



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

November 30, 2009

Mr. Gary Grief
Deputy Executive Director
Texas Lottery Commission
P.O. Box 16630
Austin, Texas 78761-6630

OR2009-16837

Dear Mr. Grief:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 362692.

The Texas Lottery Commission (the "commission") received a request for communications pertaining to a specified lottery game, as well as all information responsive to another request for information.¹ You state that you will provide some of the requested information to the requestor. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.107, and 552.111 of the Government Code. You also state, and provide documentation showing, that you notified GTECH Corporation ("GTECH") of the commission's receipt of the request for information and of GTECH's right to submit arguments to this office as to why the requested information should not be released to the requestor. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act in certain circumstances).

¹We note that the commission asked for and received clarification regarding this request. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222(b) (governmental body may communicate with requestor for purpose of clarifying or narrowing request for information); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 663 (1999) (discussing tolling of deadlines during period in which governmental body is awaiting clarification). We further note that the requestor excluded from her request any information already released to the requestor.

GTECH has responded to this notice. We have considered the submitted arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

You inform us that some of the requested information was the subject of a previous request for information, as a result of which this office issued Open Records Letter No. 2009-14744 (2009). In that decision, we ruled that the commission must withhold portions of the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 466.022(b) of the Government Code. Further, we ruled that the commission may withhold other information under sections 552.107(1) and 552.111 of the Government Code and release the remaining information. As we have no indication that the law, facts, or circumstances on which the prior ruling was based have changed, the commission may continue to rely on Open Records Letter No. 2009-14744 as a previous determination and withhold or release the same information in accordance with the previous determination. See Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (so long as law, facts, and circumstances on which prior ruling was based have not changed, first type of previous determination exists where requested information is precisely same information as was addressed in prior attorney general ruling, ruling is addressed to same governmental body, and ruling concludes that information is or is not excepted from disclosure).

We note you have marked portions of the submitted information as not responsive to the instant request. This ruling does not address the public availability of any information that is not responsive to the request, and the commission need not release non-responsive information.

We now address your arguments against disclosure of the remaining responsive submitted information. Section 552.101 of the Government Code, which excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information made confidential by other statutes. You raise section 552.101 in conjunction with section 466.022(b) of the Government Code. Section 466.022(b) provides that the following information is confidential and exempt from disclosure:

- (1) security plans and procedures of the commission designed to ensure the integrity and security of the operation of the lottery;
- (2) information of a nature that is designed to ensure the integrity and security of the selection of winning tickets or numbers in the lottery, other than information describing the general procedures for selecting winning tickets or numbers[.]

Id. § 466.022(b)(1), (2). The commission states that release of the information it has marked "would compromise the lottery games and threaten the integrity and security of the lottery." Based upon your representations and our review of the documents at issue, we conclude that

the commission must withhold the information you have marked, as well as the additional information we have marked, under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 466.022(b) of the Government Code.²

Section 552.107(1) of the Government Code protects information that comes within the attorney-client privilege. When asserting the attorney-client privilege, a governmental body has the burden of providing the necessary facts to demonstrate the elements of the privilege in order to withhold the information at issue. *See* Open Records Decision No. 676 at 6-7 (2002). First, a governmental body must demonstrate that the information constitutes or documents a communication. *Id.* at 7. Second, the communication must have been made “for the purpose of facilitating the rendition of professional legal services” to the client governmental body. *See* TEX. R. EVID. 503(b)(1). The privilege does not apply when an attorney or representative is involved in some capacity other than that of providing or facilitating professional legal services to the client governmental body. *See In re Tex. Farmers Ins. Exch.*, 990 S.W.2d 337, 340 (Tex. App.—Texarkana 1999, orig. proceeding) (attorney-client privilege does not apply if attorney is acting in capacity other than that of attorney). Governmental attorneys often act in capacities other than that of professional legal counsel, such as administrators, investigators, or managers. Thus, the mere fact that a communication involves an attorney for the government does not demonstrate this element. Third, the privilege applies only to communications between or among clients, client representatives, lawyers, and lawyer representatives. *See* TEX. R. EVID. 503(b)(1)(A), (B), (C), (D), (E). Thus, a governmental body must inform this office of the identities and capacities of the individuals to whom each communication at issue has been made. Lastly, the attorney-client privilege applies only to a *confidential* communication, *id.* 503(b)(1), meaning it was “not intended to be disclosed to third persons other than those to whom disclosure is made in furtherance of the rendition of professional legal services to the client or those reasonably necessary for the transmission of the communication.” *Id.* 503(a)(5). Whether a communication meets this definition depends on the *intent* of the parties involved at the time the information was communicated. *See Osborne v. Johnson*, 954 S.W.2d 180, 184 (Tex. App.—Waco 1997, no pet.). Moreover, because the client may elect to waive the privilege at any time, a governmental body must explain that the confidentiality of a communication has been maintained. Section 552.107(1) generally excepts an entire communication that is demonstrated to be protected by the attorney-client privilege unless otherwise waived by the governmental body. *See Huie v. DeShazo*, 922 S.W.2d 920, 923 (Tex. 1996) (privilege extends to entire communication, including facts contained therein).

