



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 3, 2019

Ms. Karen Strand
Senior Assistant City Attorney
City of Mesquite
P.O. Box 850137
Mesquite, Texas 75185-0137

OR2019-27674

Dear Ms. Strand:

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# 789241.

The City of Mesquite (the "city") received a request for a specified payment bond and a specified bond agreement.¹ Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of McMahan Contracting L.P. ("McMahan"). Accordingly, you state you notified McMahan of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the submitted information should not be released. *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.

We note an interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating

¹ The city sought and received clarification of the information requested. *See Gov't Code § 552.222* (if request for information is unclear, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify request); *see also City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380, 387 (Tex. 2010) (if governmental entity, acting in good faith, requests clarification of unclear or over-broad request, ten-day period to request attorney general ruling is measured from date request is clarified).

to that party should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received any comments from McMahon explaining why any of the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude McMahon has a protected proprietary interest in the information. *See id.* § 552.110; 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. Consequently, the city may not withhold any of the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interests McMahon may have in the information. As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the city must release the submitted information.

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 <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/members-public/what-expect-after-ruling-issued> or call the OAG's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Public Information Act may be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the OAG, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Tim Neal
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TN/be

Ref: ID# 789241

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

1 Third Party
(w/o enclosures)