



2025

ANNUAL REPORT

ST. MARY'S COUNTY
POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

Adopted :
December 18, 2025

Nickolas Cromwell, Chair
Leslie Everett, Vice Chair



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INTRODUCTION

By law, a Police Accountability Board in Maryland must adopt, by December 31st of a given year, an annual report that: (a) identifies any trends in the disciplinary process of police officers of the county and (b) makes recommendations on changes to policy that would improve police accountability in the county.¹ This document is the annual report adopted by the St. Mary's County Police Accountability Board ("the Board") for calendar year 2025. This report includes information the Board feels will benefit the Commissioners of St. Mary's County and the citizens of St. Mary's County in understanding the Police Accountability Board's role, mission, and work. The Board hopes this document will provide greater context for its activities over the last calendar year and the recommendations it makes in its report.

MISSION & FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD

Per the Police Accountability Board's by-laws, "the purpose of the Body is to forward complaints of police misconduct to the appropriate law enforcement agency, to advise the Commissioners of St. Mary's County on all matters relating to local law enforcement and matters of policing, to appoint civilian members to charging committees and trial boards, to review outcomes of disciplinary matters considered by charging committees, and, on a yearly basis, to identify trends in the disciplinary process of police officers in the county and to make recommendations on changes to policy that would improve police accountability in the county."

Additionally, an important duty of the Police Accountability Board is the appointment of two members of the five-person Administrative Charging Committee for St. Mary's County; additionally, the chairperson of the Police Accountability Board, or another member of Board, must serve on the Administrative Charging Committee. The Board is also responsible for appointing the civilian member of any trial board formed should an officer appeal any discipline recommended as a result of a disciplinary matter.

Complaints of police misconduct may be sent to the Board by filling out a standardized form accessible on the Board's webpage on the County website, and all inquiries of any nature shall be sent to the Board at pab@stmaryscountymd.gov.² The email is monitored daily by supporting staff. Complaints directed against a member of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, the only local law enforcement agency in St. Mary's County, are forwarded to that organization for investigation. Complaints may also be sent directly to the Sheriff's Office.

¹ Md. Public Safety § 3-102(a)(4)

² [St. Mary's Police Accountability Board Complaint Form](#)

Any complaint received pertaining to a different agency will be forwarded to the appropriate Police Accountability Board or state agency.

In addition to receiving complaints from members of the public to forward for investigation and review, the Board must also serve as an advisory board to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County on matters of police discipline and police relations within St. Mary's County. Though the Board has no direct power to implement policy changes, Maryland law tasks the Board with making recommendations to the Commissioners that the Board believes would further police relations in the County if implemented. To that end, the Board endeavors to be in constant contact with members of local law enforcement and members of the public to monitor local sentiment.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

All members of the Police Accountability Board who served in 2024 continued in their same capacities in 2025.



Nickolas Cromwell, Chairperson

2nd Term: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028

Mr. Cromwell is a veteran and has served a combined thirty-nine years in active and civilian military service. Mr. Cromwell has served as chief executive officer of two corporations and has served on the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office's Citizen Advisory Board. He is also chairperson of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee.



Leslie Everett, Vice Chairperson

2nd Term: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028

Ms. Everett is a certified Human Resources professional and currently serves as Director of Human Resources for a locally owned land development and property management company.



Jenna Aubert

1st Term: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027

I am a retired police officer, having served with a municipal department in Prince George's County. I am passionate about community service and giving back to my community. Outside of my job as a fraud investigator for a large, multi-national insurance company, I serve as a volunteer EMT with both Leonardtown and Lexington Park Rescue Squads in my spare time.



Ylonda M. Dowleyne, Member
2nd Term: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028

Mrs. Dowleyne is a retired veteran of the United States Army with 22 years of service.



Buren W. Kidd, Member
1st Term: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026
Buren "Chip" Kidd lives in St. Mary's County with his lovely wife, Amanda, and their six children. He holds BA, MS, and JD degrees, and is a member of the Maryland Bar and the St. Mary's County Bar Association. He currently practices law with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



John W. Lydon, III, Member
1st Term: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027
LTC (Ret) Lydon served 22 years in the US Army as a Military Police Officer. He received his commission through the Missouri Western State College ROTC program while serving as a police officer on the St. Joseph, MO police department. Upon retiring, John spent 18 years in public education including working with special needs children, serving as a high school Senior Army Instructor, and as a Program Mentor with Western Governors University.



Dr. Linda W. Lymas, Member
1st Term: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027
A former principal of Great Mills High School, Dr. Lymas is a career educator. Retired from that role since 2013, she currently serves as the CEO for, and is the founder of St. Mary's Food Bank. Dr. Lymas is a past president of the Lexington Park Rotary Club and current Assistant Governor for Rotary's District 7620. In 2002, Dr. Lymas was recognized by Governor Parris Glendening for her contributions to instructional leadership in Maryland schools.



Thomas Phelan, Member
1st Term: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026
Mr. Phelan served 27 years in the Navy as a pilot and test pilot, and currently works for a defense contractor supporting Patuxent River.



Charles Shilling, Member
1st Term: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026
Mr. Shilling is the CEO of Shilling & Associates, a counseling firm to property management having operated in 21 states, and he maintains a Forensic Expert status in certain states within his field. In his volunteer life, he has 40 years of service provided within our Maryland Criminal Justice System, has served on numerous Governor Tasks Forces, and has been recognized on local, state, and international basis for his volunteer work for Victim Rights. In 2022, he was selected as Maryland's Citizen of the Year.

STRUCTURE OF THE POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

Per [Ordinance 2022-15](#), the Police Accountability Board must have a minimum membership of five voting members: one chairperson, and one member from each Commissioner district. Up to four additional voting members may be appointed by the Commissioners. All members serve staggered three-year terms. By state law, members of a Police Accountability Board must be civilians; no actively serving police officer may be a member of the Board.

The Sheriff of St. Mary's County is entitled to appoint an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the Police Accountability Board. This *ex officio* member's role is to provide advice, knowledge, and insight to the members of the Board.

Support staffing for the Board is provided through the County Attorney's Office.

MEETINGS

The Board held a total of five meetings in the course of 2025, on each of the following dates: March 12, May 15, August 21, November 20, and December 18. The Board has a statutory duty to meet no less than quarterly. A decision was made by the Board to hold an extra meeting in November to discuss and complete the Police Accountability Board's Annual Report, due December 31, 2025, to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County.

In March, the Board met with St. Mary's County Sheriff, Steven Hall, who addressed questions regarding the recent increase in submitted complaints. Lt. Krum from the Sheriff's Office followed with a presentation on the features and capabilities of the Axon Body 4 camera system used by deputies. The Board then reviewed four (4) Administrative Charging Committee ("ACC") written dispositions. Deputy County Attorney John Sterling Houser briefed members on proposed legislation that, if enacted, could affect the operations of both the PAB and the ACC. The meeting concluded with the reappointment of ACC members Michael Deitch and Joyce Dyson to successive terms.

During their May meeting, the Board discussed ACC member stipends, reviewing compensation data from other counties to assess whether St. Mary's County's stipends are commensurate with workload. No action was taken, as the Chair intended to present the comparative data to the ACC for feedback at their next meeting. John Sterling Houser provided an update on the 2025 General Assembly session, highlighting SB 533, which sets new deadlines requiring the ACC to issue dispositions within 395 days of the filing of a complaint by a member of the public, and for law enforcement agencies to submit its investigation to the ACC within 334 days. The Board discussed phase two of the Police Executive Research

Forum's study on the implementation of the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 ("MPAA"), and reviewed other Maryland counties' 2024 PAB Annual Reports, agreeing to revisit both topics as needed. The meeting concluded with the Board's review of two (2) ACC dispositions, both issued by the ACC on March 26, 2025.

In August, the Board reviewed the impact report generated from phase two of PERF's study on the statewide implementation of the MPAA, which identified challenges in collecting consistent data, citing variations of record-keeping practices and differing definitions of police misconduct and outcomes across jurisdictions. The Board also discussed potential recommendations to include in their 2025 Annual Report. The meeting concluded with the review of eight (8) ACC case files, during which the Chair provided board members with a brief summary of each disposition letter.

