shareholder approval is required for the merger by section one thousand one hundred four, article eleven of this chapter and the shareholder is entitled to vote on the merger, except that appraisal rights may not be available to any shareholder of the corporation with respect to shares of any class or series that remain outstanding after consummation of the merger; or (B) if the corporation is a subsidiary and the merger is governed by section one thousand one hundred five, article eleven of this chapter;

(2) Consummation of a share exchange to which the corporation is a party as the corporation whose shares will be acquired if the shareholder is entitled to vote on the exchange, except that appraisal rights may not be available to any shareholder of the corporation with respect to any class or series of shares of the corporation that is not exchanged;

(3) Consummation of a disposition of assets pursuant to section one thousand two hundred two, article twelve of this chapter if the shareholder is entitled to vote on the disposition;

(4) An amendment of the articles of incorporation with respect to a class or series of shares that reduces the number of shares of a class or series owned by the shareholder to a fraction of a share if the corporation has the obligation or right to repurchase the fractional share so created; or

(5) Any other amendment to the articles of incorporation, merger, share exchange or disposition of assets to the extent provided by the articles of incorporation, bylaws or a resolution of the board of directors.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, the availability of appraisal rights under subdivisions (1), (2), (3) and (4), subsection (a) of this section are limited in accordance with the following provisions:

(1) Appraisal rights may not be available for the holders of shares of any class or series of shares which is:

(A) Listed on the New York stock exchange or the American stock exchange or designated as a national market system security on an interdealer quotation system by the national association of securities dealers, inc.; or

(B) Not so listed or designated, but has at least two thousand shareholders and the outstanding shares of a class or series has a market value of at least $20 million, exclusive of the value of the shares held by its subsidiaries, senior executives, directors and beneficial shareholders owning more than ten percent of the shares.

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(2) The applicability of subdivision (1), subsection (b) of this section is to be determined as of:

(A) The record date fixed to determine the shareholders entitled to receive notice of, and to vote at, the meeting of shareholders to act upon the corporate action requiring appraisal rights; or

(B) The day before the effective date of the corporate action if there is no meeting of shareholders.

(3) Subdivision (1), subsection (b) of this section is not applicable and appraisal rights are to be available pursuant to subsection (a) of this section for the holders of any class or series of shares who are required by the terms of the corporate action requiring appraisal rights to accept for the shares anything other than cash or shares of any class or any series of shares of any corporation, or any other proprietary interest of any other entity, that satisfies the standards set forth in subdivision (1), section (b) of this section at the time the corporate action becomes effective.

(4) Subdivision (1), subsection (b) of this section is not applicable and appraisal rights are to be available pursuant to subsection (a) of this section for the holders of any class or series of shares where any of the shares or assets of the corporation are being acquired or converted, whether by merger, share exchange or otherwise, pursuant to the corporate action by a person, or by an affiliate of a person, who: (A) Is, or at any time in the one-year period immediately preceding approval by the board of directors of the corporate action requiring appraisal rights was, the beneficial owner of twenty percent or more of the voting power of the corporation, excluding any shares acquired pursuant to an offer for all shares having voting power if the offer was made within one year prior to the corporate action requiring appraisal rights for consideration of the same kind and of a value equal to or less than that paid in connection with the corporate action; or (B) for purpose of voting their shares of the corporation, each member of the group formed is deemed to have acquired beneficial ownership, as of the date of the agreement, of all voting shares of the corporation beneficially owned by any member of the group.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of section one thousand three hundred two of this article, the articles of incorporation as originally filed or any amendment to the articles of incorporation may limit or eliminate appraisal rights for any class or series of preferred shares, but any limitation or elimination contained in an amendment to the articles of incorporation that limits or eliminates appraisal rights for any of the shares that are outstanding immediately prior to the effective date of the amendment or that the corporation is or may be required to issue or sell pursuant to any conversion, exchange or other right existing immediately before the effective date of the amendment does not apply to any corporate action that becomes effective within one year of that date if the action would otherwise afford appraisal rights.

(d) A shareholder entitled to appraisal rights under this article may not challenge a

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completed corporate action for which appraisal rights are available unless the corporate action:

(1) Was not effectuated in accordance with the applicable provisions of article ten, eleven or twelve of this chapter or the corporation's articles of incorporation, bylaws or board of directors' resolution authorizing the corporate action; or

(2) Was procured as a result of fraud or material misrepresentation.

