



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 2, 2022

Mr. Zac Hatcher
Assistant District Attorney
Wichita County Criminal District Attorney's Office
Wichita County Courthouse
900 Seventh Street
Wichita Falls, Texas 76301-2482

OR2022-22655

Dear Mr. Hatcher:

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# 964108 (Ref. No. ORR.02967).

Wichita County (the "county") received a request for the contracts, certain invoices, proposals, and scoring evaluations pertaining to two specified contracts. Although you take no position regarding whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure, you state its release may implicate the proprietary interests of BI Incorporated ("BI"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified BI of the request and its right to submit arguments to this office. *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.

Initially, we note the county has only submitted the requested contracts and invoices. To the extent information responsive to the remainder of the request existed on the date the county received the request, we assume you have released it. *See* Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body concludes no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible). If you have not released any such information, you must do so at this time. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301(a), .302.

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 to

that party should not be released. *See id.* § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this ruling, we have not received comments from BI. Thus, we have no basis to conclude BI has 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 county may not withhold any of the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest BI may have in the information. The county 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,

Meredith L. Coffman
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MLC/be

Ref: ID# 964108

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)