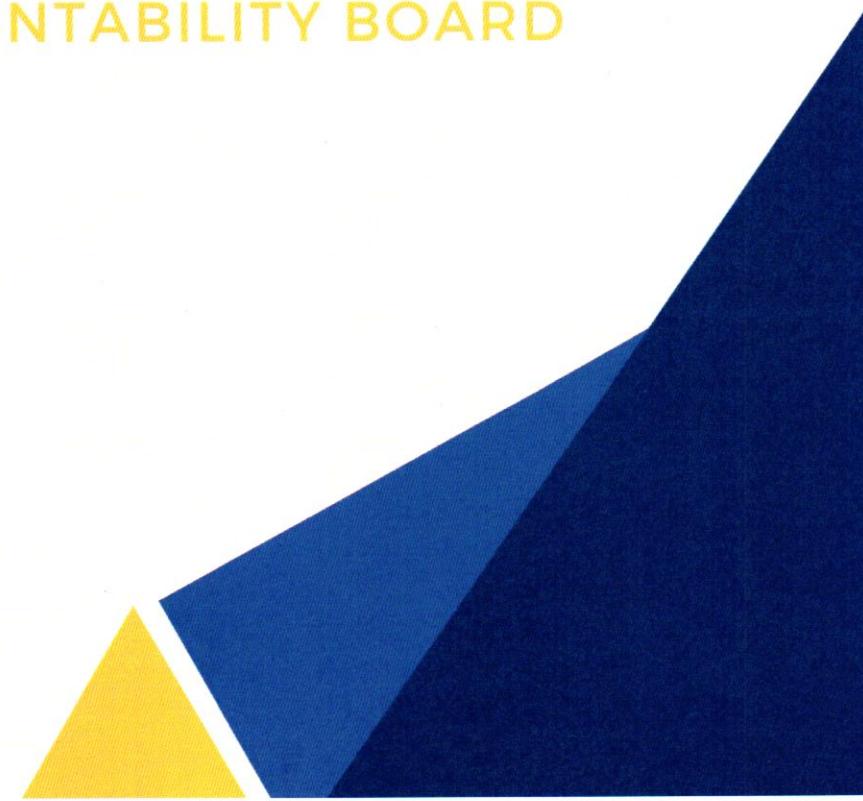
An additional Board meeting held in November saw the review of six (6) ACC dispositions, the adoption of the 2026 meeting schedule, and approval of this annual report.

Minutes of each meeting held in calendar year 2025 are attached to this report as Appendix Item B.



ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGING COMMITTEE

**ST. MARY'S COUNTY
POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD**



MISSION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

While the Police Accountability Board provides review and recommendations as an advisory body, the Administrative Charging Committee is charged with making disciplinary recommendations regarding alleged police misconduct. Its duties and powers are to: (1) review the findings of law enforcement agency's investigation; (2) make a determination as to whether to administratively charge a police officer who is the subject of the investigation; (3) if the police officer is charged, recommend discipline in accordance with the law enforcement agency's disciplinary matrix; (4) review any body camera footage that may be relevant to the matters covered in the complaint of misconduct; (5) authorize a police officer called to appear before an administrative charging committee to be accompanied by a representative; (6) issue a written opinion that describes in detail its findings, determination, and recommendations; and (7) forward the written opinion to the chief of the law enforcement agency, the police officer, and the complainant.

PROCESS FOR REVIEWING INVESTIGATORY FILES

The investigation and review process for a matter brought before the Administrative Charging Committee is extensive. Complaints of police misconduct may be made through the Police Accountability Board or through the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office. Upon receipt of a complaint the allegation is investigated by the Sheriff's Office. Following completion of that investigation, the Sheriff's Office forwards a copy of the investigatory file – which includes case summaries, documentary evidence, transcripts of all associated interviews, and any associated body worn camera or other media files - to the ACC for review. The investigation file includes recommendations by the Sheriff as to whether the accused officer should be administratively charged and, if so, what discipline should be offered.

Once the investigatory file of the allegation of police misconduct is in possession of the ACC, the Committee reviews the entire law enforcement agency's investigatory file. In a typical case, ACC members receive all written components of a pending investigative file one to two weeks prior to their next monthly meeting. Media files are reviewed collectively at that meeting. The ACC has the authority, if needed, to request further investigation from the law enforcement agency. If the ACC is satisfied that the investigative file is complete, a preliminary finding is made and staff are directed to prepare a written opinion consistent with that finding. A written opinion is presented for ratification by the ACC at its next monthly meeting. Upon adoption of a final written opinion – which will include a finding as to whether the accused officer should be administratively charged for the alleged violation and, if so, what

discipline the ACC recommends – it is transmitted to the Sheriff. If discipline is recommended, it must be categorized according to the classes established by the Statewide Disciplinary Matrix. The Sheriff may elect to administer the ACC’s recommended discipline or to impose harsher discipline than that recommended. Once an officer has accepted an offer of discipline or exhausted his or her rights to challenge any adverse finding, the ACC’s written determination is made publicly available.

The St. Mary’s County Administrative Charging Committee takes a literal interpretation of the definition of “police misconduct” provided in Maryland Public Safety Article § 3-101(g): “‘Police misconduct’ means a pattern, a practice, or conduct by a police officer or law enforcement agency that includes: (1) depriving persons of rights protected by the constitution or laws of the State or the United States; (2) a violation of a criminal statute; **and** (3) a violation of law enforcement agency standards and policies.” (**Emphasis added**). Accordingly, the ACC does not review technical infractions that do not involve the public. By agreement with the Sheriff’s Office, however, the ACC does review technical infractions if they arise from the same circumstances as an allegation that satisfies the three definitional elements of “police misconduct.” For example, an officer alleged to have delayed activation of a body worn camera in violation of agency policy, would have that alleged violation subject to ACC review if, in the same event, the officer is alleged to have engaged in other conduct that would satisfy the definition of “police misconduct.”

All findings made in 2025 are attached as an appendix to this report.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGING COMMITTEE



Nickolas Cromwell, Chairperson

2nd Term: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028

Mr. Cromwell is a veteran and has served a combined thirty-nine years in active and civilian military service. Mr. Cromwell has served as chief executive officer of two corporations, has served on the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office’s Citizen Advisory Board. He is also chairperson of the St. Mary’s County Administrative Charging Committee.



Michael R. Deitch, Member

2nd Term: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028

As a retired police officer from New Jersey, I bring a wealth of experience in law enforcement, having developed strong skills in investigation, crisis management, and community engagement. Transitioning into cybersecurity supporting the Department of Defense, I leverage my background to identify and mitigate threats, ensuring the safety and security of digital environments. My unique combination of practical law enforcement experience and technical expertise allows me to provide valuable insights into both physical and cyber safety, making me a trusted resource for the Administrative Charging Committee.



Joyce I. Dyson, Member

2nd Term: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028

My name is Joyce I. Dyson. I am a retired government employee who served as an Advisory Council Board member, I ensured government policies were followed based on the situation. This responsibility helped me with decision-making on the Administrative Charging Committee.



Dr. Linda W. Lymas, Member

2nd Term: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028

A former principal of Great Mills High School, Dr. Lymas is a career educator. Retired from that role since 2013, she currently serves as the CEO for, and is the founder of St. Mary's Food Bank. Dr. Lymas is a past president of the Lexington Park Rotary Club and current Assistant Governor for Rotary's District 7620. In 2002, Dr. Lymas was recognized by Governor Parris Glendening for her contributions to instructional leadership in Maryland schools.



