



KEN PAXTON  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 14, 2020

Mr. John B. Strong  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Fort Worth  
200 Texas Street, 3rd Floor  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102-6311

OR2020-04842

Dear Mr. Strong:

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# 809310 (Ref. Nos. W093558 & W094218).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received two requests from different requestors for personnel information pertaining to a named former city police officer. You claim some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. Additionally, you state the city notified the Fort Worth Officer's Association (the "association") of the right to submit comments to this office stating why the submitted information should not be released.<sup>1</sup> See Gov't Code § 552.304 (interested party may submit comments stating why information should or should not be released). We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the submitted information contains a Texas Commission on Law Enforcement ("TCOLE") identification number. Section 552.002(a) of the Government

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<sup>1</sup> As of the date of this letter, this office has not received comments from the association explaining why any of the submitted information should not be released. Although you contend the association objects to release of the submitted information based on section 143.089(g) of the Local Government Code, we note neither the association nor the city has provided our office with arguments in support of the applicability of this provision. Accordingly, we do not address the applicability of section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with this provision to the submitted information. See Gov't Code §§ 552.301(e)(1)(A), .302.

Code defines “public information” as information that is written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained under a law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business:

- (1) by a governmental body;
- (2) for a governmental body and the governmental body:
  - (A) owns the information;
  - (B) has a right of access to the information; or
  - (C) spends or contributes public money for the purpose of writing, producing, collecting, assembling, or maintaining the information;  
or
- (3) by an individual officer or employee of a governmental body in the officer’s or employee’s official capacity and the information pertains to official business of the governmental body.

*Id.* § 552.002(a). In Open Records Decision No. 581 (1990), this office determined certain computer information, such as source codes, documentation information, and other computer programming, that has no significance other than its use as a tool for the maintenance, manipulation, or protection of public property is not the kind of information made public under section 552.021 of the Government Code. We understand a TCOLE identification number is a unique computer-generated number assigned to licensees for identification in TCOLE’s electronic database and may be used as an access device number on the TCOLE website. Accordingly, we find the TCOLE identification number in the submitted information does not constitute public information under section 552.002 of the Government Code, and the city need not release it to the requestors.

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 other statutes. Section 552.101 of the Government Code also 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 argues some of the submitted information is subject to chapter 261 of the Family Code. Upon review, we find the city has not demonstrated any portion of the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect under section 261.201(a)(2). Furthermore, the city has not established the information is a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under section 261.201(a)(1). *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 Fam. Code ch. 261). Therefore, the city may not withhold any portion of the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 611.002 of the Health and Safety Code, which provides, in part, as follows:

(a) Communications between a patient and a professional, and records of the identity, diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of a patient that are created or maintained by a professional, are confidential.

(b) Confidential communications or records may not be disclosed except as provided by Section 611.004 or 611.0045.

Health & Safety Code § 611.002(a)-(b); *see id.* § 611.001 (defining “patient” and “professional”). Upon review, we find the city must withhold the mental health records we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 611.002 of the Health and Safety Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses information protected by section 1703.306 of the Occupations Code, which provides:

(a) A polygraph examiner, trainee, or employee of a polygraph examiner, or a person for whom a polygraph examination is conducted or an employee of the person, may not disclose information acquired from a polygraph examination to another person other than:

(1) the examinee or any other person specifically designated in writing by the examinee;

(2) the person that requested the examination;

(3) a member, or the member’s agent, of a governmental agency that licenses a polygraph examiner or supervises or controls a polygraph examiner’s activities;

- (4) another polygraph examiner in private consultation; or
- (5) any other person required by due process of law.

(b) The [Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation] or any other governmental agency that acquires information from a polygraph examination under this section shall maintain the confidentiality of the information.

Occ. Code § 1703.306(a), (b). The remaining information contains information acquired from a polygraph examination. The requestor does not fall within any of the categories of individuals who have a right of access to the submitted polygraph information under section 1703.306(a). Accordingly, the city must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1703.306 of the Occupations Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses information made confidential by section 1701.306 of the Occupations Code. Section 1701.306 makes confidential L-2 Declaration of Medical Condition and L-3 Declaration of Psychological and Emotional Health forms required by TCOLE. Section 1701.306 provides, in part:

(a) [TCOLE] may not issue a license to a person as an officer or county jailer unless the person is examined by:

- (1) a licensed psychologist or by a psychiatrist who declares in writing that the person is in satisfactory psychological and emotional health to serve as the type of officer for which a license is sought; and

- (2) a licensed physician who declares in writing that the person does not show any trace of drug dependency or illegal drug use after a physical examination, blood test, or other medical test.

