

CHAPTER 278

REAL ESTATE TAXES; OBJECTIONS, DEFENSES

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service and filing.

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278.01 DEFENSE OR OBJECTION TO TAX ON LAND; SERVICE AND FILING.

Subdivision 1. **Determination of validity.** Any person having any estate, right, title, or interest in or lien upon any parcel of land, who claims that such property has been partially, unfairly, or unequally assessed in comparison with other property in the (1) city, or (2) county, or (3) in the case of a county containing a city of the first class, the portion of the county excluding the first class city, or that the parcel has been assessed at a valuation greater than its real or actual value, or that the tax levied against the same is illegal, in whole or in part, or has been paid, or that the property is exempt from the tax so levied, may have the validity of the claim, defense, or objection determined by the district court of the county in which the tax is levied or by the tax court by serving two copies of a petition for such determination upon the county auditor, one copy on the county attorney, and one copy on the county treasurer. In counties where the office of county treasurer has been combined with the office of county auditor, the petitioner must serve the number of copies required by the county. The petitioner must file the copies with proof of service, in the office of the court administrator of the district court before the 16th day of May of the year in which the tax becomes payable. The county auditor shall immediately forward one copy of the petition to the appropriate governmental authority in a home rule charter or statutory city or town in which the property is located if that city or town employs its own certified assessor. A copy of the petition shall also be sent to the school board of the school district in which the property is located. A petition for determination under this section may be transferred by the district court to the tax court. An appeal may also be taken to the tax court under chapter 271 at any time following receipt of the valuation notice required by section 273.121 but prior to May 16 of the year in which the taxes are payable.

[For text of subds 2 and 3, see M.S.1988]

History: 1989 c 277 art 2 s 39; 1989 c 324 s 23

278.02 PETITION MAY INCLUDE SEVERAL PARCELS.

Such petition need not be in any particular form, but shall clearly identify the land involved and shall set forth in concise language the claim, defense, or objection asserted. Several parcels of land in or upon which the petitioner has an estate, right, title, interest, or lien may be included in the same petition, but only if they are in the same city or town, except that contiguous property overlapping city or town boundaries may be included in one petition.

History: 1989 c 324 s 24

278.03 PAYMENT OF TAX.

If the proceedings instituted by the filing of the petition have not been completed before the 16th day of May next following the filing, the petitioner shall pay to the county treasurer 50 percent of the tax levied for such year against the property involved, unless permission to continue prosecution of the petition without such payment is obtained as herein provided. If the proceedings instituted by the filing of the petition have not been completed by the next October 16, or, in the case of class 1b agricultural homestead, class 2a agricultural homestead, and class 2b(2) agricultural nonhomestead property, November 16, the petitioner shall pay to the county treasurer

50 percent of the unpaid balance of the taxes levied for the year against the property involved if the unpaid balance is \$2,000 or less and 80 percent of the unpaid balance if the unpaid balance is over \$2,000, unless permission to continue prosecution of the petition without payment is obtained as herein provided. The petitioner, upon ten days notice to the county attorney and to the county auditor, given at least ten days prior to the 16th day of May or the 16th day of October, or, in the case of class 1b agricultural homestead, class 2a agricultural homestead, and class 2c agricultural nonhomestead property, the 16th day of November, may apply to the court for permission to continue prosecution of the petition without payment; and, if it is made to appear

(1) that the proposed review is to be taken in good faith;

(2) that there is probable cause to believe that the property may be held exempt from the tax levied or that the tax may be determined to be less than 50 percent of the amount levied; and

(3) that it would work a hardship upon petitioner to pay the taxes due,

the court may permit the petitioner to continue prosecution of the petition without payment, or may fix a lesser amount to be paid as a condition of continuing the prosecution of the petition.

Failure to make payment of the amount required when due shall operate automatically to dismiss the petition and all proceedings thereunder unless the payment is waived by an order of the court permitting the petitioner to continue prosecution of the petition without payment. The petition shall be automatically reinstated upon payment of the entire tax plus interest and penalty if the payment is made within one year of the dismissal. The county treasurer shall, upon request of the petitioner, issue duplicate receipts for the tax payment, one of which shall be filed by the petitioner in the proceeding.

