WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §61-8C-11

§61-8C-11. Disposition of other forfeited property; distribution of proceeds.

(a) When property other than that referred to in section ten of this article is forfeited under this article, the circuit court ordering the forfeiture, upon application by the prosecuting attorney or the Superintendent of the State Police or his or her designee, may direct that:

(1) Title to the forfeited property be vested in the law-enforcement agency so petitioning;

(2) The law-enforcement agency responsible for the seizure retain the property for official use; or

(3) The forfeited property shall be offered at public auction to the highest bidder for cash. Notice of such public auction shall be published as a Class III legal advertisement in accordance with article three, chapter fifty-nine of this code. The publication area shall be the county where the public auction will be held.

(b) When a law-enforcement agency receives property pursuant to this section, the court may, upon request of the prosecuting attorney initiating the forfeiture proceeding, require the law-enforcement agency to pay unto the office of said prosecuting attorney a sum not to exceed ten percent of the value of the property received to compensate said office for actual costs and expenses incurred.

(c) The proceeds of every public sale conducted pursuant to this section shall be paid and applied as follows: First, to the balance due on any security interest preserved by the court; second, to the costs incurred in the storage, maintenance and security of the property; and third, to the costs incurred in selling the property.

(d) Any proceeds of a public sale remaining after distribution pursuant to subsection (c) of this section shall be distributed as follows:

(1) Ten percent of such proceeds shall be tendered to the office of the prosecuting attorney who initiated the forfeiture proceeding.

(2) The balance shall be deposited in a special law-enforcement investigation fund. Such fund shall be administered by the Superintendent of the State Police or his or her designee and shall take the form of an interest-bearing account with any interest earned to be compounded to the fund. Any funds deposited in the special law-enforcement investigative fund pursuant to this article shall be expended only to defray the costs of protracted or complex investigations, to provide additional technical equipment or expertise, to provide matching funds to obtain federal grants or for such other law-enforcement purposes as the Superintendent of the State Police or his or her designee may deem appropriate; however, these funds may not be utilized for regular operating needs.

WV Legislature

(e) If more than one law-enforcement agency was substantially involved in effecting the seizure and forfeiture of property, the court wherein the petition for forfeiture was filed shall equitably distribute the forfeited property among the law-enforcement agencies. In the event of a public sale of such property pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the court shall equitably distribute any proceeds remaining after distribution pursuant to subsection (c) and subdivision (1), subsection (d) of this section among such law-enforcement agencies for deposit into their individual special law-enforcement investigative fund. Equitable distribution shall be based upon the overall contribution of the individual law-enforcement agency to the investigation which led to the seizure.

(f) Upon the sale of any forfeited property for which title or registration is required by law, the state shall issue a title or registration certificate to any bona fide purchaser at a public sale of the property conducted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. Upon the request of the law-enforcement agency receiving, pursuant to the order of the court, or electing to retain, pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, any forfeited property for which title or registration is required by law, the state shall issue a title or registration certificate to the appropriate governmental body.

(g) Any funds expended pursuant to the provisions of this section shall only be expended in the manner provided in subsection (b), section ten of this article.

(h) Every prosecuting attorney or law-enforcement agency receiving forfeited property or proceeds from the sale of forfeited property pursuant to this article shall submit an annual report to the body which has budgetary authority over such agency. Such report shall specify the type and approximate value of all forfeited property and the amount of proceeds from the sale of forfeited property received in the preceding year. No county or municipality may use anticipated receipts of forfeited property in their budgetary process.

(i) In lieu of the sale of any forfeited property subject to a bona fide security interest preserved by an order of the court, the law-enforcement agency receiving the forfeited property may pay the balance due on any security interest preserved by the court from funds budgeted to the office or department or from the special fund and retain possession of the forfeited property for official use pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

(j) In every case where property is forfeited, disposition of the forfeited property, in accordance with this article, shall be made within six months of the date upon which the court of jurisdiction orders forfeiture. Should the office or agency receiving the property fail either to place the property in official use or dispose of the property in accordance with law, the court of jurisdiction shall cause disposition of the property to be made with any proceeds therefrom to be awarded to the state.

(k) No disposition shall occur until all applicable periods for filing a notice of intent to appeal has expired and no party in interest shall have filed such notice. The filing of the notice of intent to appeal shall stay any such disposition until the appeal has been finally adjudicated or until the appeal period of one hundred eighty days has expired without an appeal having

WV Legislature

actually been taken or filed, unless a valid extension of the appeal has been granted by the circuit court under the provisions of section seven, article four, chapter fifty-eight of this code.

(l) The special law-enforcement investigative funds of each law-enforcement agency may be placed in an interest-bearing depository insured by the federal government.

WV Legislature