(b) An agency hiring a person for whom a license as an officer or county jailer is sought shall select the examining physician and the examining psychologist or psychiatrist. The agency shall prepare a report of each declaration required by Subsection (a) and shall maintain a copy of the report on file in a format readily accessible to [TCOLE]. A declaration is not public information.

*Id.* § 1701.306(a), (b). Therefore, the city must withhold the submitted L-2 and L-3 declaration forms under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1701.306 of the Occupations Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses information protected by chapter 411 of the Government Code, which makes confidential criminal history record information (“CHRI”) generated by the National Crime Information Center or by the Texas

Crime Information Center. *See* Gov't Code § 411.083(a). Title 28, part 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations governs the release of CHRI that states obtain from the federal government or other states. Open Records Decision No. 565 (1990). The federal regulations allow each state to follow its individual laws with respect to the CHRI it generates. *See id.* Section 411.083 of the Government Code deems confidential CHRI that the Department of Public Safety ("DPS") maintains, except that 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. We note CHRI does not include driving record information. *See id.* § 411.082(2)(B). We also note section 411.083 does not apply to active warrant information or other information relating to one's current involvement with the criminal justice system. *See id.* § 411.081(b) (police department allowed to disclose information pertaining to person's current involvement in the criminal justice system). Upon review, we find a portion of the remaining information consists of CHRI that is confidential under section 411.083. Thus, the city must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code.

Section 552.102(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information in a personnel file, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy."<sup>2</sup> *Id.* § 552.102(a). The Texas Supreme Court has considered the applicability of section 552.102 and has held section 552.102(a) excepts from disclosure the dates of birth of state employees in the payroll database of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. *Tex. Comptroller of Pub. Accounts v. Attorney Gen. of Tex.*, 354 S.W.3d 336, 348 (Tex. 2010). Upon review, we find the city must withhold the former officer's date of birth under section 552.102(a) of the Government Code.

Section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure the home address, home telephone number, emergency contact information, and social security number of a peace officer, as well as information that reveals whether the peace officer has family members, regardless of whether the peace officer complies with sections 552.024 and 552.1175 of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 552.117(a)(2). Section 552.117(a)(2) applies to peace officers as defined by article 2.12 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. We note section 552.117 is also applicable to personal cellular telephone numbers, provided the cellular telephone service is not paid for by a governmental body. *See* Open Records Decision No. 506 at 5-6 (1988) (section 552.117 not applicable to

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<sup>2</sup> The Office of the Attorney General will raise mandatory exceptions on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

cellular telephone numbers paid for by governmental body and intended for official use). Upon review, we find some of the remaining information may be subject to section 552.117(a)(2). We note the individuals whose information is at issue may be currently licensed peace officers as defined by article 2.12. Accordingly, to the extent the information at issue pertains to individuals who are currently licensed peace officers as defined by article 2.12, the city must withhold the information we marked and indicated under section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code; however, the cellular telephone numbers may be withheld only if a governmental body does not pay for the cellular telephone service.

If the individuals are not currently-licensed peace officers, then the information at issue may be subject to section 552.117(a)(1) of the Government Code. Section 552.117(a)(1) excepts from disclosure the home address and telephone number, emergency contact information, social security number, and family member information of a current or former employee of a governmental body who requests this information be kept confidential under section 552.024 of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 552.117(a)(1). Whether a particular item of information is protected by section 552.117(a)(1) must be determined at the time of the governmental body's receipt of the request for the information. *See* Open Records Decision No. 530 at 5 (1989). Thus, information may be withheld under section 552.117(a)(1) only on behalf of a current or former employee who made a request for confidentiality under section 552.024 prior to the date of the governmental body's receipt of the request for the information. Information may not be withheld under section 552.117(a)(1) on behalf of a current or former employee who did not timely request under section 552.024 the information be kept confidential. As noted above, section 552.117 is also applicable to personal cellular telephone numbers, provided the cellular telephone service is not paid for by a governmental body. *See* ORD 506 at 5-6. Therefore, if the individuals at issue made timely elections under section 552.024, then the city must withhold the information at issue under section 552.117(a)(1) of the Government Code; however, the marked cellular telephone numbers may be withheld only if a governmental body does not pay for the cellular telephone service.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130. The city must withhold the motor vehicle record information we marked and indicated under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

Section 552.136(b) 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." *Id.* § 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. Open Records Decision No. 684 at 9 (2009). Therefore, the city must withhold the insurance policy number we marked under section 552.136 of the Government Code.

