



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 15, 2008

Ms. Laura M. Jamouneau
Walsh, Anderson, Brown, Schulze & Aldridge, P.C.
P.O. Box 2156
Austin, Texas 78768

OR2008-12636

Dear Ms. Jamouneau:

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# 321917.

The New Caney Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received a request for copies of specified checks and all corresponding invoices and receipts that are directly related to each check. You state you have released some of the requested information. You claim portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under section 552.136 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the information you have submitted.

Section 552.136 of the Government Code states that "[n]otwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, a credit card, debit card, charge card, or access device number that is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental body is confidential." Gov't Code § 552.136. An access device number is one that may be used to "(1) obtain money, goods, services, or another thing of value; or (2) initiate a transfer of funds other than a transfer originated solely by paper instrument." *Id.* We agree that the utility account numbers we have marked are confidential under section 552.136 of the Government Code and must be withheld. However, you have also marked general account numbers and budget codes under section 552.136. You do not explain, nor can we discern, how the general account numbers and budget codes can be used to access "money, goods, services, or any thing of value." *Id.* Thus, we conclude you have failed to demonstrate that the general account numbers and budget codes are access device numbers for the purposes of

section 552.136. Therefore, the district may not withhold the general account numbers and budget codes you have marked under section 552.136. As you raise no other arguments against disclosure of the general account numbers and budget codes, they must be released to the requestor.

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 file suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such a challenge, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3). If the governmental body does not file suit over 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).

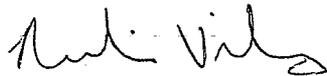
If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can challenge that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

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,



Melanie J. Villars
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MJV/jh

Ref: ID# 321917

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Brenda Webb
c/o Walsh, Anderson, Brown, Schulze & Aldridge, P.C.
P.O. Box 2156
Austin, Texas 78768
(w/o enclosures)