You seek to withhold portions of the remaining information under section 552.107(1). You state that the information at issue consists of communications involving commission staff, consultants, and attorneys for the commission that were made in furtherance of the rendition of professional legal services to the commission. You have identified the parties to the

²As our ruling is dispositive of this information, we need not address GTECH’s arguments or your remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

communications. You also state that the communications were intended to be and have remained confidential. Based on your representations and our review, we conclude that the information you have marked under section 552.107 consists of privileged attorney-client communications that the commission may withhold under section 552.107.³

Finally, you assert that some of the remaining information is excepted under section 552.111 of the Government Code. Section 552.111 excepts from disclosure "an interagency or intraagency memorandum or letter that would not be available by law to a party in litigation with the agency." Gov't Code § 552.111. This section encompasses the deliberative process privilege. See Open Records Decision No. 615 at 2 (1993). In Open Records Decision No. 615, this office reexamined the predecessor to the section 552.111 exception in light of the decision in *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ), and held that section 552.111 excepts only those internal communications consisting of advice, recommendations, and opinions reflecting the policymaking processes of the governmental body. See *City of Garland v. Dallas Morning News*, 22 S.W.3d 351, 364 (Tex. 2000); see also *Arlington Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Tex. Attorney Gen.*, 37 S.W.3d 152 (Tex. App.—Austin 2001, no pet.). The purpose of section 552.111 is "to protect from public disclosure advice and opinions on policy matters and to encourage frank and open discussion within the agency in connection with its decision-making processes." *Austin v. City of San Antonio*, 630 S.W.2d 391, 394 (Tex. App.—San Antonio 1982, writ ref'd n.r.e.).

An agency's policymaking functions do not encompass internal administrative or personnel matters. Disclosure of information relating to such matters will not inhibit free discussion among agency personnel as to policy issues. See ORD 615 at 5-6. However, a governmental body's policymaking functions do include administrative and personnel matters of broad scope that affect the governmental body's policy mission. See Open Records Decision No. 631 at 3 (1995). Further, a preliminary draft of a policymaking document that has been released or is intended for release in final form is excepted from disclosure in its entirety under section 552.111 because such a draft necessarily represents the advice, recommendations, or opinions of the drafter as to the form and content of the final document. See Open Records Decision No. 559 at 2 (1990). Section 552.111 does not protect facts and written observations of facts and events that are severable from advice, opinions, and recommendations. See ORD 615 at 5. But, if factual information is so inextricably intertwined with material involving advice, opinion, or recommendation as to make severance of the factual data impractical, the factual information also may be withheld under section 552.111. See Open Records Decision No. 313 at 3 (1982).

You state that some of the remaining information consists of the advice, opinions, and recommendations of commission employees. You assert this information involves

³As our ruling is dispositive for this information, we need not address your argument against its disclosure under section 552.111.

policymaking matters relating to the commission. You also indicate that some of the information you have marked under section 552.111 consists of draft versions of documents intended for release in their final form. Based upon your representations and our review, we agree that some of the remaining information consists of the advice, opinions, or recommendations of commission employees regarding policymaking matters, and the commission may withhold the information we have marked under section 552.111. However, you have not demonstrated how the remaining information at issue consists of advice, opinions, or recommendations about a policymaking decision. Therefore, the commission may not withhold any portion of the remaining information under section 552.111 of the Government Code.

In summary, (1) the commission may continue to rely on Open Records Letter No. 2009-14744 as a previous determination and withhold or release the same information in accordance with that ruling; (2) the commission must withhold the information you have marked, as well as the additional information we have marked, under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 466.022(b) of the Government Code; (3) the commission may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.107(1) of the Government Code; and (4) the commission may withhold the information we have marked under section 552.111 of the Government Code. The remaining responsive information must be released to the requestor.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Christopher D. Sterner
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CDSA/eeg

Ref: ID# 362692

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

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(w/o enclosures)