



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 18, 2020

Ms. Tiffany Bull
Assistant City Attorney
City of Grand Prairie
P.O. Box 534045
Grand Prairie, Texas 75053-4045

OR2020-13967

Dear Ms. Bull:

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# 828780 (GPCA# 20-0073).

The Grand Prairie Police Department (the "department") received a request basic information pertaining to shift reports during a specified time period. You state the department has released some information. You state the department does not have information responsive to a portion of the request.¹ 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 representative sample of information.²

Initially, we note the requestor only seeks basic information. *See* Gov't Code 552.108(c). Accordingly, only the basic information in the submitted information is responsive to the request. This ruling does not address the public availability of any information that is not

¹ The Act does not require a governmental body to release information that did not exist when a request for information was received or to prepare new information in response to a request. *See Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266, 267-68 (Tex. Civ. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983).

² We assume the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

responsive to the request and the department is not required to release such information in response to this request.

Section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure the internal records and notations of law enforcement agencies and prosecutors when their release would interfere with law enforcement and crime prevention. *Id.* § 552.108(b)(1); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 531 at 2 (1989) (quoting *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977)). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(b)(1) must explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.108(b)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706. Section 552.108(b)(1) is intended to protect “information which, if released, would permit private citizens to anticipate weaknesses in a police department, avoid detection, jeopardize officer safety, and generally undermine police efforts to effectuate the laws of this State.” *See City of Fort Worth v. Cornyn*, 86 S.W.3d 320 at 327 (Tex. App.—Austin 2002, no pet.). This office has concluded section 552.108(b)(1) excepts from public disclosure information relating to the security or operation of a law enforcement agency. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 531 (release of detailed use of force guidelines would unduly interfere with law enforcement), 252 (1980) (section 552.108 of the Government Code is designed to protect investigative techniques and procedures used in law enforcement), 143 (1976) (disclosure of specific operations or specialized equipment directly related to investigation or detection of crime may be excepted). Section 552.108(b)(1) is not applicable, however, to generally known policies and procedures. *See, e.g.*, ORDs 531 at 2-3 (Penal Code provisions, common law rules, and constitutional limitations on use of force not protected), 252 at 3 (governmental body failed to indicate why investigative procedures and techniques requested were any different from those commonly known).

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure “basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.” Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). *See also* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Accordingly, the department may not withhold any portion of the responsive information under section 552.108 of the Government Code.

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. Section 552.101 encompasses section 58.008 of the Family Code, which provides, in part:

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), law enforcement records concerning a child and information concerning a child that are stored by electronic means or otherwise and from which a record could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

(1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult records;

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as adult records, accessible only under controls that are separate and distinct from the controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and

(3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subsection (c) or Subchapter B, D, or E.

Fam. Code § 58.008(b)); *see also id.* § 51.03 (defining “delinquent conduct” and “conduct indicating a need for supervision” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). Section 58.008(b) is applicable to records of juvenile conduct that occurred before, on, or after September 1, 2017. The juvenile must have been at least 10 years old and less than 17 years of age when the conduct occurred. *See id.* § 51.02(2) (defining “child” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). We note section 58.008(b) does not apply to law enforcement records that relate to a juvenile involved only as a complainant, victim, witness, or other involved party; rather, the juvenile must be involved as a suspect, offender, or defendant. Upon review, we find portions of the responsive information involve delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision. However, we are unable to determine the ages of the offenders involved in the information at issue. Accordingly, we must rule in the alternative. To the extent any portion of the responsive information involves an offender who was ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct at issue, then the department must withhold that information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code.³ However, to the extent the information at issue does not involve an offender who was ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct at issue, then the information does not involve juvenile conduct for purposes of section 58.008(b) of the Family Code, and the information at issue may not be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 261.201 of the Family Code 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

³ As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Id. § 261.201(a). Portions of the remaining responsive information may relate to reports of alleged abuse or neglect made to the department. However, we are unable to determine the ages of the victims involved in the information at issue. *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 must rule in the alternative. To the extent any portion of the remaining responsive information involves a victim of alleged abuse or neglect who was a child at the time of the incident at issue, then the information is subject to chapter 261 of the Family Code. In that instance, as the department does not indicate it has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, the department must withhold the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code.⁴ *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute). However, to the extent the information at issue does not involve a victim of alleged abuse or neglect who was a child at the time of the incident at issue, then the information is not subject to chapter 261 of the Family Code and the department may not withhold the information under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

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. In Open Records Decision No. 393 (1983), this office concluded information that either identifies or tends to identify a victim of sexual assault or other sex-related offense must be withheld under common-law privacy. ORD 393 at 2; *see* Open Records Decision No. 339 (1982); *see also Morales v. Ellen*, 840 S.W.2d at 519 (Tex. App.—El Paso 1992, writ denied) (identity of witnesses to and victims of sexual harassment was highly intimate or embarrassing information and public did not have a legitimate interest in such information). Upon review, we find portions of the remaining responsive information relate to incidents involving sexual assault or other sex-related offenses. Therefore, to the extent any of the remaining responsive information consists of the home address or name of a victim of sexual assault or other sex-related offense, the department must withhold that information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.⁵ However, we find the department has not demonstrated any of the remaining responsive information is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public concern. Thus, the department may not withhold

⁴ As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

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any portion of the remaining information at issue under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses sections 418.176 through 418.182 of the Government Code were added to chapter 418 of the Government Code as part of the Texas Homeland Security Act (the "HSA"). These provisions make certain information related to terrorism confidential. Section 418.176 of the HSA provides in relevant part:

(a) Information is confidential if the information is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental entity for the purpose of preventing, detecting, responding to, or investigating an act of terrorism or related criminal activity and:

(1) relates to the staffing requirements of an emergency response provider, including a law enforcement agency, a fire-fighting agency, or an emergency services agency; [or]

(2) relates to a tactical plan of the provider[.]

Gov't Code § 418.176(a)(1)-(2). The fact that information may relate to a governmental body's security concerns does not make the information per se confidential under the Texas Homeland Security Act. *See* Open Records Decision No. 649 at 3 (1996) (language of confidentiality provision controls scope of its protection). Furthermore, the mere recitation by a governmental body of a statute's key terms is not sufficient to demonstrate the applicability of a claimed provision. As with any exception to disclosure, a governmental body asserting one of the confidentiality provisions of the Texas Homeland Security Act must adequately explain how the responsive records fall within the scope of the claimed provision. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must explain how claimed exception to disclosure applies).

The department argues release the remaining information would reveal information regarding "how department staff are allocated and what shifts they are assigned to" and its release "would allow [individuals] to know which shifts have lower staffing to assist them in best determining when to commit a crime[.]" Upon review, however, we find you failed to demonstrate the remaining responsive information at issue relates to staffing requirements or a tactical plan of an emergency response provider for purposes of section 418.176. Accordingly, the department may not withhold any of the remaining responsive information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 418.176 of the Government Code.

In summary, to the extent any portion of the responsive information involves an offender who was ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct at issue, then, as it does not appear any of the exceptions in section 58.008 apply, the department must withhold that information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. To the extent any portion of the remaining responsive information involves a victim of alleged abuse or neglect who

was a child at the time of the incident at issue, the department must withhold the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. To the extent any of the remaining responsive information consists of the home address or name of a victim of sexual assault or other sex-related offense, the department must withhold that information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department must release the remaining responsive information.

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,

Kelly McWethy
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KM/eb

Ref: ID# 828780

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)