



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

September 10, 2013

Mr. William C. Ferebee  
City Attorney  
City of Shenandoah  
29955 IH-45 North  
Shenandoah, Texas 77381

OR2013-15715

Dear Mr. Ferebee:

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# 503533.

The City of Shenandoah (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to a specified arrest. You claim the requested 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.

Initially, we must address the city's obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code, which prescribes the procedures that a governmental body must follow in asking this office to decide whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. Pursuant to section 552.301(e), a governmental body must submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving an open records request general written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld. Gov't Code § 552.301(e)(1)(A). The city received the request for information on August 8, 2013. Thus, the city's fifteen-business-day deadline under section 552.301(e) was August 29, 2013. Although you timely asserted section 552.108 of the Government Code, as of the date of this letter, the city has provided no arguments explaining the applicability of this exception to the information at issue. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A). Thus, we conclude the city failed to comply with the procedural requirements mandated by section 552.301 regarding this exception.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption the

requested information is public and must be released unless a compelling reason exists to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (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) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to section 552.302); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). Generally, a compelling reason to withhold information exists where some other source of law makes the information confidential or where third party interests are at stake. Open Records Decision No. 150 at 2 (1977). Although you raise section 552.108 of the Government Code, this is a discretionary exception to disclosure that protects a governmental body's interests and may be waived; as such, this section does not constitute a compelling reason to withhold information for purposes of section 552.302. *See* Gov't Code § 552.007; Open Records Decision Nos. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally), 177 at 3 (1977) (statutory predecessor to section 552.108 subject to waiver). Therefore, the city may not withhold any of the submitted information under section 552.108. However, because section 552.130 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason to withhold information, we will address the applicability of this exception to the information at issue.<sup>1</sup>

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1)-(2). Accordingly, the city must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.<sup>2</sup> The city must release the remaining 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 [http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl\\_ruling\\_info.shtml](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml), or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for

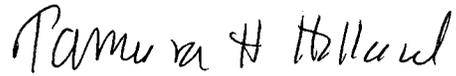
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<sup>1</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception like section 552.130 on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

<sup>2</sup>We note section 552.130(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in subsection 552.130(a) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. *See* Act of May 6, 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., S.B. 458, § 1 (to be codified as an amendment to Gov't Code § 552.130(c)). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.130(e). *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(d), (e).

providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tamara H. Holland".

Tamara H. Holland  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

THH/ac

Ref: ID# 503533

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)