



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

April 11, 2007

Ms. Ann Forbes  
Paralegal  
Forth Worth Independent School District  
100 North University Drive  
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

OR2007-04031

Dear Ms. Forbes:

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# 276148.

The Fort Worth Independent School District (the "district") received a request for copies of documentation regarding Bid 06-028. You indicate that some of the requested information will be made available to the requestor. Further, you do not take a position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act. However, you state that release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Bank of America Corp. and J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, N.A. You state, and provide documentation showing, that you notified the interested third parties of the district's receipt of the request for information and of the right of each 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). 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 requested information relating to it should be withheld from disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, neither of the interested third parties has submitted to this office any reasons explaining why the requested information should not be released. We thus have no basis for concluding that any portion of the submitted information constitutes proprietary information of either company, and the district may not withhold any portion of the submitted information on that basis. *See* 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 (1990). Accordingly, the district must release the submitted information to the requestor.

We note that portions of the requested information include notice of copyright protection. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Attorney General Opinion JM-672 (1987). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *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). Thus, in releasing the requested information, the district must comply with applicable copyright law.

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, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, 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 Office of the Attorney General 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. 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,



L. Joseph James  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

LJJ/eeg

Ref: ID# 276148

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Julie Heymann  
Commerce Bank  
6627 Fireflame Drive  
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(w/o enclosures)

Mr. Andrew Witkoff  
Bank of America Corporation  
500 West Seventh Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102  
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Mr. J. Michael Wilson  
JP Morgan Chase Bank, N.A.  
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Fort Worth, Texas 76113  
(w/o enclosures)