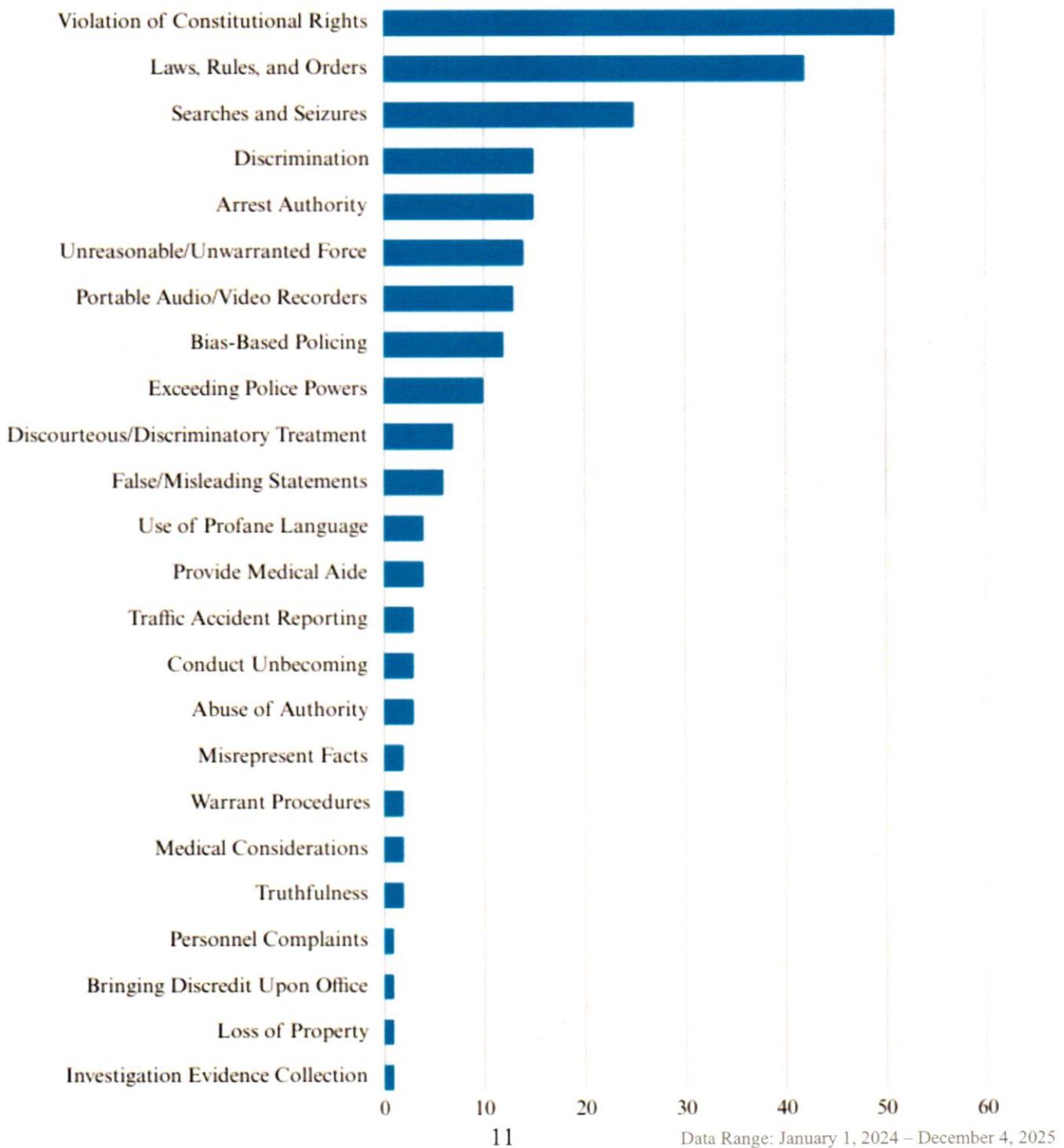
Peter F. Wild, Member

2nd Term: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028

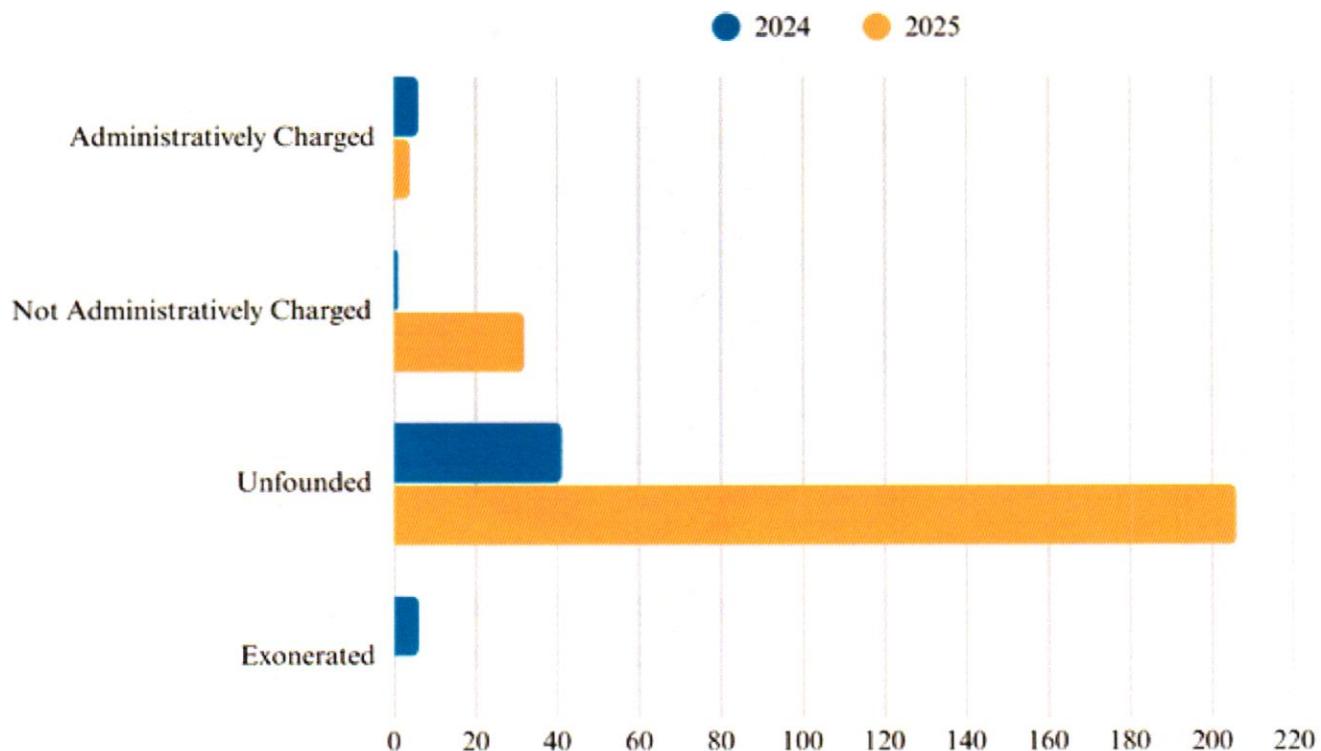
Served in the US Navy from 1982-1990 as an Electronics Technician / Nuclear Reactor Operator on board 2 Submarines. Was brought to St Mary's County Maryland as a Control Technician Nuclear at Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power plant. Joined the Maryland State Police in 1994 as a State Trooper / Master Flight paramedic and served until retirement in 2011. Worked for Charles Co Government for the Department of Emergency Services in 2008 and retired as an EMS Operations Captain in 2024. Volunteered in St Mary's Co as a Fire Fighter and Paramedic from 1990 - 2018. I am a Life Member of St Mary's Co Advanced Life Support Unit.

ACC DATA AND STATISTICS BETWEEN 2024 and 2025

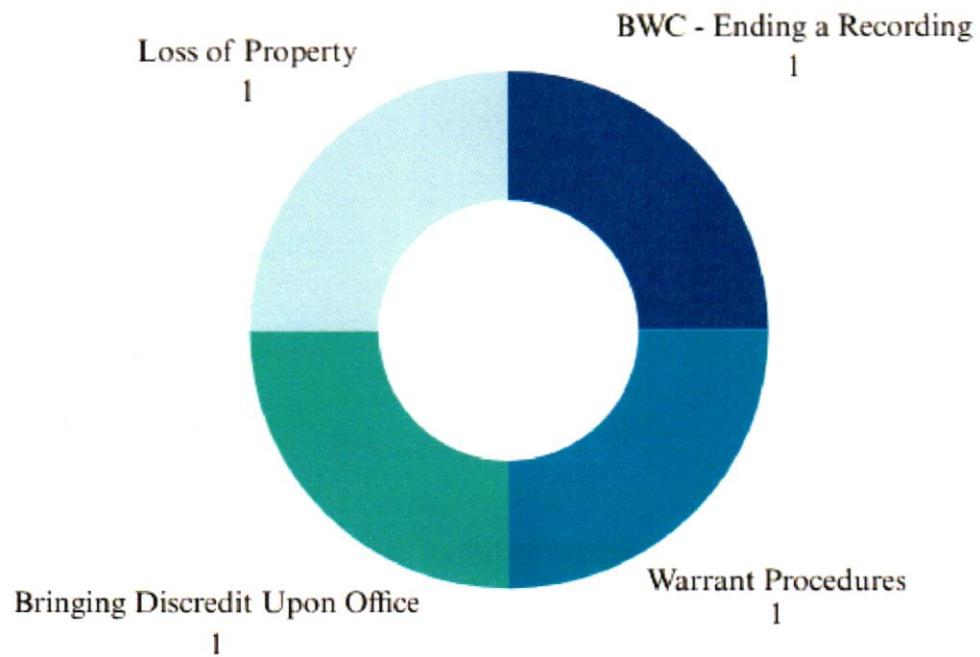
Total Number Allegations Reviewed by the ACC in 2025



