

**PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BUREAU  
INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** MARCH 5, 2019

**TO:** DISTRIBUTION

**FROM:** CAPTAIN RAY WHITELEY *Rw*  
Professional Standards Bureau

**SUBJECT:** SHERIFF'S FINDING

Per Sheriff Gualtieri, Deputy Christopher Amatruda, #59301, will receive the following as a result of AI-18-035:

1. Forty (40) hours Suspension, reduced by Education Based Discipline (Review of General Oder 15-2), is amended to Sixteen (16) hours Suspension to be served on:  
March 6, 2019 (10 hours), and March 7, 2019 (6 hours).

**DISTRIBUTION:**

Sheriff Bob Gualtieri  
Chief Deputy Dan Simovich  
Assistant Chief Deputy Sean Jowell  
Assistant Chief Deputy George Steffen  
Colonel Dave Danzig  
Major Stefanie Campbell  
Major Bill Hagans  
Major Paul Halle  
Major Sean McGillen  
Major Larry Nalven  
Lieutenant Deanna Carey  
Director Jennifer Crockett  
Director Nancy Duggan  
Director Susan Krause  
Director Jason Malpass  
Shannon Lockheart, General Counsel  
Payroll  
Purchasing-Uniform Supply  
Deputy Christopher Amatruda

RW/kmm

**PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 2019**

**TO: DEPUTY CHRISTOPHER AMATRUDA, #59301**

**FROM: SHERIFF BOB GUALTIERI**

**SUBJECT: CHARGES RE: AI-18-035**

An investigation has been conducted by the Administrative Investigation Division, Professional Standards Bureau, of the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office. As a result of this investigation, the Administrative Review Board has determined you committed the following violation:

On, but not limited to, September 12, 2018, while on duty in Pinellas County, Florida, you violated the Pinellas County Sheriff's Civil Service Act Laws of Florida, 89-404 as amended by Laws of Florida 08-285, Section 6, Subsection 4, by violating the provisions of law or the rules, regulations, and operating procedures of the Office of the Sheriff.

1. You violated Pinellas County Sheriff's Office General Order 3-1.1, Rule and Regulation 5.4, Duties and Responsibilities.

Synopsis: You engaged in the pursuit of a vehicle which violated Pinellas County Sheriff's Office Policy.

As you were traveling eastbound on Park Boulevard in the area of 57<sup>th</sup> Street North, you conducted a random registration check of the vehicle traveling ahead of you. The results identified the vehicle was reported stolen to the St. Petersburg Police Department on August 23, 2018.

You followed directly behind the stolen vehicle as it continued to travel eastbound on Park Boulevard. Assistance was immediately requested from the flight unit and they requested responding deputies await their arrival.

You were directly behind the vehicle as it was stopped for the red light at US 19 N and Park Boulevard. The suspect vehicle stopped ahead of you in the left turn lane indicating that it would be continuing northbound onto US 19 N.

You continued to follow the vehicle as it traveled northbound on US 19 N. The suspect vehicle came to a stop for the red light at 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. The suspect vehicle was in the outside lane, while you were stopped to its immediate left in the middle lane.

INS 19-0001

The stolen vehicle continued northbound on US 19 N until it made a right turn (eastbound) into the north entrance of the Bayside Inn (9359 US 19 N). You then made an abrupt right turn (eastbound) into the north entrance of the Bayside Inn behind the stolen vehicle.

While traveling east through the parking lot on the north side of the Bayside Inn you activated your emergency lights behind the stolen vehicle. You then activated your siren and the stolen vehicle continued around the hotel failing to yield. While traveling west, along the south side of the Bayside Inn, the stolen vehicle accelerated away from your vehicle.

The stolen vehicle demonstrated that it was fleeing from you as it maneuvered around other deputies' stopped cruisers with emergency lights activated. In addition, other deputies deployed stop sticks which the vehicle made efforts to avoid.

You continued to actively pursue the stolen vehicle around the south side of the Bayside Inn parking lot and out onto and across the northbound lanes of US 19 N. You then deactivated your emergency lights as you were turning south on US 19 N behind the stolen vehicle. It was at this time that the flight unit began to update deputies on the location and direction of travel of the stolen vehicle.

You continued to pursue the vehicle southbound on US 19 N until reaching 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. You pursued the stolen vehicle westbound onto 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue North at a high rate of speed and continued as it turned northbound onto 48<sup>th</sup> Street North. The stolen vehicle ultimately came to a stop at 48<sup>th</sup> Street North and 71<sup>st</sup> Avenue North.

You acknowledged you engaged in pursuit of the vehicle on the aforementioned roadways which was unauthorized and in violation of policy as the vehicular pursuit did not involve a forcible felony, an imminent and/or continuous threat, or any extremely dangerous driving.

During the Administrative Interview you made the following statements:

- You acknowledged you heard your Lieutenant provide direction of, "Let's just wait for the Eagle (flight unit) before we do anything else."
- When asked if you were in pursuit on the south side of the Bayside Hotel you responded, "Yes, sir. When we clearly see 19 and it begins to accelerate and they're out there with stop sticks, the pursuit initiated."
- When asked if you were in pursuit on 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue North you responded, "After it turning onto 70<sup>th</sup>, I would consider it to still be a pursuit. Hindsight, I'm saying it's a pursuit, at that point."
- You testified that you were aware the flight unit had arrived and was monitoring the vehicle as it turned southbound onto US 19 N.
- You testified, "Um, at the time, I thought I had a little bit of tunnel vision."
- You acknowledged you were familiar with the pursuit policy and when asked if a pursuit would have been authorized for this incident you stated, "Oh, No, Sir."

During the Administrative Review Board you provided the following testimony:

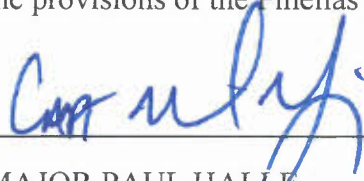
- When asked, "When you pulled out onto US 19 and you turned southbound and deactivated your lights, where you in pursuit at that point?" You responded, "I believe I stopped, but hindsight's 20/20, I feel that I should have been way more back."
- You testified once you turned onto 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue, "Once we were on that two (2) lane road and it was only me and him it was obvious that I was the car behind him."
- You testified, "I was just amped and in the moment and wanted to be closer than I should have been."
- When asked why you admitted to the policy violation you testified, "Unauthorized pursuit."
- You testified, "Hindsight's 20/20, I should have been way further. I shouldn't have even seen him turn on that road."
- You testified, "It was just poor judgment and poor discretion."

You admitted to this violation.

Disciplinary Points and Recommended Discipline Range:

You were found to be in violation of one (1) Level Five Rules and Regulations violation totaling fifty (50) points. These points, which were affected by no modified points from previous discipline, resulted in fifty (50) progressive discipline points. At this point level, the recommended discipline range is from five (5) days Suspension to Termination.

Disciplinary action shall be consistent with progressive discipline, for cause in accordance with the provisions of the Pinellas County Civil Service Act.

  
to 416 For Major Halle  
MAJOR PAUL HALLE  
PATROL OPERATIONS BUREAU  
FOR BOB GUALTIERI, SHERIFF

I have received a copy:

Date 3/05/19  
Time 1015  
C. S. [Signature]