



Palm Beach Shores Police Department

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Chief of Police

The first duty a chief of police has is to the safety of the folks who live, visit and work here.

The second thing you should know is, I am like bubble gum on your shoe I am not going anywhere, no matter which choice is picked!

We are a special town with incredible people, volunteerism is the spirit of this town, friendship and caring is how we go about daily living.

There is no other place like Palm Beach Shores.

I was tasked with looking into different ways of providing services to save money, in the following report I will let you know what we learned.

In my 26 years here I have seen the police department change from the 7-person agency it was in 1993 to the agency it is today. In 1993 we had one officer on duty during the day and night, and a backup officer on the weekend from 7PM to 3AM. The 911 and regular calls were turned over to the sheriff's office and we were dispatched by them until a dispatcher came back to work here.

Around 2011 we added one officer to the force bringing us where we are today at 11 full time sworn officers.

In order to stabilize the force and attract and retain police officers we will need to be complete, not with the larger agencies but we must keep in mind that is a choice for officers. While we will need to bring the starting salary from 49K up and will need a longevity system to keep them here.

The commission did put additional funding in last year's budget to bring the present salaries high and the same this year. Perhaps this coming year we can entice officers over with this funding level, I will try my level best.

The officer we are looking for is one that has about 3 years of police working experience, or on has retired after 20 or 25 years, but wishers to continue to work not just come to work in uniform. (retired on duty)

I was also asked about Citizen patrol. We started that in the mid 90's, I was put in charge by then Chief Wille. It worked pretty well for about a year and then faded out. Folks no longer had the time or in some case may have been a bit too aggressive and decided to leave. We can look into this again to check on interest in it. It will require training on the volunteer's part and some initial funding for supplies. However, this is a great town to relax, maybe not driving a citizen's volunteer car, but if it can work, I am all for it.

The other day I was asked to talk about the 3 supervisors positions we have now including myself and why the Sheriffs office would not need them in town. Below is a small sampling of what is required of our town's supervisors,

A similar town, in Ocean Ridge has a chief, 2 Lieutenants and 4 sergeants.

- We have reduced the number of ranking officers from 4 to 3. Supervision is a must in this profession, besides serving as training officers the following services must be done by state law and or industry standards. Internal affairs and the ability to receive and talk about any complaints from citizens is an important part of supervision.
- Evidence gathering, storage and disposal which includes meeting with the medical examiner, state attorneys and finally a judge to determine what can be destroyed.
- Training: All our officers must be trained twice a year in firearms, once in Taser, and verbal encounters to deescalate an encounter. Some of it can be done with computers, some cannot. All these training needs are compiled and transmitted to the State and every four years are audited. If the officers have not completed the training, the state decertifies them until they do so.
- IT needs, while our IT company does a great job, someone must install the computers and have knowledge how to make the easy fixes in house. Same with our cameras and license plate readers, they all need to have someone to train the other staff members and make the easy fixes in house. Or we must pay to bring them in house to do installs.
- A supervisor must have control over the internal affairs component of the department, we have a part time detective but he must have contact with the supervisor on duty at the time. Thorough investigation is needed to be fair to all and presented to the chief, and if needed to the State.

- Any time a juvenile is detained a detailed report must be made and the reports compiled monthly and sent to the state, and audited quarterly.
- Maintaining our equipment and vehicles must have coordination to ensure proper upkeep, and to correct any updated software from our cameras and computers.
- Policies must be kept up to date, which I work on with another officer. To do so research is needed to ensure the policy you are instituting is in accordance with all state, local and federal law and ensure the work seamlessly here.
- The computers we use must be audited for any potential violation of the various state and federal data bases we have access to. These reports are compiled and sent to the State. All police reports with a crime must be classified per state and federal laws, they are compiled and sent to the state and then to the FBI, this report is extremely important, as it tells the world our crime rates. The rules to this are changing in 2021 and we are trying to get a head of the game with training and software tweaking
- We meet monthly with the emergency operations center where I represent the town for hurricane preparedness and coordination with EOC staff. I meet with the north county chiefs of police monthly to learn of any changes, crime trends or request form other agencies or help we are asking for.
- I attend monthly Chiefs of Police meetings from the county to look at the county wide picture and also meet with Criminal Justice commission which is a coordinated meeting with the chiefs of police estate attorney, medical examiner, FBI secret service, DEA and a host of others to know what is or could affect us, we discuss laws and better ways to provide service to all.
- Myself, 2 sergeants and 8 officers cover 24 hours 7 days a week 365 days, we augment our force with part time officers as we can hire them.

