



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 24, 2020

Mr. Zachary Brown
Mr. Neal Falgoust
Assistant City Attorneys
City of Austin
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767 8828

OR2020-21147

Dear Mr. Brown and Mr. Falgoust:

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# 839291 (City PIR# C068199).

The City of Austin (the "city") received a request for information related to a particular incident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

We must address the city's obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code, which prescribes the procedures a governmental body must follow in asking this office to decide whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301. Pursuant to section 552.301(b), a governmental body must ask for a decision from this office and state the exceptions that apply within ten business days of receiving the written request. *See id.* § 552.301(b). Further, pursuant to section 552.301(e), a governmental body must submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving an open records request (1) written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. *See id.* § 552.301(e). The city received the request for information on May 12, 2020. You inform us the city was closed on May 25, 2020. This office does not count the date the request was received or holidays for purposes of calculating a

governmental body's deadlines under the Act. Accordingly, the city was required to provide the information required by section 552.301(b) by May 27, 2020. Moreover, the city was required to provide the information required by section 552.301(e) by June 3, 2020. However, the envelope in which the city first provided the information required by sections 552.301(b) and 552.301(e) was postmarked June 4, 2020. *See id.* § 552.308(a)(1) (describing rules for calculating submission dates of documents sent via first class United States mail, common or contract carrier, or interagency mail). Consequently, we conclude the city failed to comply with the procedural requirements mandated by section 552.301 of the Government Code.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the requested information is public and must be released unless there is a compelling reason to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ). You raise section 552.108 for the information at issue. However, we find you have failed to establish a compelling reason to address your argument under this section. Accordingly, the city must release the submitted 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,

Erin Groff
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

EMG/jxd

Ref: ID# 839291

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)