New Bedford woman seeks advice in dispute with ex over custody of dog

“My ex and I split up in the beginning of November. When he left he left a dog we had in my home.

The dog had a vet bill that I paid for back from September. The agreement was for him to pay half of the vet bill ($175) to have visitation with the dog. On 1-6-22 he called me and said he had $50 for the dog. So I agreed the dog could stay with him overnight. I called the next day and my ex proceeds to tell me that he went and had the dog licensed in his name and that he is not returning the dog.

I have proof of all of this. Under Massachusetts state law a dog is looked at as a piece of property. I have called the police several times and they refuse to do anything. Police say that they do not want to do anything because the dog was obtained while we were together. So it’s disputed property. But under law, as I said, a dog is considered property (I know it’s sad) and he moved out at the beginning of November and took the dog away last week. Property left after 30 days is considered abandoned. So by law, the dog is mine and that means that he stole the dog.

I’ve contacted a lawyer and the DA office who both say this is a larceny case.

But again police are no help. I’ve been to the courthouse to file my own criminal charges and a small claims case. With COVID and staff issues at the courthouse, I’m looking at July before I get in court.

I’m so frustrated and at my wit’s end about this. I was just wondering if you knew of any resources I could use? If you

knew any help I’d greatly appreciate it. I need any help I can get at this point. I get a lot of advice like “Steal the dog back!”. Thing is, we have the same landlord. And if I ’cause problems’ he is threatening to kick me out.” -Anonymous.