



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

February 18, 2009

Mr. John Knight
Deputy City Attorney
City of Denton
215 East McKinney
Denton, Texas 76201

OR2009-02129

Dear Mr. Knight:

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# 335183.

The Denton Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specific police report and 9-1-1 call. You state you have released some of the requested information to the requestor. You claim that the remaining 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.

We must address the department's obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code. Pursuant to section 552.301(b), the governmental body must ask for the attorney general's decision and state the exceptions that apply not later than the tenth business day after receiving the request. Gov't Code § 552.301(b). You state the department received the request for information on November 14, 2008. However, you did not request a decision from this office until December 9, 2008. Consequently, you have failed to comply with the requirements of section 552.301 in requesting the decision from our office.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the information is public and must be released. Information that is presumed public must be released unless a governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information to overcome this presumption. *See Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex.

App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to section 552.302); Open Records Decision No. 319 (1982). Generally, a compelling reason to withhold information exists where some other source of law makes the information confidential or where third-party interests are at stake. *See* Open Records Decision No. 150 at 2 (1977). Although you raise section 552.108 of the Government Code as an exception to disclosure, this section is a discretionary exception that protects a governmental body's interests and may be waived. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 665 at 2 n.5 (discretionary exceptions generally), 177 at 3 (1977) (statutory predecessor to section 552.108 subject to waiver). In failing to comply with section 552.301, the department has waived its claim under section 552.108. Therefore, the department may not withhold any of the information at issue under section 552.108 of the Government Code. As you raise no further arguments against disclosure of the submitted information, it must be released.

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.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, 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 must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

Sincerely,



Christina Alvarado
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CA/cc

Ref: ID# 335183

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)