



OFFICE *of the* ATTORNEY GENERAL
GREG ABBOTT

May 15, 2007

Ms. Lillian Guillen Graham
Assistant City Attorney
City of Mesquite
P.O. Box 850137
Mesquite, Texas 75185-0137

OR2007-05989

Dear Ms. Graham:

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# 282443.

The Mesquite Police Department (the "department") received a request for copies of four specified incident reports, and all calls for service from July 2003 to the present involving a listed address. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.¹

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. It encompasses confidentiality provisions found in other statutes, such as section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

¹ To the extent any additional responsive information existed on the date the department received this request, we assume you have released it. If you have not released any such records, you must do so at this time. See Gov't Code §§ 552.301(a), .302; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body concludes that no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

The 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, 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). We have reviewed the submitted information and agree that a portion of it relates to an investigation of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect and is therefore subject to section 261.201. You do not inform us that the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information. We therefore assume no such rule exists. Given this assumption, we conclude that Attachment 2 is confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code and must therefore be withheld in its entirety pursuant to section 552.101.²

You also contend that some Texas motor vehicle record information, which you have marked in the remaining documents, must be withheld under section 552.130 of the Government Code. This section excepts from disclosure information that “relates to... a motor vehicle operator’s or driver’s license or permit issued by an agency of this state [or] a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state.” Gov’t Code § 552.130. We have reviewed the submitted documents and agree that the information you have marked in Attachment 3 must be withheld under section 552.130.

In summary, the department must withhold Attachment 2 under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. The department must withhold the

² We note that if the investigation has been referred to the Department of Family and Protective Services (the “DFPS”), a parent or other legal representative of a child who is a requestor may be entitled to access to the DFPS’ records. Section 261.201(g) of the Family Code provides that the DFPS, upon request and subject to its own rules:

shall provide to the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect information concerning the reported abuse or neglect that would otherwise be confidential under this section if the department has edited the information to protect the confidentiality of the identity of the person who made the report and any other person whose life or safety may be endangered by the disclosure.

Fam. Code § 261.201(g).

information marked in Attachment 3 under section 552.130. The remaining submitted information must be released.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

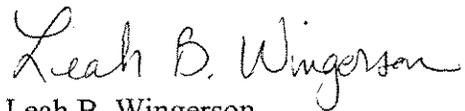
If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for

contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leah B. Wingerson".

Leah B. Wingerson
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

LBW/sdk

Ref: ID# 282443

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Janet Behning
722 Oak Drive
Mesquite, Texas 75149
(w/o enclosures)