

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

DATE: SEPTEMBER 28, 2026

TO: DISTRIBUTION

FROM: CAPTAIN ROBERT OSTERLAND RO
Professional Standards Division

SUBJECT: SHERIFF'S FINDING

Per Sheriff Gualtieri, Deputy Marc Messano, #57016, will receive the following as a result of AI 26-010:

1. An eighty (80) hour Suspension. Fifty-six (56) hours will be suspended if there is no substantiated discipline within a one-year period from September 25, 2026. The twenty-four (24) hour Suspension will be served on:

October 5, 2026 (8 hours), October 6, 2026 (8 hours), and October 7, 2026 (8 hours).

DISTRIBUTION:

Sheriff Bob Gualtieri
Chief Deputy Dave Danzig
Assistant Chief Deputy Paul Carey
Assistant Chief Deputy Dennis Komar
Colonel Joe Gerretz
Major Jose Camacho
Major Deanna Carey
Major Greg Danzig
Major Alyson Henry
Major Jon Tobeck
Major Matt Wroe
Director Jennifer Crockett
Director Susan Krause
Director Jason Malpass
Director Kristi Wong
Shannon Lockheart, General Counsel
Payroll
Purchasing-Uniform Supply
Deputy Marc Messano

RO/blb

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

DATE: SEPTEMBER 25, 2026

TO: DEPUTY MARC MESSANO, #57016

FROM: SHERIFF BOB GUALTIERI

SUBJECT: CHARGES RE: AI 26-010

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

On, but not limited to, May 9, 2026, while off 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 5.2, Loyalty;
2. You violated Pinellas County Sheriff's Office General Order 3-1.3, Rule and Regulation 3.1, Standard of Conduct

Synopsis: On May 9, 2026, at approximately 1730 hours, you were off duty, wearing civilian clothing, and driving your personally owned blue 2025 Chevrolet Tahoe near 102nd Avenue North and 131st Street North. While traveling westbound on 102nd Avenue North, you observed a vehicle traveling behind a white Nissan SUV.

The driver of the trailing vehicle followed the white SUV, honked his horn, and made hand gestures toward its driver. As the vehicles approached 131st Street North, the white SUV turned away, and the other vehicle continued northbound.

You then drove around the other vehicle, crossed the solid double-yellow line, and pulled in front of it, causing the driver to stop. You stopped the vehicle to speak with the driver about his driving behavior.

You exited your Tahoe and approached the driver's side window. As you approached, you lifted your shirt and displayed your badge. You did not verbally identify yourself as a deputy sheriff or explain the basis for the encounter.

Once at the open driver's window, you spoke with the driver about his driving behavior and hand gesture. During the exchange, you used profane language and spoke in an elevated manner.

While demonstrating the finger-gun gesture, you extended your right arm through the open driver's window, and your finger contacted the side of the driver's head.

As the encounter ended, you said words to the effect of, "try pointing a finger gun at me and see what happens." You then returned to your vehicle and left the area.

After the incident, you did not notify anyone within the agency. You did not obtain the driver's identifying information, conduct a records check, issue a warning, notify the communications center, notify a supervisor, or document the incident in ACISS, CAD, email, or any other agency system.

During a sworn interview on May 21, 2026, the driver stated that your Tahoe crossed the double-yellow line in front of him, causing him to stop. He also stated that he was concerned the encounter could become physical and that he remained calm during the exchange. The driver stated that your finger contacted his left temple. He also recalled your closing statement in substantially similar terms.

During your administrative interview on June 23, 2026, you admitted that your conduct violated General Order 3-1.1, Rule and Regulation 5.2, Loyalty, and General Order 3-1.3, Rule and Regulation 3.1, Standard of Conduct. You stated that you lost your cool over the situation. When asked about the Standard of Conduct violation, you acknowledged that you let your temper get the better of you. You also acknowledged that your actions amounted to an improper traffic stop and that, even if you had been on duty, your observations would not have justified stopping the driver.

During the Administrative Review Board on July 16, 2026, you described your actions as inappropriate, uncalled for, and a disgrace to your position and the Sheriff's Office. You accepted responsibility for stopping the vehicle, acknowledged that no one made you do so, and stated that it was your decision. You also acknowledged that your actions interfered with other motorists.

During the Board, you further acknowledged that your temper, rather than a need to protect the driver of the white SUV, influenced the incident. You acknowledged that your actions escalated the encounter. You agreed that, as a deputy sheriff, part of your responsibility is to de-escalate encounters rather than escalate them.

You also acknowledged during the Board that you undertook the encounter without a radio, left your cellular telephone in your vehicle, had not told anyone what you were doing, did not know whether the driver was armed, and left your disabled father seated in the passenger seat of your Tahoe while you approached the vehicle.

You admitted, and the Administrative Review Board determined, that you committed the violations.

Disciplinary Points and Recommended Discipline Range:

You were found to be in violation of one (1) Level Five Rule and Regulation and one (1) Level Three Rule and Regulation, totaling sixty-five (65) points. These points, when combined with thirty (30) points from previous discipline, resulted in ninety-five (95) progressive discipline points. By policy, the ninety-five (95) points revert to seventy-five (75) total points. At this point level, the recommended discipline range is from an eighty (80) hour 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.

Maj. DS #5020
MAJOR DEANNA CAREY
JUDICIAL OPERATIONS BUREAU
FOR BOB GUALTIERI, SHERIFF

I have received a copy:

Date 9/28/2026

Time 1157

Deputy Maura Messano
Member's Signature

BG:RHO