



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

December 6, 2013

Ms. Heather Silver  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Dallas  
1500 Marilla Street, Room 7DN  
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2013-21226

Dear Ms. Silver:

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# 507843.

The City of Dallas (the "city") received a request for the following categories of information: (1) information requested by the city's Housing/Community Services Department (the "department") about the requestor for a specified date range; (2) requests or correspondence to and from the city's public information office, including what was requested, what was released, and the date and time of the request, for a specified date range; (3) cost information pertaining to requests made for information about the requestor for a specified time period; (4) correspondence between named individuals, human resources officials, or civil service officials and any official from the city's attorney's office regarding allegations or grievances against the department for a specified date range; and (5) correspondence between named individuals and members of the city council regarding allegations or grievances against the department for a specified date range. You state you will release some information to the requestor. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.107 and 552.111 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup> We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Although you also raise Texas Rule of Evidence 503, we note the proper exception to raise when asserting the attorney-client privilege for information not subject to section 552.022 of the Government Code is section 552.107 of the Government Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 676 at 1-2 (2002).

<sup>2</sup>We assume the representative sample of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

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 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 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, lawyer representatives, and a lawyer representing another party in a pending action and concerning a matter of common interest therein. *See* TEX. R. EVID. 503(b)(1). 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.*, 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, orig. proceeding). Moreover, because the client may elect to waive the privilege at any time, a governmental body must explain 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 claim Exhibit B is protected by section 552.107(1) of the Government Code. You state the information at issue consists of communications between attorneys for the city and city employees. You state the communications were made for the purpose of facilitating the rendition of professional legal services to the city and these communications were intended to be confidential. Based on your representations and our review, we find you have demonstrated the applicability of the attorney-client privilege to the information at issue. Thus, the city may withhold Exhibit B under section 552.107(1) of the Government Code.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of the submitted information.

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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl\\_ruling\\_info.shtml](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml), 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paige Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paige Thompson  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

PT/dls

Ref: ID# 507843

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)