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§31D-13-1303. Assertion of rights by nominees and beneficial owners.

(a) A record shareholder may assert appraisal rights as to fewer than all the shares registered in the record shareholder's name but owned by a beneficial shareholder only if the record shareholder objects with respect to all shares of the class or series owned by the beneficial shareholder and notifies the corporation in writing of the name and address of each beneficial shareholder on whose behalf appraisal rights are being asserted. The rights of a record shareholder who asserts appraisal rights for only part of the shares held of record in the record shareholder's name under this subsection are to be determined as if the shares as to which the record shareholder objects and the record shareholder's other shares were registered in the names of different record shareholders.

(b) A beneficial shareholder may assert appraisal rights as to shares of any class or series held on behalf of the shareholder only if the shareholder:

(1) Submits to the corporation the record shareholder's written consent to the assertion of the rights no later than the date referred to in paragraph (D), subdivision (2), subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred twenty-two of this article; and

(2) Does so with respect to all shares of the class or series that are beneficially owned by the beneficial shareholder.

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PART 2. PROCEDURE FOR EXERCISE OF APPRAISAL RIGHTS.

§31D-13-1320. Notice of appraisal rights.

(a) If proposed corporate action described in subsection (a), section one thousand three hundred two of this article is to be submitted to a vote at a shareholders' meeting, the meeting notice must state that the corporation has concluded that shareholders are, are not or may be entitled to assert appraisal rights under this article. If the corporation concludes that appraisal rights are or may be available, a copy of this article must accompany the meeting notice sent to those record shareholders entitled to exercise appraisal rights.

(b) In a merger pursuant to section one thousand one hundred five, article eleven of this chapter, the parent corporation must notify in writing all record shareholders of the subsidiary who are entitled to assert appraisal rights that the corporate action became effective. The notice must be sent within ten days after the corporate action became effective and include the materials described in section one thousand three hundred twenty-two of this article.

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§31D-13-1321. Notice of intent to demand payment.

(a) If proposed corporate action requiring appraisal rights under section one thousand three hundred two of this article is submitted to a vote at a shareholders' meeting, a shareholder who wishes to assert appraisal rights with respect to any class or series of shares:

(1) Must deliver to the corporation before the vote is taken written notice of the shareholder's intent to demand payment if the proposed action is effectuated; and

(2) Must not vote, or cause or permit to be voted, any shares of the class or series in favor of the proposed action.

(b) A shareholder who does not satisfy the requirements of subsection (a) of this section is not entitled to payment under this article.

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§31D-13-1322. Appraisal notice and form.

(a) If proposed corporate action requiring appraisal rights under subsection (a), section one thousand three hundred two of this article becomes effective, the corporation must deliver a written appraisal notice and form required by subdivision (1), subsection (b) of this section to all shareholders who satisfied the requirements of section one thousand three hundred twenty-one of this article. In the case of a merger under section one thousand one hundred five, article eleven of this chapter, the parent must deliver a written appraisal notice and form to all record shareholders who may be entitled to assert appraisal rights.

(b) The appraisal notice must be sent no earlier than the date the corporate action became effective and no later than ten days after that date and must:

(1) Supply a form that specifies the date of the first announcement to shareholders of the principal terms of the proposed corporate action and requires the shareholder asserting appraisal rights to certify: (A) Whether or not beneficial ownership of those shares for which appraisal rights are asserted was acquired before that date; and (B) that the shareholder did not vote for the transaction;

(2) State:

(A) Where the form must be sent and where certificates for certificated shares must be deposited and the date by which those certificates must be deposited, which date may not be earlier than the date for receiving the required form under this subdivision;

(B) A date by which the corporation must receive the form which date may not be fewer than forty nor more than sixty days after the date the appraisal notice and form required by subsection (a) of this section are sent and state that the shareholder is deemed to have waived the right to demand appraisal with respect to the shares unless the form is received by the corporation by the specified date;

(C) The corporation's estimate of the fair value of the shares;

(D) That, if requested in writing, the corporation will provide, to the shareholder so requesting, within ten days after the date specified in paragraph (B) of this subdivision the number of shareholders who return the forms by the specified date and the total number of shares owned by them; and

(E) The date by which the notice to withdraw under section one thousand three hundred twenty-three of this article must be received, which date must be within twenty days after the date specified in paragraph (B) of this subdivision; and

(3) Be accompanied by a copy of this article.