Over the years we have come to and continue to rely on Rivera Beach Police for immediate back up to our officers who need assistance. We are not a high crime area but one domestic or one fight can and has led into our officers being injured. However, they are a very busy agency and at times have been unable to send an additional unit to us.

We have and do rely on the Sheriff's office for ocean and intracoastal help, for immediate back, investigations much needed help when large events occur on Peanut Island, Phil Foster and the Sand Bar that spill over into our town.

Without both these agencies we would have a much tougher and dangerous job.

As time went on some of our officers left, some for other opportunities, some retired or were medically retired.

The biggest hurdle we have had over the last 5 to 10 years is attracting and retaining police officers. At present we are well **over 100 percent of our part time officer budget, and at least 10 percent over in regular overtime.** Some has to do with court appearances and investigations, but the vast majority is covering for officers who have left.

At the beginning of our fiscal year we were 2 officers short, we were short going into the year and continued until May of this year. All these shifts were either covered with part time officers, the Sergeant working the shift or a full-time officer on overtime. Some of our officers worked 8 12-hour shifts in a row to provide coverage and give other officers some rest and attend needed training and vacation time.

When we investigate hiring now, we have a much more intense background checks, and have added a civilian to the hiring board, some folks were denied going further in the hiring process due to this.

One officer we did hire last year, a retired officer with 25 years in Palm Beach county area, resigned and began working in North Palm Beach Police for an additional 10K and the ability to work day shift hours. He later left their and was hired at Juno Beach Police for an even higher salary.

Another factor is in our department you will be on the midnight shift until an officer leaves, giving you the opportunity to take that shift. We work 11.5-hour shifts, so everyone gets a weekend off, but midnights are not most folks preferable shift.

Then when we did begin to operate at budgeted full staff, 2 officers were out on extended leave, both are back but another is out as of now for an unknown period.

The Florida Department of law enforcement oversees the police profession and tracks the hiring and separation of police officers across our state, their records show:

In the last **5 years:** **9 police officers** left our agency; one was a medical retirement.

In the last **10 years:** **18 full time officers** left palm beach shores, 2 of which were medical retirement separations. In that same period **6 part time police officers moved on.**

To combat this, the commission has raised the starting salary to 49K, and we asked for another increase this coming fiscal year, but other agencies have raised theirs higher. The average county wide starting salary is **56K to start with little to no experience.**

Ocean Ridge PD is at 53K and Juno Beach at 61K with the ability to give a 5 % increase for added experience. These numbers may have increased in the upcoming budget year.

To make it even tougher in our hiring, the PBS School police have been on a hiring spree with the additional monies from the county wide 1 cent sales tax increase for school safety. Last fiscal year and this year coming, they have been hiring close to 150 police officers.

They also offer a higher salary than we do and offer a benefit package which includes all day shifts, Monday to Friday with weekend and holidays off, not to mention Summers off and oh yes, a cafeteria!

These are the officers we are attempting to attract, officers that have retired early and are looking for the second home in police work, bringing with them their experience.

To find candidates we sent officers to Palm Beach County state college looking for any officers coming here from out of state, then we traveled to Indian River County state college. I asked the director of the criminal justice staff to call me if he had any quality officers we could interview, to date we have had none.

I also spoke with the Director of the Florida police chief association looking for candidates that they may know of. We placed many adds in their statewide publication, but we received no applicants.

I personally called other police chiefs asking them if they had any officers who were nearing retirement but would like a part time or full-time job to have them call me for an application. That also did not work out.

We all that failed to produce candidates, we went to the Internet search engine for police positions "indeed". We received over 287 inquiries and over 1,100 views. Out of all of them only 3 were acceptable to continue it the process, they declined.

