



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 23, 2008

Mr. Mark G. Mann
Assistant City Attorney
City of Garland
P.O. Box 469002
Garland, Texas 75046-9002

OR2008-14507

Dear Mr. Mann:

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# 326342.

The Garland Police Department and the City of Garland (collectively the "city") each received a request for twenty categories of information pertaining to the city and certain named employees, and a particular incident involving the requestor. You state the city does not have information responsive to a portion of the request. We note that the Act does not require a governmental body to disclose information that did not exist at the time the request was received or to create responsive information. *See Economic Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266 (Tex. Civ. App.— San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 555 at 1 (1990), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983). You also state some of the responsive information has been released to the requestor. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.117 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information, a portion of which consists of a representative sample.¹

¹ We assume that 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 that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this

You assert that the employee file for a named officer is confidential under section 552.101 of the Government Code. Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section excepts from disclosure information deemed confidential by statute, such as section 143.089 of the Local Government Code. You state that the city is a civil service city under chapter 143 of the Local Government Code. Section 143.089 contemplates two different types of personnel files: a police officer's civil service file that the civil service director is required to maintain, and an internal file that the police department may maintain for its own use. Local Gov't Code § 143.089(a), (g). In cases in which a police department investigates a police officer's misconduct and takes disciplinary action against an officer, it is required by section 143.089(a)(2) to place all investigatory records relating to the investigation and disciplinary action, including background documents such as complaints, witness statements, and documents of like nature from individuals who were not in a supervisory capacity, in the police officer's civil service file maintained under section 143.089(a).² *Abbott v. City of Corpus Christi*, 109 S.W.3d 113, 122 (Tex. App.—Austin 2003, no pet.). All investigatory materials in a case resulting in disciplinary action are "from the employing department" when they are held by or in possession of the department because of its investigation into a police officer's misconduct, and the department must forward them to the civil service commission for placement in the civil service personnel file. *Id.* Such records are subject to release under the Act. *See* Local Gov't Code § 143.089(f); Open Records Decision No. 562 at 6 (1990). However, information maintained in a police department's internal file pursuant to section 143.089(g) is confidential and must not be released. *City of San Antonio v. Texas Attorney Gen.*, 851 S.W.2d 946, 949 (Tex. App.—Austin 1993, writ denied).

You inform us that some of the information at issue is maintained in the city police department's internal files concerning the named officer. Furthermore, you inform us that pursuant to section 143.089, you have referred the requestor to the city's Director of Civil Service to the extent that the request seeks information which may also be contained within the officer's civil service file. Based on your representations and our review of the documents at issue, we agree that the information you have marked is confidential pursuant to section 143.089(g) of the Local Government Code and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

You assert that the video and audio recordings of the incident at issue are excepted under section 552.108 of the Government Code. Section 552.108(a)(2) excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that concluded in a result other than conviction or deferred adjudication. A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must

office.

²Chapter 143 prescribes the following types of disciplinary actions: removal, suspension, demotion, and uncompensated duty. *See* Local Gov't Code §§ 143.051-143.055.

demonstrate that the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that has concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. You assert that the requested video and audio recordings pertain to a case that concluded in a result other than conviction or deferred adjudication, and that the matter is closed. Therefore, we agree that you may withhold this information under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.

You assert that the mayor's home address is excepted under section 552.117 of the Government Code. Section 552.117(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure the current and former home addresses and telephone numbers, social security number, and family member information of current or former officials or employees of a governmental body who request that this information be kept confidential under section 552.024 of the Government Code. Whether a particular piece of information is protected by section 552.117(a)(1) must be determined at the time the request for it is made. *See* Open Records Decision No. 530 at 5 (1989). You state, and provide supporting documentation showing, that the mayor elected to keep his home address confidential before the city received the request for information; therefore, we agree that you must withhold this information, which you have marked, under section 552.117.

In summary, the city must withhold the officer's internal personnel file pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 143.089(g) of the Local Government Code. The city may withhold the requested video and audio recordings under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code. The city must withhold the mayor's home address under section 552.117 of the Government Code. The remaining 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 file suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such a challenge, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3). If the governmental body does not file suit over 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 challenge 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,



Emily Sitton
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

EBS/eeg

Ref: ID# 326342

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Ben Taylor
P.O. Box 431
Utopia, Texas 78884
(w/o enclosures)