



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 6, 2019

Ms. Judy Hickman
Assistant Supervisor
Beaumont Police Department
P.O. Box 3827
Beaumont, Texas 77704

OR2019-31367

Dear Ms. Hickman:

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# 803289.

The Beaumont Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified case number. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

We note some of the submitted information was the subject of a previous request for information, in response to which this office issued Open Records Letter No. 2019-17212 (2019). As we have no indication the law, facts, and circumstances on which the prior rulings were based have changed, the department may continue to rely on that ruling as a previous determination and withhold or release the submitted information in accordance with Open Records Letter No. 2019-17212.¹ 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 a prior attorney general ruling, ruling is addressed to same governmental body, and ruling concludes that information is or is not excepted from

¹ As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your argument against disclosure of this information.

disclosure). To the extent the submitted information was not previously ruled on, we will address your submitted arguments.

Next, we note the information at issue includes body worn camera video 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 requestor does not give the requisite information under section 1701.661(a) for some of the submitted body worn camera videos. As the requestor did not properly request the body worn camera recordings at issue pursuant to chapter 1701, our ruling does not reach this information and it need not be released. However, pursuant to section 1701.661(b), a “failure to provide all the information required by Subsection (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). Further, we note the requestor provided the requisite information under section 1701.661(a) for the remaining body worn camera recordings. Accordingly, the requestor properly requested the body worn camera recordings at issue, and we will consider the department’s arguments against disclosure of this information.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). The department states the remaining information pertains to a pending criminal investigation. Based on your representation, we conclude the release of the information at issue would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536

S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Thus, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.²

In summary, to the extent the submitted information is identical to the information previously submitted and ruled upon by this office, the department may continue to rely on Open Records Letter No. 2019-17212 as a previous determination and withhold or release the submitted information in accordance with that ruling. As the requestor did not properly request the body worn camera recordings at issue pursuant to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code, our ruling does not reach this information and it need not be released. The department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government 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,



Jesse Harvey
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JHI/eb

Ref: ID# 803289

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

²As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.