



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

March 14, 2006

Ms. Kathleen Weisskopf
Police Legal Advisor
Arlington Police Department
P. O. Box 1065, MS 04-0200
Arlington, Texas 76004-1065

OR2006-02527

Dear Ms. Weisskopf:

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# 245135.

The Arlington Police Department (the "department") received a request for a "full copy of [a specified] report along with [the] arrest warrant." You claim that 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.

The submitted information includes both an arrest warrant and its corresponding arrest warrant affidavit. Article 15.26 of the Code of Criminal Procedure states "[t]he arrest warrant, and any affidavit presented to the magistrate in support of the issuance of the warrant, is public information." Crim. Proc. Code art. 15.26. Exceptions to disclosure under the Act generally do not apply to information that is made public by other statutes, such as article 15.26 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 623 at 3 (1994), 525 at 3 (1989). Thus, the arrest warrant and its supporting affidavit must be released to the requestor.

We next address your claim under section 552.108 of the Government Code with respect to the remaining submitted information. Section 552.108(a) excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if: (1) release of the information would interfere

with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime.” Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. See Gov’t Code §§ 552.108(a)(1), (b)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); see also *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the information at issue relates to a pending criminal case. Based upon this representation, we conclude that the release of the remaining submitted information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. See *Houston Chronicle Publ’g 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) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases).

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. Thus, with the exception of the basic front page offense and arrest information, the department may withhold the remaining submitted information from disclosure based on section 552.108(a)(1). We note that the department has the discretion to release all or part of this information that is not otherwise confidential by law. Gov’t Code § 552.007.

In summary, the arrest warrant and its supporting affidavit must be released pursuant to article 15.26 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. With the exception of basic information, which must be released, the department may withhold the remaining submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government 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 ten 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, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the

Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, 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); *Tex. 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 complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Office of the Attorney General 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. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within ten calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Robert B. Rapfogel
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

RBR/krl

Ref: ID# 245135

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Robert L. Martin
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(w/o enclosures)