



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

November 15, 2013

Ms. June B. Harden  
Assistant Attorney General  
Assistant Public Information Coordinator  
General Counsel Division  
Office of the Attorney General  
P.O. Box 12548  
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OR2013-19986

Dear Ms. Harden:

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# 506017 (PIR Nos. 13-37072, 13-37156, 13-37427).

The Office of the Attorney General (the "OAG") received three requests for information pertaining to request for proposal number 352611 for Data Management services. The OAG has released some of the responsive information to the requestors and takes no position as to disclosure of the remaining information. Because release of the information may implicate the proprietary interests of Maximus Human Services, Inc. ("Maximus") and Stellarware Corporation ("Stellarware"), the OAG notified the third parties of the requests and of their right to submit arguments to this office as to why their information should not be released. Gov't Code § 552.305(d) (permitting third party with proprietary interest to submit to attorney general reasons why requested information should not be released); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (determining statutory predecessor to Gov't Code § 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception to disclosure under Act in certain circumstances). We have received comments from Maximus and Stellarware. We have considered the submitted arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note Maximus seeks to withhold information not submitted to this office by the OAG. By statute, this office may only rule on the public availability of information

submitted by the governmental body requesting the ruling. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(e)(1)(D) (governmental body requesting decision from Attorney General must submit copy of specific information requested). Because this information was not submitted by the OAG, this ruling does not address this information and is limited to the information submitted as responsive by the OAG.

Stellarware generally raises section 552.101 of the Government Code for portions of its submitted information. Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.” *Id.* § 552.101. However, Stellarware has not pointed to any law, nor are we aware of any, that would make any of its submitted information confidential for purposes of section 552.101. *See, e.g.,* Open Records Decision Nos. 611 at 1 (1992) (common-law privacy), 600 at 4 (1992) (constitutional privacy), 478 at 2 (1987) (statutory confidentiality). Therefore, the OAG may not withhold any of Stellarware’s submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

Maximus raises section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the doctrines of common-law and constitutional privacy. Common-law privacy protects information that is (1) highly intimate or embarrassing, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person and (2) not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be satisfied. *Id.* at 681-82. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. This office has found that personal financial information not relating to a financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body is generally intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 545 (1990) (mortgage payments, assets, bills, and credit history). However, we note common-law privacy protects the interests of individuals, not those of corporate and other business entities. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 620 (1993) (corporation has no right to privacy), 192 (1978) (right to privacy is designed primarily to protect human feelings and sensibilities, rather than property, business, or other pecuniary interests); *see also Rosen v. Matthews Constr. Co.*, 777 S.W.2d 434 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1989) (corporation has no right to privacy (citing *United States v. Morton Salt Co.*, 338 U.S. 632, 652 (1950))), *rev'd on other grounds*, 796 S.W.2d 692 (Tex. 1990). We also note an individual’s name, education, prior employment, and personal information are not ordinarily private information subject to common-law privacy. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 554 (1990), 448 (1986). Upon review, we find no portion of the information at issue is highly intimate or embarrassing and of no legitimate public concern. Accordingly, the OAG may not withhold any of the information at issue under section 552.101 on that basis.

Constitutional privacy consists of two interrelated types of privacy: (1) the right to make certain kinds of decisions independently and (2) an individual’s interest in avoiding disclosure of personal matters. ORD 455 at 4. The first type protects an individual’s

autonomy within “zones of privacy,” which include matters related to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, and child rearing and education. *Id.* The second type of constitutional privacy requires a balancing between the individual’s privacy interests and the public’s need to know information of public concern. *Id.* The scope of information protected is narrower than under the common-law doctrine of privacy; the information must concern the “most intimate aspects of human affairs.” *Id.* at 5 (citing *Ramie v. City of Hedwig Village, Tex.*, 765 F.2d 490 (5th Cir. 1985)). Upon review, we find no portion of the information at issue falls within the zones of privacy or implicates an individual’s privacy interests for the purposes of constitutional privacy. Consequently, the OAG may not withhold any of the information at issue under section 552.101 in conjunction with constitutional privacy.