Section 552.137 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “an e-mail address of a member of the public that is provided for the purpose of communicating electronically with a governmental body” unless the member of the public consents to its release or the e-mail address is of a type specifically excluded by subsection (c). *See* Gov’t Code § 552.137(a)-(c). The e-mail addresses at issue are not excluded by subsection (c). Therefore, the city must withhold the personal e-mail addresses we marked under section 552.137 of the Government Code, unless the owners affirmatively consent to their public disclosure.

Section 552.140 of the Government Code provides a military veteran’s DD-214 form or other military discharge record that is first recorded with, or that otherwise first comes into the possession of, a governmental body on or after September 1, 2003, is confidential for a period of seventy-five years and may only be disclosed in accordance with section 552.140 or in accordance with a court order. *See id.* § 552.140(a)-(b). The city came into possession of the submitted military discharge records after September 1, 2003. Accordingly, we conclude the city must withhold the submitted DD-214 form under section 552.140 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also 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. Additionally, this office has concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision No. 455 (1987). This office has also found personal financial information not relating to a financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body is generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 600 (1992) (employee’s designation of retirement beneficiary, choice of insurance carrier, election of optional coverages, direct deposit authorization, forms allowing employee to allocate pretax compensation to group insurance, health care or dependent care), 545 (1990) (deferred compensation information, participation in voluntary investment program, election of optional insurance coverage, mortgage payments, assets, bills, and credit history), 523 (1989) (common-law privacy protects credit reports, financial statements, and other personal financial information), 455 at 9 (employment applicant’s salary information not private), 423 at 2 (1984) (scope of public employee privacy is narrow), 373 (1983) (sources of income not related to financial transactions between individual and governmental body protected under common-law privacy). However, we note the public generally has a legitimate interest in information that relates to public employment and public employees. *See* Open Records Decisions Nos. 562 at 10 (1990) (personnel file information does not involve most intimate aspects of human affairs, but in fact touches on matters of legitimate public concern), 542, 470 at 4 (public has legitimate interest in job qualifications and performance of public employees), 444 at 5-6 (1986) (public has legitimate interest in knowing reasons for dismissal, demotion, promotion, or resignation of public employees).

Upon review, we find some of the remaining information satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Accordingly, the city must withhold the information we marked and indicated under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, we find you have failed to demonstrate any of the remaining information at issue is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public concern. Therefore, the city may not withhold any portion of the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

We note some of the remaining materials at issue may be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; see Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with the copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit.

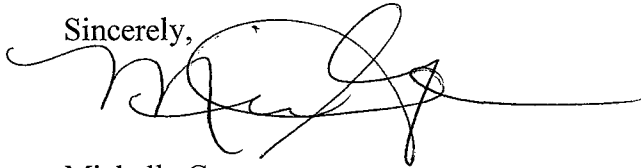
In summary, the former officer's TCOLE number is not subject to the Act and need not be released to the requestor. The city must withhold the mental health records we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 611.002 of the Health and Safety Code. The city must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1703.306 of the Occupations Code. The city must withhold the submitted L-2 and L-3 declaration forms under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1701.306 of the Occupations Code. The city must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code. The city must withhold the date of birth of the former officer under section 552.102(a) of the Government Code. To the extent the information at issue pertains to individuals who are currently licensed peace officers as defined by article 2.12 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the city must withhold the information we marked and indicated under section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code; however, the cellular telephone numbers may be withheld only if a governmental body does not pay for the cellular telephone service. If the individuals at issue made timely elections under section 552.024 of the Government Code, then the city must withhold the information at issue under section 552.117(a)(1) of the Government Code; however, the marked cellular telephone numbers may be withheld only if a governmental body does not pay for the cellular telephone service. The city must withhold the information we marked and indicated under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The city must withhold the insurance policy number we marked under section 552.136 of the Government Code. The city must withhold the personal e-mail addresses we marked under section 552.137 of the Government Code, unless the owners affirmatively consent to their public disclosure. The city must withhold the submitted DD-214 form under section 552.140 of the Government Code. The city must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with

common-law privacy. The city must release the remaining information; however, any information protected by copyright may only be released in accordance with copyright law.<sup>3</sup>

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,



Michelle Garza  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MRG/gw

Ref: ID# 809310

Enc. Submitted documents

c: 2 Requestors  
(w/o enclosures)

c: Third Party  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>3</sup> The information to be released includes social security numbers. Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office under the Act. Gov't Code § 552.147(b).