



OFFICE *of the* ATTORNEY GENERAL
GREG ABBOTT

January 16, 2003

Mr. Michael C. Hayes
City Attorney
City of Kerrville
800 Junction Highway
Kerrville, Texas 78028-5069

OR2003-0353

Dear Mr. Hayes:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 175191.

The City of Kerrville (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to a specified police report. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and have reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note that the information at issue contains a "Texas Peace Officer's Accident Report," which is subject to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. Section 550.065(b) provides that, except as provided by subsection (c), accident reports are privileged and confidential. *See* Transp. Code § 550.065(b). Section 550.065(c)(4) provides for the release of accident reports to a person who provides two of the following three pieces of information: (1) date of the accident; (2) name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) specific location of the accident. *See* Transp. Code § 550.065(c)(4). In this case, we find that the requestor has not provided the city with any of the three pieces of information required under section 550.065(c)(4). Accordingly, we conclude that the city must withhold the accident report that we have marked pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code.

You claim that the remaining requested information is excepted from disclosure pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code.¹ Section 58.007 provides that juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997 are confidential. *See* Fam. Code § 58.007. Section 58.007 states in pertinent part:

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. *See* Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses information that is protected from disclosure by other statutes.

(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 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 Subchapter B.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c). The remaining requested information involves allegations of conduct in violation of a penal statute(s) by a person who was between the ages of ten and sixteen at the time the conduct occurred. Thus, this information is subject to section 58.007 as information concerning juvenile conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997. *See* Fam. Code § 51.02(2) (providing that in title 3 of Family Code, “child” means person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age). It does not appear that any of the exceptions in section 58.007 apply. Further, we do not believe that section 58.007 is intended solely to protect the privacy interests of the subject juvenile. Therefore, the fact that the subject juvenile is now deceased does not remove the information at issue from the ambit of section 58.007. Accordingly, we conclude that the city must withhold the remaining requested information in its entirety pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code.

In summary, the city must withhold the accident report that we have marked pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code. The city must withhold the remaining requested information in its entirety pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code.

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).

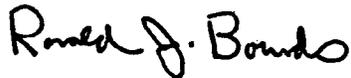
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, 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 Department of Public 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 Texas Building and Procurement Commission 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. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. 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,



Ronald J. Bounds
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

RJB/lmt

Ref: ID# 175191

Enc. Marked documents

c: Ms. Trisha Anderson
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(w/o enclosures)