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§31D-13-1323. Perfection of rights; right to withdraw.

(a) A shareholder who receives notice pursuant to section one thousand three hundred twenty-two of this article and who wishes to exercise appraisal rights must certify on the form sent by the corporation whether the beneficial owner of the shares acquired beneficial ownership of the shares before the date required to be set forth in the notice pursuant to subdivision (1), subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred twenty-two of this article. If a shareholder fails to make this certification, the corporation may elect to treat the shareholder's shares as after-acquired shares under section one thousand three hundred twenty-five of this article. In addition, a shareholder who wishes to exercise appraisal rights must execute and return the form and, in the case of certificated shares, deposit the shareholder's certificates in accordance with the terms of the notice by the date referred to in the notice pursuant to paragraph (B), subdivision (2), subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred twenty-two of this article. Once a shareholder deposits the shareholder's certificates or, in the case of uncertificated shares, returns the executed forms, that shareholder loses all rights as a shareholder unless the shareholder withdraws pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

(b) A shareholder who has complied with subsection (a) of this section may decline to exercise appraisal rights and withdraw from the appraisal process by so notifying the corporation in writing by the date set forth in the appraisal notice pursuant to paragraph (E), subdivision (2), subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred twenty-two of this article. A shareholder who fails to withdraw from the appraisal process by that date may not withdraw without the corporation's written consent.

(c) A shareholder who does not execute and return the form and, in the case of certificated shares, deposit the shareholder's share certificates where required, each by the date set forth in the notice described in subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred twenty-two of this article, is not entitled to payment under this article.

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§31D-13-1324. Payment.

(a) Except as provided in section one thousand three hundred twenty-five of this article, within thirty days after the form required by paragraph (B), subdivision (2), subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred twenty-two of this article is due, the corporation shall pay in cash to those shareholders who complied with subsection (a), section one thousand three hundred twenty-three of this article the amount the corporation estimates to be the fair value of their shares, plus interest.

(b) The payment to each shareholder pursuant to subsection (a) of this article must be accompanied by:

(1) Financial statements of the corporation that issued the shares to be appraised, consisting of a balance sheet as of the end of a fiscal year ending not more than sixteen months before the date of payment, an income statement for that year, a statement of changes in shareholders' equity for that year and the latest available interim financial statements, if any;

(2) A statement of the corporation's estimate of the fair value of the shares, which estimate must equal or exceed the corporation's estimate given pursuant to paragraph (C), subdivision (2), subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred twenty-two of this article; and

(3) A statement that shareholders described in subsection (a) of this section have the right to demand further payment under section one thousand three hundred twenty-six of this article and that if any shareholder does not make a demand for further payment within the time period specified, shareholder is deemed to have accepted the payment in full satisfaction of the corporation's obligations under this article.

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§31D-13-1325. After-acquired shares.

(a) A corporation may elect to withhold payment required by section one thousand three hundred twenty-four of this article from any shareholder who did not certify that beneficial ownership of all of the shareholder's shares for which appraisal rights are asserted was acquired before the date set forth in the appraisal notice sent pursuant to subdivision (1), subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred twenty-two of this article.

(b) If the corporation elected to withhold payment under subsection (a) of this section, it must, within thirty days after the form required by paragraph (B), subdivision (2), subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred twenty-two of this article is due, notify all shareholders who are described in subsection (a) of this section:

(1) Of the information required by subdivision (1), subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred twenty-four of this article;

(2) Of the corporation's estimate of fair value pursuant to subdivision (2), subsection (b), section one thousand three hundred twenty-four of this article;

(3) That they may accept the corporation's estimate of fair value, plus interest, in full satisfaction of their demands or demand appraisal under section one thousand three hundred twenty-six of this article;

(4) That those shareholders who wish to accept the offer must notify the corporation of their acceptance of the corporation's offer within thirty days after receiving the offer; and

(5) That those shareholders who do not satisfy the requirements for demanding appraisal under section one thousand three hundred twenty-six of this article are deemed to have accepted the corporation's offer.

(c) Within ten days after receiving the shareholder's acceptance pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, the corporation must pay in cash the amount it offered under subdivision (2), subsection (b) of this section to each shareholder who agreed to accept the corporation's offer in full satisfaction of the shareholder's demand.

