



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

April 24, 2020

Mr. Christopher K. Austria
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
200 Texas Street, 3RD Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2020-11683

Dear Mr. Austria:

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# 828809 (FW PIR No. W098979).

The Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified accident. You state you will release some of the requested information. 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.

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 made confidential by other statutes. The submitted information consists of police officers' 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 requestor does not provide the requisite information under section 1701.661(a) for some of the submitted body worn camera video. As the body worn camera video at issue was not properly requested pursuant to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code, our ruling does not reach this information and it need not be released.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). We note, the instant request includes all the information required by section 1701.661(a) with respect to the remaining body worn camera video. *Id.* § 1701.661(a). Accordingly, we find the requestor properly requested the remaining body worn camera video.

However, section 1701.661(f) provides, in relevant part:

A law enforcement agency may not release any portion . . . of a recording involving the investigation of conduct that constitutes a misdemeanor punishable by fine only and does not result in arrest, without written authorization from the person who is the subject of that portion of the recording or, if the person is deceased, from the person’s authorized representative.

Id. § 1701.661(f). You state the remaining body worn camera video pertains to the investigation of conduct that constitutes a misdemeanor punishable by fine only and which did not result in an arrest. You also state you have not received written authorization for release from all of the subjects of the video at issue. *See id.* Accordingly, we find the department must withhold the remaining body worn camera video under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1701.661(f) of the Occupations Code.

In summary, as the requestor did not properly request some of the submitted body worn camera video under section 1701.661 of the Occupations Code, our ruling does not reach this information and it need not be released. The department must withhold the remaining body worn camera video under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1701.661(f) of the Occupations 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.

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

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,

Amy Shipp
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ALS/mo

Ref: ID# 828809

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)