



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 12, 2019

Ms. Karen Strand
Senior Assistant City Attorney
City of Mesquite
P.O. Box 850137
Mesquite, Texas 75185-0137

OR2019-31802

Dear Ms. Strand:

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# 796361.

The City of Mesquite (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to a specified automobile accident involving the requestor's client. You state the city has released some information to the requestor. You claim portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.130, and 552.136 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exceptions and reviewed the submitted information.

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. 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 and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. This office has found personal financial information not relating to a financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body is generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos.

545 (1990) (common-law privacy protects 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). Upon review, we find some of the information at issue satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. We note the requestor has a right of access to her client's private information pursuant to section 552.023 of the Government Code, and this information may not be withheld from her under common-law privacy. *See* Gov't Code § 552.023(a) (person or person's authorized representative has special right of access to records that contain information relating to the person that are protected from public disclosure by laws intended to protect that person's privacy interests); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individuals request information concerning themselves). Accordingly, with the exception of the information pertaining to the requestor's client, the city must withhold the information you indicated, and the additional information we indicated, under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 411.083 of the Government Code, which pertains to criminal history record information ("CHRI"). CHRI generated by the National Crime Information Center or by the Texas Crime Information Center is confidential under federal and state law. CHRI means "information collected about a person by a criminal justice agency that consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, informations, and other formal criminal charges and their dispositions." Gov't Code § 411.082(2). Title 28, part 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations governs the release of CHRI obtained from the federal government or other states. *See* Open Records Decision No. 565 (1990). The federal regulations allow each state to follow its individual laws with respect to CHRI it generates. *See id.* Section 411.083 of the Government Code deems confidential CHRI the Texas Department of Public Safety ("DPS") maintains, except DPS may disseminate this information as provided in chapter 411, subchapter F or subchapter E-1, of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 411.083(a). Sections 411.083(b)(1) and 411.089(a) authorize a criminal justice agency to obtain CHRI; however, a criminal justice agency may not release CHRI except to another criminal justice agency for a criminal justice purpose. *Id.* § 411.089(b)(1). Other entities specified in chapter 411 of the Government Code are entitled to obtain CHRI from DPS or another criminal justice agency; however, those entities may not release CHRI except as provided by chapter 411. *See generally id.* §§ 411.090-.127. Thus, any CHRI obtained from DPS or any other criminal justice agency must be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with chapter 411, subchapter F, of the Government Code. Upon review, we find some of the information at issue consists of CHRI that is confidential under section 411.083. Accordingly, the city must withhold the CHRI we indicated under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure information relating to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration,

or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country. *See id.* § 552.130. We note, because section 552.130 protects privacy interests, the requestor has a right of access to her client's motor vehicle record information pursuant to section 552.023 of the Government Code. *See id.* § 552.023(a); ORD 481 at 4. Accordingly, with the exception of the motor vehicle record information pertaining to the requestor's client, we find the city must withhold the motor vehicle record information you indicated, and the additional motor vehicle record information we indicated, under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

Section 552.136 of the Government Code provides, "[n]otwithstanding any other provision of [the Act], a credit card, debit card, charge card, or access device number that is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental body is confidential." Gov't Code § 552.136(b); *see id.* § 552.136(a) (defining "access device"). This office has determined insurance policy numbers are access device numbers for purposes of section 552.136. *See* Open Records Decision No. 684 at 9 (2009). We note the requestor has a right of access to her client's account information pursuant to section 552.023 of the Government Code, and it may not be withheld from this requestor under section 552.136. *See* Gov't Code § 552.023(a); ORD 481 at 4. Accordingly, with the exception of the insurance policy number pertaining to the requestor's client, the city must withhold the insurance policy number you indicated under section 552.136 of the Government Code.

In summary, with the exception of the information pertaining to the requestor's client, the city must withhold the information you indicated and we indicated under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The city must withhold the CHRI we indicated under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code. With the exception of the motor vehicle record information pertaining to the requestor's client, the city must withhold the motor vehicle record information you indicated and we indicated under section 552.130 of the Government Code. With the exception of the insurance policy number pertaining to the requestor's client, the city must withhold the insurance policy number you indicated under section 552.136 of the Government Code. The city must release the remaining 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 <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/members-public/what-expect-after-ruling-issued> or call the OAG's Open

¹ We note the information being released contains information to which the requestor has a right of access under section 552.023 of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 552.023(a); *see also* ORD 481 at 4. Accordingly, if the city receives another request for this same information from a different requestor, the city must again seek a ruling from this office.

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 "J.M. Graham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

James M. Graham
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JMG/mo

Ref: ID# 796361

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)