Total Charged/Not Charged/Unfounded Findings

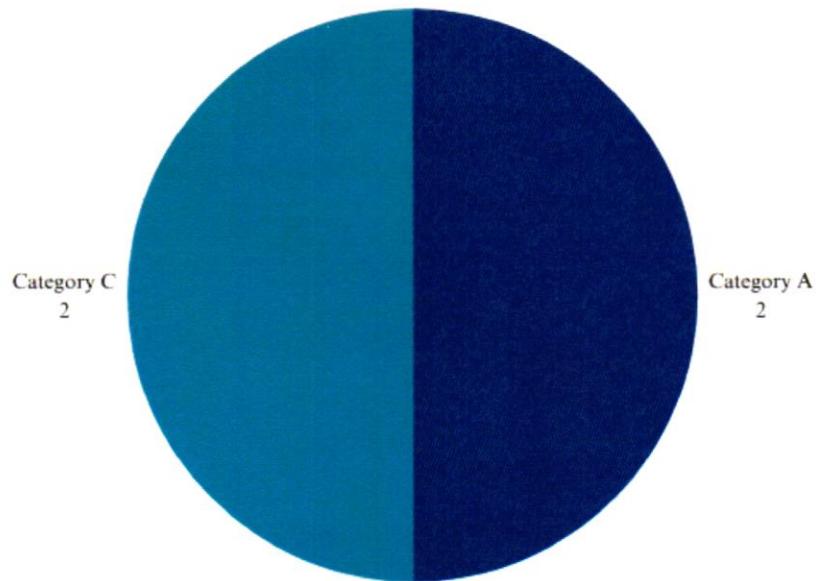


Allegations Administratively Charged in 2025, by Subject

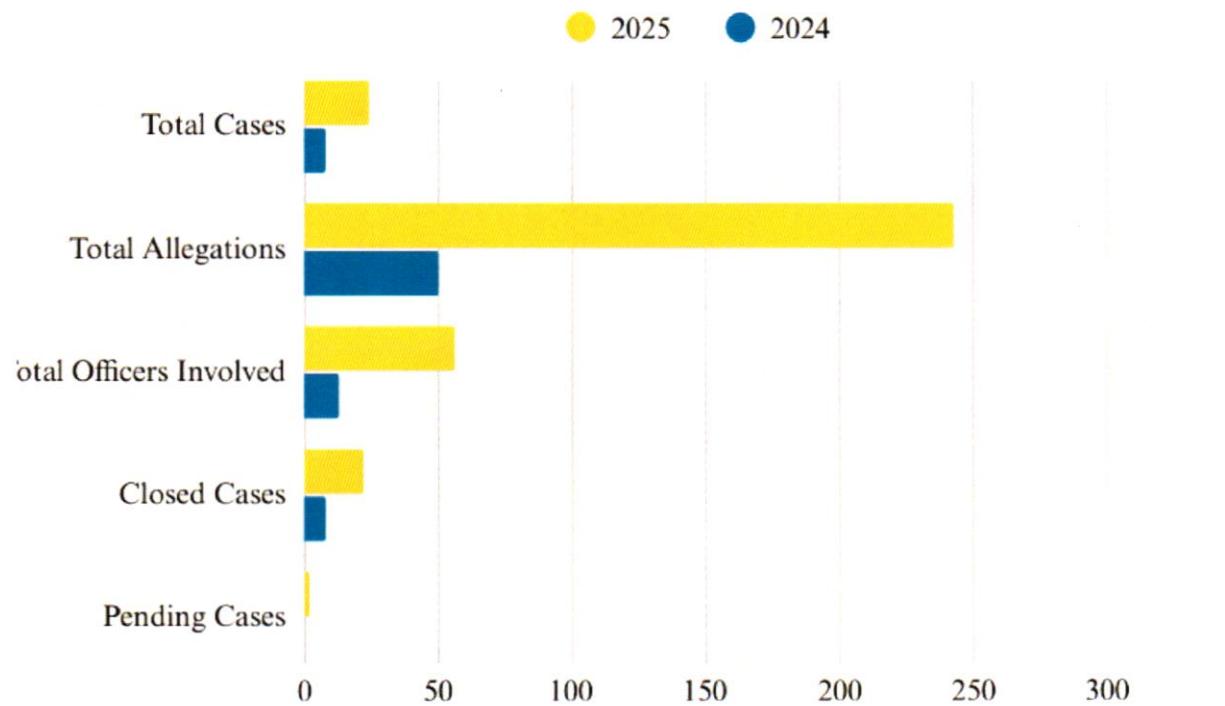


Data Range: January 1, 2024 – December 4, 2025

Disciplinary Category of Administrative Charges



Case File Statistics



Data Range: January 1, 2024 – October 21, 2025

The previous chart titled "Case File Statistics" indicates a total of 56 officers involved in 2025 Administrative Charging Committee cases. Please note that this figure includes some officers being counted multiple times if they were involved in multiple cases.



TRENDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ST. MARY'S COUNTY
POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD



DISCIPLINARY TRENDS

The Administrative Charging Committee has seen roughly the same amount of overall cases as it did in the prior years. The number of total allegations grew considerably, though. Allegations are arranged according to which SMCSO policy an officer is accused of violating. The increase appears to be the product of SMCSO identifying more individual policies in a given case that are alleged to be violated, rather than an increase in the severity or degradation of discipline among officers. The nature and outcomes of the cases appear substantially the same as in prior years.

A chart summarizing the violations and case dispositions of each disciplinary matter is attached as appendix A.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the information brought before the Board in the past calendar year, and relying on the Board's understanding of local police disciplinary processes, local law enforcement's relationship with the local community, and the local community's needs, the Board makes the following recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION #1:

State law should be amended to provide clarity as to what cases are meant for the ACC's jurisdiction and which are not. A minority of counties take a literal view that Public Safety § 3-101(g)'s definition of "police misconduct" is a conjunctive list of required elements that must each be alleged for a case to be brought before the ACC. Among the majority of counties that view the definition as a disjunctive list, the PERF Report makes clear that there is still broad disagreement among them over what types of cases should be brought before the ACC. There is widespread disagreement over when police misconduct is considered to "involve a member of the public"; there is widespread disagreement over whether purely technical infractions should be brought. A clear, uniform definition that dispels doubt would bring greater public confidence to the system, provide law enforcement agencies and personnel more consistency and prediction over outcomes, and give Police Accountability Boards and Administrative Charging Committees a greater clarity of purpose and jurisdiction.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing, along with the enclosed appendices, comprise the St. Mary's County Police Accountability Board's Annual Report for Calendar Year 2025, and are presented in the form adopted by the Police Accountability Board on December 18, 2025.



Nickolas J. Cromwell
Chairperson

MEMBERS VOTING FOR ADOPTION OF THE REPORT:

Cromwell
Everett
Aubert
Dowleyne
Kidd
Lydon
Lymas
Phelan

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT AT THE ADOPTION OF THE REPORT:

Shilling

MEMBERS VOTING AGAINST ADOPTION OF THE REPORT:

APPENDIX A

OPR Case Number	Nature of Violation	SMCSO Determination	ACC Determination	Violation Category, if Administratively Charged	ACC Voting Results
OPR2024-0722	100.3.1(b)(3) - Arrest Authority; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 311.3 - Searches and Seizures; Searches 300.6 - Medical Considerations; 319.5.8(m) - Unwarranted Force; 319.5.8(n) - Exceeding Police Powers; 1010.3.1 - Personnel Complaints; 319.5.8(d) - False/Misleading Statements	<i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 100.3.1 - 319.4 - 311.3 - 300.6 - 319.5.8(m) <i>Officer 2:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 100.3.1 - 319.4 - 311.3 - 300.6 - 319.5.8(m) <i>Officer 3:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 100.3.1 - 319.5.8(n) - 319.4 <i>Officer 4:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 1010.3.1 <i>Officer 5:</i> UNFOUNDED - 319.5.8(d) <i>Officer 6:</i>	<i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 100.3.1 - 319.4 - 311.3 - 300.6 - 319.5.8(m) <i>Officer 2:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 100.3.1 - 319.4 - 311.3 - 300.6 - 319.5.8(m) <i>Officer 3:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 100.3.1 - 319.5.8(n) - 319.4 <i>Officer 4:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 1010.3.1 <i>Officer 5:</i> UNFOUNDED - 319.5.8(d) <i>Officer 6:</i>		4-0 Approve

		UNFOUNDED - 319.5.8(d) Recommended Discipline: None	UNFOUNDED - 319.5.8(d) Recommended Discipline: None		
OPR2024-1800	100.3.1(b)(3) - Arrest Authority 319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 311.3 - Searches and Seizures; 319.5.8(r) - Use of Profane Language; 421.2(a) - Portable Audio/Video Recorders	<i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 319.5.8(r) UNFOUNDED - 100.3.1(b)(3) - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 <i>Officer 2:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 319.5.8(r) UNFOUNDED - 100.3.1(b)(3) - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3	<i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 319.5.8(r) UNFOUNDED - 100.3.1(b)(3) - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 <i>Officer 2:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 319.5.8(r) UNFOUNDED - 100.3.1(b)(3) - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3		3-0 Approve
OPR2024-1700	319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 319.5.3 – Discrimination; 401.3 - Bias-Based Policing; 319.5.8(a) - Misrepresent Facts	<i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(a)	<i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(a)		

		<p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 <p><i>Officer 3:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.3 - 319.5.8(a) <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 <p><i>Officer 3:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.3 - 319.5.8(a) <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	_____	3-0 Approve
OPR2024-5306	319.5.1 - Laws, Rules & Orders; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1 - 319.4 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1 - 319.4 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	_____	4-0 Approve
OPR2024-3743	319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights 311.3 - Search and Seizure 319.5.3 - Discrimination 401.3 - Bias-Based Policing;	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 	_____	

		<p><i>Officer 3:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 <p><i>Officer 4:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 <p><i>Officer 5:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<p><i>Officer 3:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 <p><i>Officer 4:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 <p><i>Officer 5:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 319.5.3 - 401.3 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		4-0 Approve
OPR2024-3469	319.5.3 – Discrimination; 319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 311.3 - Search and Seizure; 501.5 - Traffic Accident Reporting; 421.4 BWC - Ending a Recording	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 501.5 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 501.5 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 501.5 <p><i>Officer 3:</i> ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 421.4 <p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.4 - 501.5 <p>Recommended Discipline: Formal Written Counseling (FWC) – Officer # 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.3 - 501.5 <p><i>Officer 3:</i> ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 421.4 <p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.4 - 501.5 <p>Recommended Discipline: Formal Written Counseling (FWC) – Officer # 3</p>	Category A	4-0 Approve
OPR2024-2844	606.1(b)(2) - Warrant Procedures; 319.5.8(k) - Act of Bringing Discredit Upon Office; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 100.3.1 - Arrest Authority; 311.3 - Search and Seizure; Searches	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 606.1(b)(2) - 319.5.8(k) <p>NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 100.3.1 - 311.3 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100.3.1 - 319.4 - 311.3 - 606.1(b)(2) 	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 606.1(b)(2) - 319.5.8(k) <p>NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 100.3.1 - 311.3 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100.3.1 - 319.4 - 311.3 	Category C, Level One	4-0 Approve