Maximus also raises section 552.104 of the Government Code. Section 552.104 protects the interests of governmental bodies, not third parties. Open Records Decision No. 592 (1991). As the OAG does not raise section 552.104, this section is not applicable to Maximus’s information. *Id.* (Gov’t Code § 552.104 may be waived by governmental body). Thus, the OAG may not withhold Maximus’s information under section 552.104.

Maximus asserts some of its submitted information is excepted from disclosure under subsections 552.110(a) and 552.110(b) of the Government Code, and Stellarware asserts portions of its information are excepted from disclosure under subsection 552.110(b).<sup>1</sup> Section 552.110 protects (1) trade secrets, and (2) commercial or financial information, the disclosure of which would cause substantial competitive harm to the person from whom the information was obtained. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.110(a)-(b). Section 552.110(a) protects trade secrets obtained from a person and privileged or confidential by statute or judicial decision. *Id.* § 552.110(a). The Texas Supreme Court has adopted the definition of trade secret from section 757 of the Restatement of Torts. *Hyde Corp. v. Huffines*, 314 S.W.2d 763 (Tex. 1957); *see also* ORD 552 at 2. Section 757 provides that a trade secret is:

any formula, pattern, device or compilation of information which is used in one’s business, and which gives him an opportunity to obtain an advantage over competitors who do not know or use it. It may be a formula for a chemical compound, a process of manufacturing, treating or preserving materials, a pattern for a machine or other device, or a list of customers. It differs from other secret information in a business . . . in that it is not simply information as to single or ephemeral events in the conduct of the business . . . . A trade secret is a process or device for continuous use in the operation of the business . . . . [It may] relate to the sale of goods or to other operations in the business, such as a code for determining discounts, rebates

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<sup>1</sup>Although Maximus raises section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 552.110(a) of the Government Code, this office has concluded section 552.101 does not encompass other exceptions found in the Act. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 676 at 1 (2002), 575 at 2 (1990).

or other concessions in a price list or catalogue, or a list of specialized customers, or a method of bookkeeping or other office management.

RESTATEMENT OF TORTS § 757 cmt. b (1939); *see also Huffines*, 314 S.W.2d at 776. In determining whether particular information constitutes a trade secret, this office considers the Restatement's definition of trade secret as well as the Restatement's list of six trade secret factors.<sup>2</sup> RESTATEMENT OF TORTS § 757 cmt. b (1939). This office must accept a claim that information subject to the Act is excepted as a trade secret if a *prima facie* case for the exception is made and no argument is submitted that rebuts the claim as a matter of law. *See* ORD 552 at 5. However, we cannot conclude that section 552.110(a) is applicable unless it has been shown that the information meets the definition of a trade secret and the necessary factors have been demonstrated to establish a trade secret claim. Open Records Decision No. 402 (1983).

Section 552.110(b) protects “[c]ommercial or financial information for which it is demonstrated based on specific factual evidence that disclosure would cause substantial competitive harm to the person from whom the information was obtained[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.110(b). This exception to disclosure requires a specific factual or evidentiary showing, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that substantial competitive injury would likely result from release of the information at issue. *Id.*; *see also* ORD 661 at 5-6 (business enterprise must show by specific factual evidence that release of information would cause it substantial competitive harm).

Upon review, we find Maximus has failed to demonstrate how any portion of the information at issue meets the definition of a trade secret, nor has Maximus demonstrated the necessary factors to establish a trade secret claim. *See* ORDs 402 (section 552.110(a) does not apply unless information meets definition of trade secret and necessary factors have been demonstrated to establish trade secret claim), 319 at 2 (information relating to organization, personnel, market studies, professional references, qualifications, experience, and pricing not excepted under section 552.110). Further, we note pricing information pertaining to a particular proposal or contract is generally not a trade secret because it is “simply

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<sup>2</sup>The Restatement of Torts lists the following six factors as indicia of whether information constitutes a trade secret:

- (1) the extent to which the information is known outside of [the company];
- (2) the extent to which it is known by employees and other involved in [the company's] business;
- (3) the extent of measures taken by [the company] to guard the secrecy of the information;
- (4) the value of the information to [the company] and [its] competitors;
- (5) the amount of effort or money expended by [the company] in developing the information;
- (6) the ease or difficulty with which the information could be properly acquired or duplicated by others.

