



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 11, 2004

Mr. Ron G. MacFarlane, Jr.
Sifford, Anderson, Vice & MacFarlane, L.L.P.
2001 Bryan Street, Suite 2050
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2004-8600

Dear Mr. MacFarlane:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 211216.

The City of Cedar Hill (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for a specified Fire Marshall's report pertaining to the conviction of a named individual, as well as documentation of the city Fire Marshall's travel to the Federal Correctional Facility that holds the named individual. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information. We have also considered correspondence submitted by the requestor. *See* Gov't Code § 552.304 (providing that individual may submit comments stating why information should or should not be released).

You inform us that the records at issue here consist of the same information that was at issue in Open Records Letter No. 2002-3206 (2002). In that ruling, this office concluded that, with the exception of basic information, the city could withhold the requested information pursuant to section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. You indicate that the facts and circumstances surrounding our prior ruling have not changed. Therefore, the city may continue to rely on our prior ruling. *See* Open Records Decision No. 673 at 6-7 (2001) (criteria of previous determination regarding specific information previously ruled on). As we are able to make this determination, we need not address your other arguments.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited

from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Texas Building and Procurement Commission at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Sarah I. Swanson
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

SIS/krl

Ref: ID# 211216

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Phillip Bielowicz
1130 North Cedar Hill Road
Cedar Hill, Texas 75104
(w/o enclosures)