		<p>Recommended Discipline: Three (3) Days Loss of Leave (LOL). 319.5.8(k) Discipline MERGED with 606.1(b)(2) – Officer # 1</p>	<p>- 606.1(b)(2)</p> <p>Recommended Discipline: Three (3) Days Loss of Leave (LOL). 319.5.8(k) Discipline MERGED with 606.1(b)(2) – Officer # 1</p>		
OPR2024-3365	319.5.3 – Discrimination; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 401.3 - Bias-Based Policing; 319.5.8(n) - Exceeding Police Powers; 319.5.8(r) - Use of Profane Language	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 - 319.4 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(n) <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 - 319.4 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(n) <p><i>Officer 3:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 - 319.4 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(n) <p>NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.8(r) <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 - 319.4 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(n) <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 - 319.4 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(n) <p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.3 - 319.4 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(n) - 319.5.8(r) <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		5-0 Approve
OPR2024-3637	319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights;	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 421.3 	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 421.3 		

<p>319.5.8(m) - Excessive Force; 431.3 - Provide Medial Aide; 421.3 - BWC – Notification; 319.5.5(t) - Loss of Property</p>	<p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) - 431.3 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 421.3 <p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) <p><i>Officer 3:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 421.3 <p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) <p><i>Officer 4:</i> ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.5(t) <p>NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 421.3 <p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) - 	<p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) - 431.3 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 421.3 <p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) - 431.3 <p><i>Officer 3:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 421.3 <p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) - 431.3 <p><i>Officer 4:</i> ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.5(t) <p>NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 421.3 <p>UNFOUNDED</p>	<p>Category A, Level One</p>	<p>3-0 Approve</p>
		<p>Recommended Discipline:</p>		

		Formal Written Counseling (FWC) – Officer #4	- 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) Recommended Discipline: Formal Written Counseling (FWC) – Officer #4		
OPR2024-3939	100.2 - Abuse of Authority; 319.5.3 – Discrimination; 319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 319.5.8(m) - Excessive Force; 421.3 - BWC – Notification	<i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 421.3 UNFOUNDED - 100.2 - 319.5.3 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) <i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED - 100.2 - 319.5.3 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) Recommended Discipline: None	<i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 421.3 UNFOUNDED - 100.2 - 319.5.3 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) <i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED - 100.2 - 319.5.3 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) Recommended Discipline: None		3-0 Approve
OPR2024-4426	319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 319.5.8(m) - Excessive Force; 319.5.8(n) - Exceeding Police Powers;	<i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 319.5.8(r) UNFOUNDED - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m)	<i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE - 319.5.8(r) UNFOUNDED - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m)		

	<p>319.5.8(r) - Use of Profane Language; 319.5.8(x) - Conduct Unbecoming; 425.6 - Body Worn Camera - Activation</p>	<p>- 319.5.8(n)</p> <p><i>Officer 2:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.8(x) <p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) - 319.5.8(n) <p><i>Officer 3:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 425.6 <p>Recommended Discipline: Officer 3: Remedial Body Worn Camera Training</p>	<p>- 319.5.8(n)</p> <p><i>Officer 2:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.8(x) <p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) - 319.5.8(n) <p><i>Officer 3:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 425.6 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		3-0 Approve
OPR2024-4425	<p>319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders;</p> <p>319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights;</p> <p>421.2 - Portable Audio/Video Recorder - Authorized Use;</p> <p>901.4 - Non-Custodial Referral Juvenile Services</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 901.4 <p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 421.2 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 901.4 <p>UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 421.2 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		3-0 Approve
OPR2024-3951	<p>319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders</p> <p>319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights</p> <p>319.5.8(q) - Discourteous/Discriminatory</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(q) <p><i>Officer 2:</i></p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(q) <p><i>Officer 2:</i></p>		

	<p>Treatment; 100.3.1 - Arrest Authority; 319.5.8(a) - False or Misleading Statements;</p> <p><i>Officer 3:</i> UNFOUNDED - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(q) - 100.3.1 - 319.5.8(a)</p> <p><i>Officer 5:</i> UNFOUNDED - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(q) - 100.3.1 - 319.5.8(a)</p> <p><i>Officer 6:</i> RESIGNED</p> <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<p>UNFOUNDED - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(q) - 100.3.1 - 319.5.8(a)</p> <p><i>Officer 3:</i> UNFOUNDED - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(q) - 100.3.1 - 319.5.8(a)</p> <p><i>Officer 4:</i> UNFOUNDED - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(q) - 100.3.1 - 319.5.8(a)</p> <p><i>Officer 5:</i> UNFOUNDED - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(q) - 100.3.1 - 319.5.8(a)</p> <p><i>Officer 6:</i> RESIGNED</p> <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		
OPR2024-5102	319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders;	<i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED	<i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED	5-0 Approve

	<p>319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 319.5.8(m) - Unreasonable and Unwarranted Force; 319.5.8(n) - Exceeding Lawful Police Powers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) - 319.5.8(n) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) - 319.5.8(n) 		5-0 Approve
OPR2024-7025	<p>319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 311.2 - Search and Seizure; 319.5.8(n) - Exceeding Police Powers; 319.5.8(x) - Unbecoming Conduct</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.2 - 319.5.8(n) - 319.5.8(x) <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.2 - 319.5.8(n) - 319.5.8(x) 	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.2 - 319.5.8(n) - 319.5.8(x) <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.2 - 319.5.8(n) - 319.5.8(x) 		5-0 Approve
OPR2024-6054	<p>319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders; 319.5.8(m) - Unreasonable / Unwarranted Force; 311.3 - Search and Seizure - Searches</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.8(m) - 311.3 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) 	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.8(m) - 311.3 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) 		5-0 Approve

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.8(m) - 311.3 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.8(m) - 311.3 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		
OPR2024-5478	<p>319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights;</p> <p>319.5.8(m) - Unreasonable / Unwarranted Force;</p> <p>311.3 - Search and Seizure – Searches;</p> <p>100.3.1 - Arrest Authority;</p> <p>600.3.1 - Investigation - Evidence Collection;</p> <p>319.5.8(q) - Discourteous, Disrespectful Treatment</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) - 311.3 - 100.3.1 - 600.3.1 - 319.5.8(q) <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.8(m) - 311.3 - 100.3.1 - 600.3.1 - 319.5.8(q) <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		5-0 Approve
OPR2024-6635	<p>319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights;</p> <p>319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders;</p> <p>319.5.8(m) - Excessive Force;</p> <p>100.3.1 - Arrest Authority;</p> <p>425.6 - Activation of Portable Recorder;</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.8(m) - 100.3.1 - 425.6 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.8(m) - 100.3.1 - 425.6 <p><i>Officer 3:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) 	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.8(m) - 100.3.1 - 425.6 <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.8(m) - 100.3.1 - 425.6 <p><i>Officer 3:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) 		5-0 Approve

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.8(m) - 100.3.1 - 425.6 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.8(m) - 100.3.1 - 425.6 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		
OPR2025-0787	100.2 - Law Enforcement Authority; 311.2 - Search and Seizure; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders; 319.5.8 - Exceeding Police Powers; 319.5.8(x) - Conduct Unbecoming; 421.4 - BWC- Ending a Recording	<p><i>No Responding Officers Listed:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100.2 - 311.2 - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.8 - 319.5.8(x) - 421.4 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<p><i>No Responding Officers Listed:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100.2 - 311.2 - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.8 - 319.5.8(x) - 421.4 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		5-0 Approve
OPR2025-0946	311.3 - Search and Seizure; 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights; 319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders; 319.5.8(q) - Discourteous Treatment	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 311.3 - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.8(q) <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 311.3 - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 311.3 - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) - 319.5.8(q) <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 311.3 - 319.4 - 319.5.1(c) <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		5-0 Approve
OPR2025-2539	319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights;	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 		

	319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders; 401.3 – Biased-Based Policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 401.3 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 401.3 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		5-0 Approve
OPR2025-2549	319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights 319.5.1(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders 311.3 - Search and Seizure 401.3 - Biased-Based Policing 319.5.8(b) - Truthfulness	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.2 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(b) <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.2 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(b) <p><i>Officer 3:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 311.2 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>	<p><i>Officer 1:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.2 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(b) <p><i>Officer 2:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.5.1(c) - 319.4 - 311.2 - 401.3 - 319.5.8(b) <p><i>Officer 3:</i> UNFOUNDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 319.4 - 311.2 <p>Recommended Discipline: None</p>		5-0 Approve

APPENDIX B

Police Accountability Board (Wednesday, March 12, 2025)*Generated by LEGAL ACCPAB on Thursday, March 20, 2025***Members present**

Nickolas Cromwell
Leslie Everett
John Lydon
Dr Linda Lymas
Thomas Phelan
Charles Shilling
Jenna Aubert

John Sterling Houser, Deputy County Attorney
Gillian Bacon, Legal Assistant, II
Lt. Joshua Krum, SMCSO Representative

Absent

Michelle Dowleyne
Buren Kidd

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Call to Order: A. Call to Order

Nickolas Cromwell, Chair, called the March 12, 2025, meeting of the Police Accountability Board to order at 6:30pm Chesapeake Building Meeting Room, Governmental Center.