RESTATEMENT OF TORTS § 757 cmt. b (1939); *see also* Open Records Decision Nos. 319 at 2 (1982), 306 at 2 (1982), 255 at 2 (1980).

information as to single or ephemeral events in the conduct of the business,” rather than “a process or device for continuous use in the operation of the business.” *See* Restatement of Torts § 757 cmt. b (1939); *Huffines*, 314 S.W.2d at 776; ORDs 319 at 3, 306 at 3. Therefore, the OAG may not withhold any of Maximus’s submitted information pursuant to section 552.110(a) of the Government Code.

Maximus and Stellarware both raise section 552.110(b) for portions of their information. Upon review, we find Maximus has established that some of its information, which we have marked, constitutes commercial or financial information, the release of which would cause Maximus substantial competitive harm.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the OAG must withhold this information under section 552.110(b) of the Government Code. However, we find Stellarware and Maximus have not made a specific factual or evidentiary showing that release of any the remaining information would cause the companies substantial competitive injury. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 661, 509 at 5 (1988) (because bid specifications and circumstances would change for future contracts, assertion that release of bid proposal might give competitor unfair advantage on future contracts is too speculative), 319 at 3. Additionally, we note Maximus was the winning bidder in this instance. The pricing information of a winning bidder is generally not excepted under section 552.110(b). This office considers the prices charged in government contract awards to be a matter of strong public interest. *See* Open Records Decision No. 514 (1988) (public has interest in knowing prices charged by government contractors). *See generally* Dep’t of Justice Guide to the Freedom of Information Act 344-45 (2009) (federal cases applying analogous Freedom of Information Act reasoning that disclosure of prices charged government is a cost of doing business with government). Consequently, the OAG may not withhold any of Maximus’s remaining information or any of Stellarware’s information under section 552.110(b) of the Government Code.

Maximus also raises section 552.139 of the Government Code for portions of its remaining information. Section 552.139 provides, in part:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information that relates to computer network security, to restricted information under Section 2059.055 [of the Government Code], or to the design, operation, or defense of a computer network.

(b) The following information is confidential:

(1) a computer network vulnerability report; [and]

(2) any other assessment of the extent to which data processing operations, a computer, a computer program, network, system, or

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<sup>3</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address Maximus’s remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

system interface, or software of a governmental body or of a contractor of a governmental body is vulnerable to unauthorized access or harm, including an assessment of the extent to which the governmental body's or contractor's electronically stored information containing sensitive or critical information is vulnerable to alteration, damage, erasure, or inappropriate use[.]

Gov't Code § 552.139(a), (b)(1)-(2). Section 2059.055 of the Government Code provides in pertinent part:

(b) Network security information is confidential under this section if the information is:

- (1) related to passwords, personal identification numbers, access codes, encryption, or other components of the security system of a state agency;
- (2) collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental entity to prevent, detect, or investigate criminal activity; or
- (3) related to an assessment, made by or for a governmental entity or maintained by a governmental entity, of the vulnerability of a network to criminal activity.

*Id.* § 2059.055(b). Maximus generally asserts portions of its remaining information are excepted from disclosure under section 552.139. However, Maximus has not demonstrated how any of the information at issue relates to computer network security, or to the design, operation, or defense of the computer network as contemplated in section 552.139(a). Further, we find Maximus has failed to explain how any of the information at issue consists of a computer network vulnerability report or assessment as contemplated by section 552.139(b). Accordingly, the OAG may not withhold any of the information at issue under section 552.139 of the Government Code.

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. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; see Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). 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.

In summary, the OAG must withhold the information we marked under section 552.110 of the Government Code. The OAG must release the remaining information; however, any information subject to copyright may be released only in accordance with copyright law.<sup>4</sup>

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,



Amy L.S. Shipp  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

ALS/ag

Ref: ID# 506017

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestors  
(w/o enclosures)

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(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>4</sup>We note the information being released contains a social security number. Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office. See Gov't Code § 552.147(b).