



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 31, 2015

Mr. Mark G. Daniel  
Counsel for the City of Watauga  
Evans, Daniel, Moore, Evans & Biggs  
115 West Second Street, Suite 202  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2015-15660

Dear Mr. Daniel:

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# 573670 (PIA Request No. 15-228-PD).

The Watauga Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for all reports relating a specified address during a specified period of time. The department states it has released some of the requested information. The department claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions the department claims and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.<sup>1</sup>

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. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides, in relevant part:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under [the Act], and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent

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<sup>1</sup>We assume 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 those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

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 [chapter 261 of the Family Code] and the identity of the person making the report; and

(2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under [chapter 261 of the Family Code] or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). Upon review, we find the information in Exhibits B and E was used or developed in investigations of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect; thus, this information falls within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201 as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes), 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). As the department does not indicate the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, and based on our review, we determine the information in Exhibits B and E is confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute). Therefore, the department must withhold the information in Exhibits B and E in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code.<sup>2</sup>

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 58.007 of the Family Code. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997, are confidential under section 58.007(c). Section 58.007 provides, in pertinent part, as follows:

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records and files concerning a child and information stored, by electronic means or otherwise, concerning the child from which a record or file could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

(1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult files and records;

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as records or files relating to adults, be accessible under controls that are

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<sup>2</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the department’s remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

separate and distinct from controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and

(3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subchapters B, D, and E.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c). For purposes of section 58.007(c), “child” means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age when the conduct occurred. *See id.* § 51.02(2). Upon review, we conclude the information in Exhibits C and D consists of law enforcement records involving juvenile conduct indicating a need for supervision occurring after September 1, 1997, and is, therefore, subject to section 58.007(c). *See id.* § 51.03(b) (defining “conduct indicating a need for supervision” for purposes of section 58.007). None of the exceptions in section 58.007 apply. Therefore, the information in Exhibits C and D is confidential under section 58.007(c) of the Family Code and must be withheld in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code.<sup>3</sup>

In summary, the department must withhold the information in Exhibits B and E in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code and the information in Exhibits C and D in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family 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](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,



David L. Wheelus  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

DLW/bhf

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<sup>3</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the department’s remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

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Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)