



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 13, 2017

Ms. Stephanie Berry
Assistant City Attorney
City of Denton
215 East McKinney
Denton, Texas 76201-4299

OR2017-20969

Dear Ms. Berry:

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# 675357 (ORR R000329-062617).

The City of Denton (the "city") received a request for specified video recordings. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.103 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the submitted information is subject to article 2.1396 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which provides,

A person stopped or arrested on suspicion of an offense under Section 49.04, 49.045, 49.07, or 49.08, Penal Code, is entitled to receive from a law enforcement agency employing the peace officer who made the stop or arrest a copy of any video made by or at the direction of the officer that contains footage of:

(1) the stop;

- (2) the arrest;
- (3) the conduct of the person stopped during any interaction with the officer, including during the administration of a field sobriety test; or
- (4) a procedure in which a specimen of the person's breath or blood is taken.

Act of May 30, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., H.B. 245 § 4 (to be codified at Crim Proc. Code art 2.1396). We note the requestor's client was stopped or arrested on suspicion of an offense under section 49.04 of the Penal Code and the submitted footage subject is to article 2.1396 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. *See* Penal Code § 49.04 (person commits offense if person is intoxicated while operating motor vehicle in public place). Therefore, the requestor is entitled to receive a copy of this video recording pursuant to article 2.1396 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Although you assert sections 552.103 and 552.108 of the Government Code to withhold this information, a statutory right of access prevails over the Act's general exceptions to public disclosure. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 613 at 4 (1993) (exceptions in Act cannot impinge on statutory right of access to information), 451 (1986) (specific statutory right of access provisions overcome general exception to disclosure under the Act). Because sections 552.103 and 552.108 are general exceptions under the Act, the requestor's statutory access under article 2.1396 prevails and the city may not withhold the video recording at issue under section 552.103 or section 552.108 of the Government Code. Therefore, the city must release the submitted information.¹

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

¹We note the requestor has a right of access beyond that of the general public to some of the information being released. *See* Crim. Proc. Code art. 2.1396; *see also* Gov't Code § 552.023(a) (governmental body may not deny access to person to whom information relates, or that party's representative, solely on grounds that information is considered confidential by privacy principles); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individuals request information concerning themselves). Because such information is confidential with respect to the general public, if the city receives another request for this information from a different requestor, then the city should again seek a ruling from this office.

providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jahna Ward', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jahna Ward
Attorney
Open Records Division

JW/tdw

Ref: ID# 675357

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)