



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 3, 2020

Mr. Marc Schnall  
Counsel for the City of Castle Hills  
Langley & Banack Incorporated  
745 East Mulberry, Suite 700  
San Antonio, Texas 78212

OR2020-06561

Dear Mr. Schnall:

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# 814336.

The City of Castle Hills (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for the attorney fee bills pertaining to a specified lawsuit and specified certificates. We understand you will release some information. You claim some of the submitted information is privileged under Texas Rule of Evidence 503. We have considered the submitted argument and reviewed the submitted information.

The submitted information consists of attorney fee bills that are subject to section 552.022 of the Government Code. Section 552.022(a)(16) provides the following:

Without limiting the amount or kind of information that is public information under this chapter, the following categories of information are public information and not excepted from required disclosure unless made confidential under this chapter or other law:

...

(16) information that is in a bill for attorney's fees and that is not privileged under the attorney-client privilege[.]

Gov't Code § 552.022(a)(16). The Texas Supreme Court has held the Texas Rules of Evidence are "other law" that make information expressly confidential for purposes of section 552.022. *In re City of Georgetown*, 53 S.W.3d 328, 336 (Tex. 2001). Accordingly,

we will consider the assertion of the attorney-client privilege under rule 503 for this information.

Texas Rule of Evidence 503(b)(1) provides the following:

A client has a privilege to refuse to disclose and to prevent any other person from disclosing confidential communications made to facilitate the rendition of professional legal services to the client:

- (A) between the client or the client's representative and the client's lawyer or the lawyer's representative;
- (B) between the client's lawyer and the lawyer's representative;
- (C) by the client, the client's representative, the client's lawyer, or the lawyer's representative to a lawyer representing another party in a pending action or that lawyer's representative, if the communications concern a matter of common interest in the pending action;
- (D) between the client's representatives or between the client and the client's representative; or
- (E) among lawyers and their representatives representing the same client.

TEX. R. EVID. 503(b)(1). A communication is "confidential" if not intended to be disclosed to third persons other than those to whom disclosure is made to further the rendition of professional legal services to the client or reasonably necessary to transmit the communication. *Id.* 503(a)(5).

Accordingly, in order to withhold attorney-client privileged information from disclosure under rule 503, a governmental body must 1) show that the document is a communication transmitted between privileged parties or reveals a confidential communication; 2) identify the parties involved in the communication; and 3) show that the communication is confidential by explaining that it was not intended to be disclosed to third persons and that it was made in furtherance of the rendition of professional legal services to the client. *See* Open Records Decision No. 676 (2002). Upon a demonstration of all three factors, the entire communication is confidential under rule 503 provided the client has not waived the privilege or the communication does not fall within the purview of the exceptions to the privilege enumerated in rule 503(d). *Huie v. DeShazo*, 922 S.W.2d 920, 923 (Tex. 1996) (privilege extends to entire communication, including facts contained therein); *In re Valero Energy Corp.*, 973 S.W.2d 453, 457 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1998, orig. proceeding) (privilege attaches to complete communication, including factual information).

The city explains the information you marked consists of confidential communications between attorneys for and employees of the city that were made in furtherance of the

rendition of professional legal services. The city also asserts the communications were intended to be confidential and their confidentiality has been maintained. Upon review, we find the city has established some of the submitted information, which we marked, consists of privileged attorney-client communications that the city may withhold under rule 503. We note an entry stating a memorandum or an email was prepared or drafted does not demonstrate the document was communicated to the client. Thus, we find the city has failed to demonstrate the remaining information at issue was communicated and it does not reveal a client confidence. Accordingly, the city may not withhold any of the remaining information under rule 503. Therefore, the city may withhold the information we marked under Texas Rule of Evidence 503, but must release the remaining 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,



D. Michelle Case  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

DMC/rm

Ref: ID# 814336

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)