2. ROLL CALL

Action: A. Approval of Agenda

I move to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion by Charles Shilling, second by Leslie Everett.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, Leslie Everett, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Charles Shilling, Jenna Aubert

Minutes, Action: B. Approval of Minutes

I move to approve the minutes of the December 19, 2024, Police Accountability Board.

Motion by Thomas Phelan, second by Dr Linda Lymas.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, Leslie Everett, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Charles Shilling, Jenna Aubert

3. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion: A. SMCSO - Sheriff Hall

St. Mary's County Sheriff, Steven Hall, fielded questions from board members on reasons that the PAB may be seeing an increase in submitted complaints. SMCSO attributes this increase to the accessibility of the complaint form, which allows the public to more easily submit complaints online through the public portal. Lt. Krum noted that while the Board may be seeing an uptick in the number of complaints, the proportion of complaints that have been sustained has not substantially increased.

Information: B. Body-Worn Camera Demonstration - SMCSO

Lt. Krum, a representative from the SMCSO, gave a presentation to the board on the Axon Body 4, the body camera used by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Officers. The presentation highlighted the various uses and capabilities of the body-worn camera, as well as the features of the Flex POV module.

Discussion, Information: C. Review of ACC Disposition

Nickolas Cromwell, Chairman, provided a brief summary of the dispositions for the following Administrative Charging Committee investigatory files:OPR2024-1197, OPR2024-0722, OPR2024-1800, and OPR2024-1700.

The Chairman along with St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Representative, Lt. Joshua Krum, took questions regarding these case files from PAB members Charles Shilling and Jenna Aubert.

Discussion, Information: D. 2025 Legislative Update

John Sterling Houser, Deputy County Attorney, gave the Board an overview of proposed legislation that would have had the potential, if enacted, to affect the operations of the Police Accountability Boards and Administrative Charging Committees.

Bills specifically discussed by the Board were:

HB238/SB533; Public Safety - Police Accountability - Time Limit for Filing Administrative Charges

HB985; Police Discipline - Administrative Charging Committees - Additional Charging Committee

HB836; County Police Accountability Boards - Investigation of Complaints of Police Misconduct

HB885/SB 625; Public Safety - Police Accountability - Investigation Records Relating to Unfounded and Exonerated Complaints

4. ENTRY INTO CLOSED SESSION

Action: A. Entry into Closed Session

I move to enter into closed session under Local Government Article, §9-512 (a)(1) for the purpose of discussing personnel matters

Motion by Charles Shilling, second by Leslie Everett

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, Leslie Everett, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Charles Shilling, Jenna Aubert

5. 8:08 p.m. - CLOSED SESSION

Action, Discussion, Information: A. Appointments to the Administrative Charging Committee

Authority: §9-512(a)(1) of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland

Time Held: 8:08 p.m. - 8:22 p.m.

Location: Commissioners of St. Mary's County Meeting Room

Purpose: To discuss the assignment, promotion, resignation, salary, demotion, dismissal, reprimand, or appointment of a member of a public agency or employee.

5. 8:22 P.M. - ADJOURN FROM CLOSED SESSION

Action: A. MOTION TO ADJOURN FROM CLOSED SESSION

I move to adjourn from closed session and reconvene in open session.

Motion by Nickolas Cromwell, second by John Lydon

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, Leslie Everett, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Charles Shilling, Jenna Aubert

6. APPOINTMENTS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGING COMMITTEE

Action, Discussion, Information: A. Appointments to the Administrative Charging Committee

I move to reappoint Michael Deitch and Joyce Dyson to the Administrative Charging Committee for a successive term.

Motion by Charles Shilling, second by Jenna Aubert.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, Leslie Everett, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Charles Shilling, Jenna Aubert

7. ADJOURN

Action: A. Motion to Adjourn

I move to adjourn the March 12, 29025 meeting of the Police Accountability Board.

Motion by Nickolas Cromwell, second by Jenna Aubert.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, Leslie Everett, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Charles Shilling, Jenna Aubert

Meeting adjourned at 8:24PM.

Police Accountability Board (Thursday, May 15, 2025)
Generated by LEGAL ACCPAB on Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Members present

Nickolas Cromwell
Michelle Dowleyne
Leslie Everett
John Lydon
Dr Linda Lymas
Thomas Phelan
Charles Shilling

John Sterling Houser, Deputy County Attorney
Gillian Bacon, Legal Assistant, II
Lt. Joshua Krum, SMCSO Representative

Via Zoom

Jenna Aubert

Absent

Buren Kidd

Meeting called to order at 6:37 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Call to Order: A. Call to Order

Nickolas Cromwell, Chair, called the May 15, 2025, meeting of the Police Accountability Board to order at 6:37pm Chesapeake Building Meeting Room, Governmental Center.

2. ROLL CALL

Action: A. Approval of Agenda

I move to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion by Leslie Everett, second by Thomas Phelan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, Michelle Dowleyne, Leslie Everett, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Charles Shilling, Jenna Aubert

Minutes, Action: B. Approval of Minutes

I move to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2025, meeting of the Police Accountability Board, with the exception that under new business, we add the discussion of case determinations for the following ACC case files: OPR2024-1197, OPR2024-0722, OPR2024-1800, and OPR2024-1700.

Motion by Nickolas Cromwell, second by Michelle Dowleyne.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, Michelle Dowleyne, Leslie Everett, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Charles Shilling, Jenna Aubert

3. OLD BUSINESS

Discussion: A. ACC Membership Stipend

The Board reviewed compensation data for PAB and ACC members across all Maryland counties in an effort to assess whether the stipend provided to St. Mary's County ACC members is commensurate with their workload. The Chairman intends to present this information to the ACC at their next meeting to gather member feedback.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion, Information: A. Legislative Update

John Sterling Houser, Deputy County Attorney, provided the Board a brief update on legislation from the 2025 General Assembly Session that would affect the operations of the Police Accountability Boards and Administrative Charging Committees. One bill of note was Senate Bill 533, which is currently awaiting the Governor's signature. The bill would require the ACC to issue its disposition within 395 days from the date a complaint is filed by the public, and that a law enforcement agency must have its investigation forwarded to an ACC no later than 334 days after the complaint is filed.

Discussion: B. Police Executive Research Forum Report - Implementation of the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021

PAB member Charles Shilling and Deputy County Attorney John Sterling Houser attended a presentation by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), which offered insight into the upcoming second phase of the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 ("MPAA") study. This next phase will focus on analyzing the differences in the types of cases reported under the MPAA compared to Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights ("LEOBR"), including comparison of their respective outcomes.

Discussion: C. 2024 Maryland PAB Annual Reports

The Board reviewed publicly posted 2024 Police Accountability Board (PAB) Annual Reports from various Maryland Counties. The Board agreed to revisit this topic as necessary, and to continue collecting information on the other 2024 PAB Annual Reports from across Maryland, which may not have been posted at the time of this meeting.

Discussion: D. Review of ACC Dispositions

Nickolas Cromwell, Chairman, provided a brief summary of the dispositions for Administrative Charging Committee investigatory files OPR2024-5306 and OPR2024-3743.

5. ADJOURN

Action: A. Motion to Adjourn

I move to adjourn the May 15, 2025, meeting of the Police Accountability Board.

Motion by Nickolas Cromwell, second by Charles Shilling.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, Michelle Dowleyne, Leslie Everett, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Charles Shilling, Jenna Aubert

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Police Accountability Board (Thursday, August 21, 2025)
Generated by LEGAL ACCPAB on Tuesday, October 14, 2025

Members present

Nickolas Cromwell
Michelle Dowleyne
Leslie Everett
John Lydon
Dr Linda Lymas
Charles Shilling
Bruen Kidd
Jenna Aubert

John Sterling Houser, Deputy County Attorney
Gillian Bacon, Legal Assistant, II
Sgt. William Ray, SMCSO Representative

Members Absent

Thomas Phelan

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Call to Order: A. Call to Order

Nickolas Cromwell, Chair, called the August 21, 2025, meeting of the Police Accountability Board to order at 6:30pm Chesapeake Building Meeting Room, Governmental Center.

2. ROLL CALL

Action: A. Approval of Agenda

I move to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion by Dr Linda Lymas, second by Charles Shilling.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, Leslie Everett, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Charles Shilling, Bruen Kidd, Jenna Aubert

Not Present at Vote: Michelle Dowleyne

3. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion, Information: A. Maryland Police Accountability Act - Impact Report

The Board reviewed the most recent phase of the Police Executive Research Forum ("PERF") study on the statewide implementation of the Maryland Police Accountability Act ("MPAA"). Among other objectives, PERF sought to determine whether officers are charged with misconduct more frequently, face more severe disciplinary actions, or are more likely to have charges sustained under the MPAA compared to the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights ("LEOBR"). The PERF report noted significant challenges in collecting consistent data, citing variations in record-keeping practices and differing definitions of misconduct and outcomes across jurisdictions.