We also began to investigate ways to offset costs from our respective departments in town. I was asked and met with the Chiefs of North county who use Northcom, which is a consortium of many northern police departments sharing one dispatch center headquartered at Palm Beach Gardens Police.

The hiring of dispatchers has changed over the years, it used to be agencies would train from within, due to terrible errors in the field the State enacted a law requiring over 400 hours of classroom testing with a state final exam at the end before an applicant can enter into the process. Florida statute 401.465.

We had asked them twice before to join over the years and we twice declined to join.

They were kind enough to speak to us a third time and we will be getting firm numbers. But this would mean terminating all our dispatch staff, some with us for 18 years, as NorthCom is at full staff. We estimate the startup costs for new police radios to match the groups would be about 120K and another 80K for a new dispatch integration system and report writing systems.

The day to day running of the police department has maintenance costs for equipment and services, we have added surveillance systems and license plate readers and are looking to purchase a few more, all of these items have long term contract and associated fees.

Our IT service fees alone are \$2,800.00 per month due to ransomware threats, data backup and the state mandates on security for the critical information our computers have and have access to.

Palm Beach County charges us about 15K just to use their radio system. We pay 18K a year for maintenance fees for our dispatch and report writing fees, 7K a year in the leasing of our tasers for the next 2 years out of the last 5.

This is just a small part of the recurring costs, then there are training costs both online which we try do much of, but specialized training can mean days to a week away, then the twice-yearly firearms training with handheld and patrol rifle training.

Thankfully the Fleming Family Foundation has been a great friend and an extraordinary help to the police, without them over the years I know our officers' and dispatchers' jobs would be so much harder. The in-car cameras, in car computers, weapons, 2 all-terrain vehicles one to replace the older one, badges, flashlights, dispatch computer and CCTV monitor along with much more came to us free of charge from the Fleming Family.

With a simple arrest it can leave one officer on duty. When a subject is arrested the officer is preparing the person for transport to the Sheriff's office in West Palm Beach and must complete all the paperwork that must accompany the arrestee.

Especially on the midnight shift that can leave the town with one lone officer for 3 hours or more. We are subject to delay in a line of officers with persons at the jail who are awaiting process.

Within the next 3-year years we will need to have a discussion on the hiring of at least one possibly two police officers, as mention we currently employ 11 full time personnel.

If we have the figures right, between salary and all the costs associated with a new hire, each one would add \$92K years to the budget

At present other agencies have a larger staff but may not have the same crime incident hurdles ours does. A recent check as of last week showed the following towns have a total complement including supervisor staff of:

Ocean Ridge PD:	18 no commercial properties
Highland Beach	15
Gulfstream	12
June Beach	17
Palm Beach Shores	11

In the next 18 months we expect possibly 2 retirements, also some of our officers are actively seeking employment elsewhere due to family finances.

So...Looking into ways to reduce costs I met with Colonel Tony Araujo who you just heard from, I have known him and worked side by side with him for over 30 years, I know him to be an honest person.

The sheriff's office and Palm Beach Shores has held a very fraternal relationship over the years going back to the 1980's.

So, it was easy to begin a dialogue.

The 2019-2020 budget calls for the police budget to be:

\$2.065.629, this includes **\$428.438.00** Dollars to run the dispatch center in costs and salaries

In my discussions with them I spoke about our town's needs, which include house checks, care programs, Mayors youth council events, knowing who the officers are by name and much more.

The colonel assured us all this would continue and would be augmented by additional staff. There would be a minimum of 2 deputies/officers on duty 24/7 and my smiling face at the station and at all meetings and events.

He also assured me that they do not pull officer from contracts to help others, they simply pull from the unincorporated areas and other deputies that are on during a shift county wide, but not needed at the present time.

They will assume all pension liabilities, civil and insurance costs and will absorb the officers present vacation and sick time into the original costs.

ALL full-time police officers and dispatchers would become deputies and would remain in our town for a minimum of 2 years, permanently if they wish.

Whatever decision that is made the men and woman of Palm Beach Shores police will be here to assist, no matter what you call us.

Thank you for your time and thank you most of all for your friendship.