



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 18, 2016

Ms. M. Shannon Kackley
Counsel for the City of Bay City
Denton Navarro Rocha Bernal Hyde & Zech, P.C.
2500 West William Cannon Drive, Suite 609
Austin, Texas 78745-5320

OR2016-18751

Dear Ms. Kackley:

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# 623038.

The Bay City Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for the employment history, evaluations, disciplinary records, commendations, and training records related to a named department officer. You state the department will release some information with redactions made pursuant to sections 552.130(c) and 552.147(b) of the Government Code and Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009).¹ We understand you will redact additional information subject to section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code pursuant to Open Records Decision No. 670 (2001).² You claim portions of the submitted

¹Section 552.130(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in section 552.130(a) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.130(e). *See id.* § 552.130(d), (e). Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office. *See id.* § 552.147(b). Open Records Decision No. 684 serves as a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold certain categories of information without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision. *See* ORD 684.

²Although you state you will redact certain information pursuant to section 552.1175 of the Government Code, we note the proper exception in this instance is section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code because the department holds the information at issue in an employment context. We further note Open Records Decision No. 670 is a previous determination that authorizes all governmental bodies to withhold

information are not subject to the Act. You further claim portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.119, and 552.139 of the Government Code. We have considered your arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, you claim the information you have marked Exhibit E is not responsive to the present request. Upon review, we find, with the exception of the information we have marked as responsive to the request, Exhibit E is not responsive. This ruling does not address the public availability of any information that is not responsive to the request and the department is not required to release such information in response to this request.³ However, we find the remaining information at issue consists of employment history, evaluations, and training records related to the named officer. Thus, we find the information we have marked is responsive to the present request, and we will address your arguments against its disclosure.

Next, we note the responsive information contains a peace officer's Texas Commission on Law Enforcement ("TCOLE") identification number. Section 552.002(a) of the Government Code defines "public information" as information that is written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained under a law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business:

- (1) by a governmental body;
- (2) for a governmental body and the governmental body:
 - (A) owns the information;
 - (B) has a right of access to the information; or
 - (C) spends or contributes public money for the purpose of writing, producing, collecting, assembling, or maintaining the information; or
- (3) by an individual officer or employee of a governmental body in the officer's or employee's official capacity and the information pertains to official business of the governmental body.

the home addresses and telephone numbers, personal cellular telephone and pager numbers, social security numbers, and family member information of peace officers under section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision. ORD 670; *see also* Gov't Code § 552.301(a); Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (delineating circumstances under which attorney general decision constitutes previous determination under section 552.301).

³As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

Gov't Code § 552.002. In Open Records Decision No. 581 (1990), this office determined certain computer information, such as source codes, documentation information, and other computer programming, that has no significance other than its use as a tool for the maintenance, manipulation, or protection of public property is not the kind of information made public under section 552.021 of the Government Code. We understand an officer's TCOLE identification number is a unique computer-generated number assigned to peace officers for identification in the commissioner's electronic database and may be used as an access device number on the TCOLE website. Accordingly, we find the officer's TCOLE identification number in the responsive information does not constitute public information under section 552.002 of the Government Code. Therefore, the TCOLE identification number is not subject to the Act, and the department need not release it to the requestor.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." *Id.* § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that is (1) highly intimate or embarrassing, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be satisfied. *Id.* at 681-82. Types of information considered intimate or embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. Additionally, this office has concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision No. 455 (1987). This office has also found that personal financial information not relating to a financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body is generally intimate or embarrassing. *See generally* Open Records Decision Nos. 600 at 9-10 (1992) (employee's withholding allowance certificate, designation of retirement beneficiary, choice of insurance carrier, election of optional coverages, direct deposit authorization, forms allowing employee to allocate pretax compensation to group insurance, health care or dependent care), 545 (1990) (deferred compensation information, participation in voluntary investment program, election of optional insurance coverage, mortgage payments, assets, bills, and credit history), 523 (1989) (common-law privacy protects credit reports, financial statements, and other personal financial information), 373 (1983) (sources of income not related to financial transaction between individual and governmental body protected under common-law privacy). However, information concerning financial transactions between an employee and a public employer is generally of legitimate public interest. ORD 545. We note the payroll deductions for federal withholding tax are protected by common-law privacy and must be withheld under section 552.101, but the payroll deductions for social security, mandatory retirement, and Medicare are not protected by common-law privacy and may not be withheld under section 552.101. *See, e.g.*, ORDs 600 at 9-12 (participation in TexFlex), 545 at 3-5; *see also* Attorney General Opinion GA-0572 at 4 (2007) (public employee's net salary protected by common-law privacy, but gross salary is not). Whether the public's interest in obtaining personal financial information is sufficient to justify its disclosure must be determined on a case-by-case basis. *See* ORD 373.

Upon review, we find the information we have marked satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Accordingly, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, we find the remaining information is not highly intimate or embarrassing information or is of legitimate public interest. Therefore, none of the remaining responsive information may be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.139 of the Government Code provides, in part:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information that relates to computer network security, to restricted information under Section 2059.055 [of the Government Code], or to the design, operation, or defense of a computer network.

(b) The following information is confidential:

(1) a computer network vulnerability report; [and]

(2) any other assessment of the extent to which data processing operations, a computer, a computer program, network, system, or system interface, or software of a governmental body or of a contractor of a governmental body is vulnerable to unauthorized access or harm, including an assessment of the extent to which the governmental body's or contractor's electronically stored information containing sensitive or critical information is vulnerable to alteration, damage, erasure, or inappropriate use[.]

Gov't Code § 552.139(a), (b)(1)-(2). Section 2059.055 of the Government Code provides in pertinent part:

(b) Network security information is confidential under this section if the information is:

(1) related to passwords, personal identification numbers, access codes, encryption, or other components of the security system of a state agency[.]

Id. § 2059.055(b)(1). You assert the information you have indicated “would allow access to the [City of Bay City's] computer systems[.]” However, we note the information at issue consists of the named officer's login information for a publicly available website not tied to the department's computer systems. Therefore, we find you have failed to demonstrate any of the remaining responsive information relates to computer network security, to restricted information under section 2059.055, or to the design, operation, or defense of a computer network as contemplated in section 552.139(a). Further, we find you have failed to

demonstrate any of the remaining responsive information consists of a computer network vulnerability report or assessment as contemplated by section 552.139(b). Consequently, the department may not withhold any of the remaining responsive information under section 552.139 of the Government Code.

In summary, the TCOLE identification number in the responsive information is not subject to the Act, and the department need not release it to the requestor. The department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department must release the remaining responsive 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 http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Tim Neal
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TN/bhf

Ref: ID# 623038

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)