



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 23, 2014

Mr. James McKechnie
Assistant City Attorney
City of Wichita Falls
P.O. Box 1431
Wichita Falls, Texas 76307-1431

OR2014-19126

Dear Mr. McKechnie:

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# 540883 (City ID# 483).

The City of Wichita Falls (the "city") received a request for five specified police reports. 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.

Initially, we note you have only submitted information pertaining to three of the specified police reports. To the extent any information responsive to the remaining two specified police reports existed on the date the city received the request, we assume the city has released it. If the city has not released any such information, it 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 no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.”¹ Gov’t Code § 552.101. This section encompasses the common-law right of privacy, which protects information if it (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) is 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 established. *Id.* at 681-82. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683.

Report number 04-082539 is a sexual assault report. In Open Records Decision No. 393 (1983), this office concluded, generally, only information which either identifies or tends to identify a victim of sexual assault or other sex-related offense may be withheld under common-law privacy; however, because the identifying information was inextricably intertwined with other releasable information, the governmental body was required to withhold the entire report. Open Records Decision No. 393 at 2; *see* Open Records Decision No. 339 (1982); *see also Morales v. Ellen*, 840 S.W.2d 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); Open Records Decision No. 440 (1986) (detailed descriptions of serious sexual offenses must be withheld). The requestor in this case knows the identity of the alleged victim. We believe in this instance, withholding only identifying information from the requestor would not preserve the victim’s common-law right to privacy. We conclude, therefore, the city must withhold report number 04-082539 in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.²

Section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(2). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must provide comments explaining why exceptions raised should apply to information requested). You have provided a representation from the Chief of Police of the city’s police department that states report number 03-071754 and report number 04-060168 pertain to criminal investigations that concluded in results other than convictions or deferred adjudications. Based on this representation and our review,

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

²As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your arguments against disclosure of this information.

we agree section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to report number 03-071754 and report number 04-060168.

However, we note, and you acknowledge, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. *Id.* § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the basic “front-page” offense and arrest 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 Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Thus, with the exception of the basic information, which you state you have released, the city may withhold report numbers 03-071754 and 04-060168 under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.³

In summary, the city must withhold report number 04-082539 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. With the exception of the basic information, which you state you have released, the city may withhold report numbers 03-071754 and 04-060168 under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.

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, or call the Office of the Attorney General’s Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Paige Thompson
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

PT/dls

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

Ref: ID# 540883

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)