



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

December 30, 2009

Ms. Kelly J. Shook
Schwartz & Eichelbaum
4201 West Parmer Lane, Suite A-100
Austin, Texas 78727

OR2009-18439

Dear Ms. Shook:

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# 365801.

The Mission Consolidated Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received a request for a specified proposal and specified presentation materials related to a Request for Qualifications for delinquent property tax services. Although you take no position with respect to the public availability of the submitted information, you indicate its release may implicate the proprietary interests of Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, LLP ("Linebarger"). Accordingly, you state, and have provided documentation showing, you notified Linebarger of the request and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the submitted information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (determining statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain the applicability of exception to disclose under Act in certain circumstances). We have reviewed the submitted information.

An interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice under section 552.305(d) to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from Linebarger explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude Linebarger has protected proprietary interests in the submitted information. *See id.* § 552.110; Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3. Accordingly, the district may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest Linebarger may have in the information.

We note that some of the submitted information may be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. *See* Attorney General Opinion JM-672 (1987). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *See id.* If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with the copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit. *See* Open Records Decision No. 550 (1990). As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the submitted information must be released to the requestor in accordance with copyright law.

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,



Sarah Casterline
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

SEC/jb

Ref: ID# 365801

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, L.L.P.
205 South Pin Oak Avenue
Edinburg, Texas 78539
(w/o enclosures)