Discussion: B. 2025 Annual Report

The Board began discussions on the upcoming 2025 Police Accountability Board Annual Report, due to the St. Mary's County Commissioners by December 31st. Discussions included the possibility of requiring complainants to swear to the accuracy of their statement and implementing a "cooling-off period" after a complaint is filed, allowing time to decide whether the individual wishes to proceed with their complaint. SMCSO representative, Sgt. Ray, noted to the Board that once an allegation of police misconduct is submitted, the SMCSO Office of Personnel Management investigation continues regardless of whether the complainant chooses to pursue it or not.

Discussion: C. Review of ACC Dispositions

Nickolas Cromwell, Chairman, provided a brief summary of the dispositions for the following Administrative Charging Committee investigatory files: OPR2024-3469, OPR2024-2844, OPR2024-3365, OPR2024-3637, OPR2024-3939, OPR2024-4426, OPR2024-4425, and OPR2024-3951.

4. ADJOURN

Action: A. Motion to Adjourn

I move to adjourn the August 21, 2025, meeting of the Police Accountability Board.

Motion by Nickolas Cromwell, second by Jenna Aubert.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, Michelle Dowleyne, Leslie Everett, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Charles Shilling, Bruen Kidd, Jenna Aubert

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Members present

Nickolas Cromwell
John Lydon
Dr Linda Lymas
Thomas Phelan
Bruen Kidd
Jenna Aubert

John Sterling Houser, Deputy County Attorney
Gillian Bacon, Legal Assistant, II
Lt. Joshua Krum, SMCSO Representative

Members absent

Michelle Dowleyne
Leslie Everett
Charles Shilling

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Call to Order: A. CALL TO ORDER

Nickolas Cromwell, Chair, called the November 20, 2025, meeting of the Police Accountability Board to order at 6:30pm Chesapeake Building Meeting Room, Governmental Center.

2. ROLL CALL

Action: A. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

I move to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion by Thomas Phelan, second by Dr Linda Lymas.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Bruen Kidd, Jenna Aubert

Minutes, Action: B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

I move to approve the meeting minutes of the August 21, 2025, meeting of the Police Accountability Board.

Motion by Thomas Phelan, second by Dr Linda Lymas.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Bruen Kidd, Jenna Aubert

3. OLD BUSINESS

Discussion: A. 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

I move to apprve the draft 2025 annual report as written with the exception already provided digitally.

Motion by Dr Linda Lymas, second by John Lydon.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Bruen Kidd, Jenna Aubert

4. NEW BUSINESS

Action: A. DRAFT 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

I move to accept the 2026 tentative meeting schedule of the Police Accountability Board with the exception of attempting to move the February 19th meeting date to February 12th.

Motion by John Lydon, second by Dr Linda Lymas.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Bruen Kidd, Jenna Aubert

Discussion: B. REVIEW OF ACC DISPOSITIONS

Nickolas Cromwell, Chairman, provided a brief summary of the dispositions for the following Administrative Charging Committee investigatory files: OPR2024-5102, OPR2024-7025, OPR2024-6054, OPR2024-5478, OPR2025-0787, and OPR2025-0946.

5. ADJOURN

Action: A. MOTION TO ADJOURN

I move to adjourn the November 20, 2025, meeting of the Police Accountability Board.

Motion by Jenna Aubert, second by Dr Linda Lymas.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Nickolas Cromwell, John Lydon, Dr Linda Lymas, Thomas Phelan, Bruen Kidd, Jenna Aubert

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.

APPENDIX C



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-0722

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 12/18/2024; 1/29/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Lt. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Sgt. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: February 5, 2024 at 1709 hrs.

Incident Location: 46400 Lexington Village Way, Lexington Park

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 100.3.1 Arrest Authority (Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Dep. [REDACTED])
- 319.4 – General Standards - Violation of Constitutional Rights (Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Dep. [REDACTED])
- 311.3 – Search and Seizure: Searches (Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 300.6 – Medical Considerations (Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8(m) – Unwarranted Force (Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8(n) – Exceeding Policy Powers (Dep. [REDACTED])
- 1010.3.1 – Personnel Complaints (Dep. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8(d) – False/Misleading Statements (Lt. [REDACTED], Sgt. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Sgt. William Ray, #131

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 10/11/2024
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies:
 - o 100, 300, 311, 319, 1010
- Copy of Shift Briefing Summary, Lt. [REDACTED]; 2/6/2024
- Incident Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Statement of Charges, [REDACTED]
- Arrest Report, [REDACTED]
- CAD Call Information Report, 2/5/2024
- Photos of Mr. [REDACTED] Car
- Use of Force Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Transcript of Phone Call from Sgt. [REDACTED] to Lt. [REDACTED]
- Maryland Criminal Procedure Code Ann. § 2-203
- Maryland Criminal Procedure Code Ann. § 2-208
- Maryland Criminal Procedure Code Ann. § 2-102
- Maryland Public Safety Code Ann. § 6-304
- Maryland Public Safety Code Ann. § 6-305
- Maryland Criminal Law Code Ann. § 6-107
- The following Case Law:
 - o Davis v. United States
 - o United States v. Leon
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Lt. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Sgt. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Copy of Defendant Probation Summary, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o Lt. [REDACTED], 7/16/2024
 - o [REDACTED] & [REDACTED], 11/26/2024
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], 11/27/2024
 - o Charles Co. Sheriff's Officer [REDACTED], 11/27/2024
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], 4/19/2024
 - o Lt. [REDACTED], 4/19/2024
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED], 4/11/2024
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED] & Lt. [REDACTED], 6/14/2024
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED], 6/24/2024
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], 5/8/2024
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED], 5/15/2024
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED], 5/14/2024

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On February 5, 2024, SMCSO personnel arrived at the Golden Chicken restaurant in Lexington Park following reports that Complainant had threatened to burn down the house of two other patrons and was observed spraying a bottle of unknown liquid in the restaurant's parking lot. Following an initial investigation, responding officers located Complainant outside a nearby Dollar Tree. After a lengthy conversation with complainant, officers placed him under arrest for two charges of making a threat to commit arson. Complainant was taken to the detention center, initially refused booking there, sent to the hospital for evaluation, and ultimately returned to the detention center by the hospital. Complainant alleges that during this sequence of events SMCSO

personnel used excessive force, deliberately ignored a medical condition, and otherwise deprived Complainant of his constitutional rights.

Sheriff's Recommendation

"For the reasons detailed in Major Safford's 4th Endorsement there is no evidence of intent on the part of Corporal [REDACTED] or Corporal [REDACTED]. Deputies are entrusted to make decisions based on an extensive library of Maryland Criminal and Traffic Law. The fact that so many deputies either misinterpreted or were unaware that Threats of Arson was not a specified crime listed in Criminal Procedure Article § 2-203 points to a training failure that requires correction. I do not see any ill intent or malice with any of the actions of the deputies on the scene and if fact, attempts to de-escalate with Mr. [REDACTED] were done so with a great degree of respect and professionalism.

I am issuing a directive to my command staff to ensure remedial training on this matter is conducted in a timely manner with all sworn members of the agency. This training will include not only an in depth review of Criminal Procedure Article § 2-203 but to reinforce the need in certain situations to slow down and take time to review the elements of the alleged crime and the criteria for arrest or issuance of a criminal citation.

I recommend the following findings as they relate to **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 311.3 Searches and Seizure, Searches
Policy 300.6 Medical Considerations
Policy 319.5.8(m) Unwarranted Force

NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

I recommend the following findings as they relate to **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]** for allegations she violated the below Sheriff's Office Policies:

Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 311.3 Searches and Seizure, Searches
Policy 300.6 Medical Considerations
Policy 319.5.8(m) Unwarranted Force

NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

I recommend the following finds as they relate to **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]** for allegations he violated the below Sheriff's Office Policies:

Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority
Policy 319.5.8(n) Exceeding Police Powers
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights

NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

I recommend the following findings as they relate to **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]** for allegations he violated the below Sheriff's Office Policies:

Policy 1010.3.1 Personnel Complaints

NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

The conversations between Lt. [REDACTED] and Sgt. [REDACTED] was recorded on Sgt. [REDACTED] BWC without her knowledge or Lt. [REDACTED] knowledge. The comments made on the recording

do not directly relate to the Police Misconduct allegations in this case and therefore do not fall under the purview of the ACC. This matter will be handled internally.

I recommend the following findings as they relate to **Lieutenant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]** and **Sergeant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]** for allegations they violated the below Sheriff's Office Policy:

319.5.8(d) False / Misleading Statement **UNFOUNDED**

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff."

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

As it most always does, the Administrative Charging Committee had the opportunity to review body worn camera ("BWC") footage from the SMCSO personnel who interacted with the Complainant on the night of February 5; that footage has given the ACC, it feels, a clear and objective understanding of what occurred between law enforcement and the complainant.