History: 1989 c 277 art 2 s 40; 1989 c 324 s 25

278.05 TRIAL OF ISSUES.

[For text of subds 1 to 3, see M.S.1988]

Subd. 4. Sales ratio studies as evidence. The sales ratio studies published by the department of revenue, or any part of the studies, or any copy of the studies or records accumulated to prepare the studies which is prepared by the commissioner of revenue for use in determining education aids shall be admissible in evidence as a public record without the laying of a foundation if the sales prices used in the study are adjusted for the terms of the sale to reflect market value and are adjusted to reflect the difference in the date of sale compared to the assessment date. The department of revenue sales ratio study shall be prima facie evidence of the level of assessment. Additional evidence relevant to the sales ratio study is also admissible. No sales ratio study received into evidence shall be conclusive or binding on the court and evidence of its reliability or unreliability may be introduced by any party including, but not limited to, evidence of inadequate adjustment of sale prices for terms of financing, inadequate adjustment of sales prices to reflect the difference in the date of sale compared to the assessment date, and inadequate sample size.

No reduction in value on the grounds of discrimination shall be granted on the basis of a sales ratio study unless

(a) the sales prices are adjusted for the terms of the sale to reflect market value,

(b) the sales prices are adjusted to reflect the difference in the date of sale compared to the assessment date,

(c) there is an adequate sample size, and

(d) the median ratio of the same classification of property in the same county, city, or town as the subject property is lower than 90 percent, except that in the case of a county containing a city of the first class, the median ratio for the county shall be the ratio determined excluding sales from the first class city within the county.

If a reduction in value on the grounds of discrimination is granted based on the above criteria, the reduction shall equal the difference between 90 percent and the median ratio determined by the court.

Subd. 5. Any time after the filing of the petition and before the trial of the issues raised thereby, when the defense or claim presented is that the property has been partially, unfairly, or unequally assessed, or that the parcel has been assessed at a valuation greater than its real or actual value, or that a parcel which is classified as homestead under the provisions of section 273.13, subdivision 22 or 23, has been assessed at a valuation which exceeds by ten percent or more the valuation which the parcel would have if it were valued at the average assessment/sales ratio for real property in the same class in that portion of the county in which the parcel is located, for which the commissioner is able to establish and publish a sales ratio study, the attorney representing the state, county, city or town in the proceedings may serve on the petitioner, or the petitioner's attorney, and file with the court administrator of the district court, an offer to reduce the valuation of any tract or tracts to a valuation set forth in the offer. If, within ten days thereafter, the petitioner, or the attorney, gives notice in writing to the county attorney, or the attorney for the city or town, that the offer is accepted, the official notified may file the offer with proof of notice, and the court administrator shall enter judgment accordingly. Otherwise, the offer shall be deemed withdrawn and evidence thereof shall not be given; and, unless a lower valuation than specified in the offer is found by the court, no costs or disbursements shall be allowed to the petitioner, but the costs and disbursements of the state, county, city or town, including interest at six percent on the tax based on the amount of the offer from and after the 16th day of October, or, in the case of class 1b agricultural homestead, class 2a agricultural homestead, and class 2b(2) agricultural nonhomestead property, the 16th day of November, of the year the taxes are payable, shall be taxed in its favor and included in the judgment and when collected shall be credited to the county revenue fund, unless the taxes were paid in full before the 16th day of October, or, in the case of class 1b agricultural homestead, class 2a agricultural homestead, and class 2b(2) agricultural nonhomestead property, the 16th day of November, of the year in which the taxes were payable, in which event interest shall not be taxable.

History: 1989 c 277 art 2 s 41,42

278.08 INTEREST.

Subdivision 1. **Interest; penalty.** The judgment must include the following interest:

- (1) if the tax is sustained in full, interest on the unpaid part of the tax computed under section 279.03;
- (2) if the tax is increased, interest on the unpaid part of the tax as originally assessed computed under section 279.03;
- (3) if the tax is reduced, interest on the difference between the tax as recomputed and the amount previously paid computed under section 279.03.

If the tax is sustained or increased, penalty on the unpaid part of the tax as originally assessed computed under section 279.01 must be included in the judgment.

[For text of subd 2, see M.S.1988]

History: 1989 c 324 s 26