



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 11, 2020

Mr. Joseph G. Hays
Assistant City Attorney
City of Houston
P.O. Box 368
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2020-19975

Dear Mr. Hays:

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# 839107 (GC 26709).

The City of Houston (the "city") received a request for the bid tabulation, proposals, and name of awarded vendor pertaining to a specified request for proposals. 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 Blackhouse and Associates Supply Co., Cadence Keen Innovations ("Cadence Keen"), and Ferullo Construction & Supplies Co. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified these third parties of the request for information and of the 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 received comments from Cadence Keen, stating it does not object to release of its information. We have reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note you have only submitted the bid tabulation pertaining to the specified request for proposals. To the extent any other responsive information existed on the date the city received the request, we assume the city has released it. If the city has not released any such information, it must do so at this time. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301(a), .302; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body concludes no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

Next, we note an interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice under section 552.305(d) to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from the remaining third parties explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude the remaining third parties have a protected proprietary interest in the submitted information. *See, e.g., id.* § 552.110 (requiring the provision of specific factual evidence demonstrating the applicability of the exception). Accordingly, the city may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest the remaining third parties 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,

Meagan Hunter
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MH/rm

Ref: ID# 839107

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

3 Third Parties
(w/o enclosures)