



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 28, 2019

Mr. Thomas McMillian
Assistant City Attorney
City of Amarillo
200 Southeast Third Avenue, Fourth Floor
Amarillo, Texas 79101-1514

OR2019-24000

Dear Mr. McMillian:

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# 782805 (ORR# 19-1378).

The City of Amarillo (the "city") received two requests from the same requestor for information related to two specified incidents. The city claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the city claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note report number 2017-0526472 was the subject of a previous request for information from the same requestor, as a result of which this office issued Open Records Letter No. 2019-17643 (2019). In that ruling, we determined the city may not withhold the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code, must withhold all public citizens' dates of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy, and must release the remaining information. We have no indication there has been any change in the law, facts, or circumstances on which the previous ruling was based. Accordingly, the city must rely on Open Records Letter No. 2019-17643 as a previous determination and withhold or release report number 2017-0526472 in accordance with that ruling. *See* Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (so long as law, facts, and circumstances on which prior ruling was based have not changed, first type of previous determination exists where requested information is precisely same information as was addressed in prior attorney general ruling, ruling is addressed to same governmental body, and ruling concludes that information is or is not excepted from disclosure).

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from public 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 section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides, in 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.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). The city informs us the remaining information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect conducted by the city’s police 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. The city does not indicate the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information and therefore we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the city must withhold the remaining 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, the city must rely on Open Records Letter No. 2019-17643 as a previous determination and withhold or release report number 2017-0526472 in accordance with that ruling. The city must withhold the remaining 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 <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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claire Morris Sloan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/mo

Ref: ID# 782805

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)