ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 13, 2004

Ms. Angela K. Washington
Cowles & Thompson
901 Main Street, Suite 4000
Dallas, Texas 75202-3793

OR2004-0281

Dear Ms. Washington:

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# 194273.

The Addison Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for information relating to a specific incident. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code 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 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 state that the investigation is now closed and that no charges were filed. Therefore, we agree that section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable.

We note, however that basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.108. *See* Gov't Code § 552.108(c). We believe such basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Company 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 basic information, you may withhold the requested information from disclosure pursuant to section 552.108(a)(2). We note that you have the discretion to release all or part of the remaining information that is not otherwise confidential by law.[1] *See* Gov't Code § 552.007.

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 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

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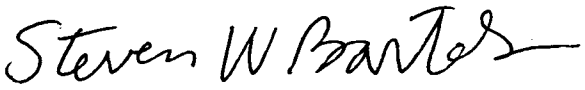
[1]We note that information subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code is confidential by law although we do not reach the substance of your arguments under that section.

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,



Steven W. Bartels
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

SWB/seg

Ref: ID# 194273

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Rick Watson
Watson Claims Service
P.O. Box 210277
Dallas, Texas 75211
(w/o enclosures)