(d) Within forty days after sending the notice described in subsection (b) of this section, the corporation must pay in cash the amount it offered to pay under subdivision (2), subsection (b) of this section to each shareholder described in subdivision (5), subsection (b) of this section.

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§31D-13-1326. Procedure if shareholder dissatisfied with payment or offer.

(a) A shareholder paid pursuant to section one thousand three hundred twenty-four of this article who is dissatisfied with the amount of the payment must notify the corporation in writing of that shareholder's estimate of the fair value of the shares and demand payment of that estimate plus interest and less any payment due under section one thousand three hundred twenty-four of this article. A shareholder offered payment under section one thousand three hundred twenty-five of this article who is dissatisfied with that offer must reject the offer and demand payment of the shareholder's stated estimate of the fair value of the shares plus interest.

(b) A shareholder who fails to notify the corporation in writing of that shareholder's demand to be paid the shareholder's stated estimate of the fair value plus interest under subsection (a) of this section within thirty days after receiving the corporation's payment or offer of payment under sections one thousand three hundred twenty-four or one thousand three hundred twenty-five of this article, respectively, waives the right to demand payment under this section and is entitled only to the payment made or offered pursuant to those respective sections.

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PART 3. JUDICIAL APPRAISAL OF SHARES.

§31D-13-1330. Court action.

(a) If a shareholder makes demand for payment under section one thousand three hundred twenty-six of this article which remains unsettled, the corporation shall commence a proceeding within sixty days after receiving the payment demand and petition the court to determine the fair value of the shares and accrued interest. If the corporation does not commence the proceeding within the sixty-day period, it shall pay in cash to each shareholder the amount the shareholder demanded pursuant to section one thousand three hundred twenty-six of this article plus interest.

(b) The corporation shall make all shareholders, whether or not residents of this state, whose demands remain unsettled parties to the proceeding as in an action against their shares, and all parties must be served with a copy of the petition. Nonresidents may be served by registered or certified mail or by publication as provided by law.

(c) The jurisdiction of the court in which the proceeding is commenced is plenary and exclusive. The court may appoint one or more persons as appraisers to receive evidence and recommend a decision on the question of fair value. The appraisers have the powers described in the order appointing them, or in any amendment to it. The shareholders demanding appraisal rights are entitled to the same discovery rights as parties in other civil proceedings. There is no right to a jury trial.

(d) Each shareholder made a party to the proceeding is entitled to judgment: (1) For the amount, if any, by which the court finds the fair value of the shareholder's shares, plus interest, exceeds the amount paid by the corporation to the shareholder for the shares; or (2) for the fair value, plus interest, of the shareholder's shares for which the corporation elected to withhold payment under section one thousand three hundred twenty-five of this article.

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§31D-13-1331. Court costs and counsel fees.

(a) The court in an appraisal proceeding commenced under section one thousand three hundred thirty of this article shall determine all costs of the proceeding, including the reasonable compensation and expenses of appraisers appointed by the court. The court shall assess the costs against the corporation, except that the court may assess costs against all or some of the shareholders demanding appraisal, in amounts the court finds equitable, to the extent the court finds the shareholders acted arbitrarily, vexatiously, or not in good faith with respect to the rights provided by this article.

(b) The court in an appraisal proceeding may also assess the fees and expenses of counsel and experts for the respective parties, in amounts the court finds equitable:

(1) Against the corporation and in favor of any or all shareholders demanding appraisal if the court finds the corporation did not substantially comply with the requirements of section one thousand three hundred twenty, one thousand three hundred twenty-two, one thousand three hundred twenty-four or one thousand three hundred twenty-five of this article; or

(2) Against either the corporation or a shareholder demanding appraisal, in favor of any other party, if the court finds that the party against whom the fees and expenses are assessed acted arbitrarily, vexatiously or not in good faith with respect to the rights provided by this article.

(c) If the court in an appraisal proceeding finds that the services of counsel for any shareholder were of substantial benefit to other shareholders similarly situated, and that the fees for those services should not be assessed against the corporation, the court may award to counsel reasonable fees to be paid out of the amounts awarded the shareholders who were benefitted.

(d) To the extent the corporation fails to make a required payment pursuant to section one thousand three hundred twenty-four, one thousand three hundred twenty-five, or one thousand three hundred twenty-six of this article, the shareholder may sue directly for the amount owed and, to the extent successful, are to be entitled to recover from the corporation all costs and expenses of the suit, including counsel fees.

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