



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 19, 2019

Ms. Jessika J. Velasquez
Counsel for the City of Watauga
Evans, Daniel, Moore, Evans, Biggs & Decker
115 West Second Street, Suite 202
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2019-04538

Dear Ms. Velasquez:

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# 751020 (Ref Nos. 18-653 and 18-694).

The Watauga Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received two requests from different requestors for the police report and body worn camera footage for a specified incident. You state some of the submitted information was not properly requested pursuant to section 1701.661 of the Occupations Code. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the submitted information includes a police officer's body worn camera recordings. Body worn cameras are subject to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code. Chapter 1701 provides the procedures a requestor must follow when seeking a body worn camera recording. Section 1701.661 provides, in relevant part, the following:

(a) A member of the public is required to provide the following information when submitting a written request to a law enforcement agency for information recorded by a body worn camera:

- (1) the date and approximate time of the recording;
- (2) the specific location where the recording occurred; and

(3) the name of one or more persons known to be a subject of the recording.

Occ. Code § 1701.661(a). In this instance, the second requestor does not provide the requisite information under section 1701.661(a). As the body worn camera recordings at issue were not properly requested by the second requestor pursuant to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code, our ruling does not reach this information and it need not be released to the second requestor.¹ However, pursuant to section 1701.661(b), a “failure to provide all the information required by [s]ubsection (a) to be part of a request for recorded information does not preclude the requestor from making a future request for the same recorded information.” *Id.* § 1701.661(b). As the first requestor did provide the requisite information under section 1701.661(a), we will address your arguments against disclosure of the body worn camera recordings as to the first 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.” Gov’t Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 261.201 of the Family Code provides, in relevant part, as follows:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

(1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and

(2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

...

(k) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), an investigating agency, other than the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services] or the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, on request, shall provide to the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect, or to the child if the child is at least 18 years of age, information concerning the reported abuse or neglect that would otherwise be confidential under this section. The investigating agency shall withhold information under this subsection if the parent, managing

¹As we are able to make this determination, we need not address your arguments against disclosure of this information.

conservator, or other legal representative of the child requesting the information is alleged to have committed the abuse or neglect.

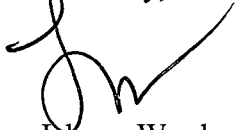
Fam. Code § 261.201(a), (k). The submitted information consists of a report of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect made to the department. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of this section as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes), 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). Accordingly, we find this information is subject to chapter 261 of the Family Code. In this instance, the requestors are the parents of the child victim listed in the information at issue. However, we note the requestors are alleged to have committed the suspected abuse or neglect. Thus, the requestors do not have a right of access to the information at issue under section 261.201(k). *See id.* § 261.201(k). Therefore, the department must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).*

In summary, as the body worn camera recordings at issue were not properly requested by the second requestor pursuant to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code, our ruling does not reach this information and it need not be released to the second requestor. The department must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code.

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,



Jahna Ward
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JW/som

Ref: ID# 751020

Enc. Submitted documents

c: 2 Requestors
(w/o enclosures)