Nov. 26, 2013

Dave McKinney
Chicago Sun-Times
Springfield Bureau Chief

Dear Mr. McKinney:

This letter is in response to your recent request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. Your request was received on Nov. 12, 2013.

On Nov. 19, our agency requested a five-day extension until Nov. 26.

You have requested copies of any emails, correspondence, reports and any other work product produced by The Vallas Group in relation to a contract it had with the Illinois State Board of Education, including all billing statements from the company, scoring sheets and any other documents that factored into the decision to award The Vallas Group its ISBE contract over a lower-priced bidder and any emails or other correspondence within the agency that relate to ISBE not renewing its contract with The Vallas Group.

A CD containing the requested documents has been left at the southwest entrance of ISBE offices at 100 N. First St. Springfield, IL, as requested.

Please note certain documents that are responsive to this request were identified as exempt pursuant to 5 ILCS 140/7 (1) (m) as they are “communications between a public body and an attorney or auditor representing the public body that would not be subject to discovery in litigation.” These communications have been withheld. Also, certain records have been identified as “preliminary drafts, notes, recommendations, memoranda and other records in which opinions are expressed, or policies or actions are formulated.” Pursuant to 5 ILCS 140/7 (1) (f), these materials have been withheld. Additionally, private information, including Social Security numbers, home addresses and telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, dates of birth and signatures, have been redacted pursuant to 5 ILCS 140/7 (1) (b).

If you feel you have been improperly denied your access to public records, an appeal may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General’s Public Access Counselor at 500 S. Second St., Springfield, IL 62706 or publicaccess@atg.state.il.us.

If you choose to submit a request for review, you must do so within 60 days after the date of this response letter. The request for review must be in writing, signed by you and include...
(i) a copy of your FOIA request and (ii) this office’s response. In addition, you have the right to seek judicial review of this response.

If you have questions, please contact Amanda Simhauser at (217) 782-4648 or asimhaus@isbe.net.

Sincerely,

Marcilene Dutton  
Deputy General Counsel