



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 29, 2019

Ms. Paige H. Saenz
Counsel for the City of Leander
The Knight Law Firm, LLP
223 West Anderson Lane, Suite A-105
Austin, Texas 78752

OR2019-20642

Dear Ms. Saenz:

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# 778022.

The City of Leander (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for text message, e-mail communications, and images of print mail between city staff and three named individuals during a specified time period. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 through 552.154 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim.

We must address the city's obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code, which prescribes the procedures a governmental body must follow in asking this office to decide whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. Pursuant to subsection 552.301(e), a governmental body must submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving an open records request (1) written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(e). The city received the request for information on May 6, 2019. This office does not count the date the request was received or holidays for purposes of calculating a governmental body's deadlines under the Act. We note May 27, 2019, was holiday; therefore, the city was required to provide the information required by subsection 552.301(e) by May 28, 2019. As of the date of this letter, you have not submitted for our review comments stating the reasons why the claimed

exceptions apply or a copy or representative sample of the information requested. Consequently, we find the city failed to comply with the requirements of section 552.301 in requesting this decision from our office.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the requested information is public and must be released unless there is a compelling reason to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ). Although the city raises exceptions to disclosure, because you have not submitted the requested information for our review, we have no basis for finding any of the information excepted from disclosure. Thus, we have no choice but to order the requested information released pursuant to section 552.302. If you believe the information may not lawfully be released, you must challenge this ruling in court pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code.

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, 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,



Emily Kunst
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

EK/be

Ref: ID# 778022

c: Requestor