As an initial matter, there is no evidence in the footage reviewed that suggests the responding officers or their supervising officers acted in anything less than absolute good faith towards the Complainant. The footage reviewed showed the Complainant was difficult, combative, unreasonable, and uncooperative throughout the entirety of his interaction with SMCSO. Complainant physically resisted being taken into custody and the force used, as seen on the BWC footage, is well within the threshold of an amount reasonably necessary to effectuate an arrest. Once taken into custody, Complainant began to assert that he was in medical distress or debilitating conditions; the officers, and the ACC on review, believed these claims to be disingenuous. Complainant evinced no signs of physical distress discernible from the body worn camera and there is no evidence of anything an objective observer would believe amounted to a medical need that needed to be seen to before transportation to the detention center -- something later verified at the hospital when detention center staff recommended he be taken there as a precautionary measure, and the hospital quickly discharged him.

In short, based upon the above, we conclude there is no merit to the Complainant's allegations that SMCSO used excessive force against him, endangered him, acted unprofessionally, or maliciously targeted him. This appears to be, in most respects, a relatively routine engagement between law enforcement and a disorderly, disruptive member of the public.

The one matter that requires some discussion to adequately resolve lies in the charges the Complainant was arrested for. "Threat of arson" is, per Criminal Law Article § 6-107(b), a misdemeanor. It is not among the enumerated misdemeanors in Criminal Procedure Article § 2-203(b) for which a warrantless arrest may be made upon probable cause. In other words, Complainant should not have been arrested that night if the charged offense was only a threat of arson.

That fact notwithstanding, state and federal case law provides "good faith exceptions" if officers had a reasonable belief an arrest was justified. There is no question in the minds that SMCSO's personnel – at many levels of authority that night – believed the arrest was valid, and that "threat of arson" was a misdemeanor for which a warrantless arrest could be made. Myriad

reasons for that confusion among law enforcement are suggested in the case file: the close similarity of “threat of arson” under Criminal Law § 6-107 to “malicious burning” under Criminal Law § 6-105, commission of which is grounds for a warrantless arrest, the state fire marshal’s authority under Criminal Procedure § 2-208 to make warrantless arrests, and the possibility of past trainings that conveyed faulty knowledge are among the theories advanced. We cannot be sure of which. What the record leaves us sure of, however, is that the mistake of law was widely held, and not limited solely to the Sheriff’s Office: the District Court Commissioner determined sufficient probable cause existed for the arrest and, during subsequent prosecution, the issue was never raised.

We do not feel it is appropriate or warranted to administratively charge any individual officers, who clearly acted in good faith and in an otherwise professional manner at all times, for a failure of training. Accordingly, we decline to administratively charge in this matter.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes the following findings in this matter:

With respect to **Corporal [REDACTED]**:

Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 311.3 Searches and Seizure, Searches	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 300.6 Medical Considerations	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 319.5.8(m) Unwarranted Force	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

With respect to **Corporal [REDACTED]**:

Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 311.3 Searches and Seizure, Searches	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 300.6 Medical Considerations	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 319.5.8(m) Unwarranted Force	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

With respect to **Deputy [REDACTED]**:

Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 319.5.8(n) Exceeding Police Powers	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

With respect to **Deputy [REDACTED]**:

Policy 1010.3.1 Personnel Complaints	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
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With respect to **Lieutenant [REDACTED]**:

319.5.8(d) False / Misleading Statement	UNFOUNDED
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With respect to **Sergeant [REDACTED]**:

Discipline

As the ACC makes no finding to administratively charge any officer, no recommendation of discipline is made.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

As noted above, there is a prevalent misunderstanding of the warrantless arrest authority for a person suspected of committing “Threat of Arson.” We note the promise in the Sheriff’s recommendation that remedial training will be held, and hope that it will be.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary’s County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 29 day of JAN, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-1800

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 1/29/2025; 2/26/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: March 22, 2024, at 0022 hrs.

Incident Location: [REDACTED] N Essex Drive, Lexington Park

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 100.3.1 Arrest Authority (Dep. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders (Dep. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights (Dep. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 311.3 – Search and Seizure: Searches (Dep. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8(r) – Use of Profane Language (Dep. [REDACTED])
- 421.2(a) – Portable Audio/Video Recorders (Cpl. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Cpl. Daniel Sidorowicz, #328

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 10/14/2024
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies:
 - o 100, 311, 319, 421
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Alcohol Influence Report, [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Order of Suspension of Driver's License, [REDACTED]
- Warrants Report, 3/27/2024
- Arrest Report, 3/27/2024
- Personal Property Receipt, [REDACTED]
- SMCSO Vehicle Tow/Storage Card
- Shift Briefing Summary, Sgt. [REDACTED]
- CAD Call Information Report, 9/04/2024
- Maryland Judiciary Case Search, [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of: [REDACTED]

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - [REDACTED] 03/27/2024
 - Dep. [REDACTED], 9/13/2024
 - DFC [REDACTED], 9/19/2024
 - Cpl. [REDACTED], 10/10/2024
 - Dep. [REDACTED], 9/30/2024

Appendices to this Written Determination:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On March 22, 2024, shortly after midnight, personnel from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office ("SMCSO") responded to a complaint that a vehicle on N. Essex Drive, Lexington Park was operating in a manner suggestive its driver was impaired. During the subsequent response, SMCSO personnel were able to identify two suspects matching descriptions provided. One suspect, Complainant, alleges SMCSO unlawfully arrested her and searched her vehicle.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

On the night in question, SMCSO received a report from a citizen that two females who were "drunk" and "high" were operating a green or blue "caravan" vehicle on N. Essex Dr., Lexington Park. Dep. [REDACTED] responded to the caller's residence and, in an interview recorded by the officer's body worn camera, was told by the caller and the other residents of caller's home that these two females had recently forced an entry into the caller's basement, were overheard saying they were there to look for a cell phone, and became involved in a physical struggle with the caller. The caller described the women as belligerent and "very drunk."

While speaking with the caller and others at the residence, Dep. [REDACTED] overheard someone shout "Hey! Here they go, right here!" from the front of the residence. Exiting to the front yard, the Deputy saw a white female with blonde hair – physical attributes that matched the description of one of the suspects – walking outside. This individual, later learned to be [REDACTED] [REDACTED], initially ignored the deputy's command to stop but ultimately complied. She had a cast on her left arm and an unsteady gait. Her speech in the ensuing conversation was slurred, belligerent, disjointed, and difficult to follow. Ms. [REDACTED] was detained with zip ties on the scene.

While detaining [REDACTED], Dep. [REDACTED] asked aloud, "Where, uh, where's this van at?" One of the occupants at the caller's home identified the car on that same street. Dep. [REDACTED] informed SMCSO the van was also present, that he assumed it would have an occupant in it, and approached the van. The van was parked on the side of the street, but was running and had its lights on. The Complainant – who was a white female with long dark hair, matching the description of the remaining suspect – was seated in the driver's seat and was initially unresponsive and would not leave the vehicle. She required the Deputy's assistance to leave the van. Her speech during this interaction was heavily slurred, disjointed, and could not engage the Deputy in

intelligible conversation. She was given approximately seventeen commands to leave the vehicle. She was, ultimately, removed from the vehicle by force and arrested. There were no signs on any of the officers' body worn camera footage that an inappropriate amount of force was used or that injury was inflicted upon Complainant. Upon being arrested she began screaming "aggressive," among other things, and continued her noncooperative behavior. She was taken to a police vehicle and taken to the detention center.

Following her arrest, Cpl. [REDACTED] searched Complainant's car to prepare it for towing. This entailed returning to the vehicle to search for registration and inventory any items of value. A cell phone, apparently belonging to Complainant, and a purse were located in the car during the search; the purse was searched and discovered to be Ms. [REDACTED]. The cell phone was not accessed or searched. All items were logged and released to Complainant after her release from custody.

The above summary establishes more than sufficient probable cause for the officers to detain and arrest Complainant. The officer received a report that a white woman with long dark hair had, with an accomplice, broken into a private home, were behaving as if inebriated, and were driving. A short time after that report and an extremely short distance from the private home, Complainant was located behind the driver's seat of a running car. Complainant's appearance and behavior fit the description of the alleged intruder. Her identity was confirmed in the moment by those still at the private home. This is more than adequate evidence to establish probable cause for the arrest and detention. As observed on body worn camera footage, no more force than that reasonably necessary to effectuate the arrest was used. Complainant was physically noncooperative, refused commands to leave the vehicle, and was taken into custody efficiently.

The following search of the vehicle was perfectly lawful. The vehicle, due to be towed because of its driver's apparent incapacity, was lawfully impounded and under the Sheriff's custody and control. The right to inventory the vehicle's contents for administrative reasons is a textbook example of a "community caretaking function" and is part of SMCSO's standardized operating procedures. *State v. Paynter*, 234 Md. App. 252, 252 (2017) (quoting *Cady v. Dombrowski*, 413 U.S. 433, 441 (1973)). "Courts – and by extension, the greater public – must scrupulously forbear from reflexively looking upon this neutral police function with cynical disdain and must refrain from cavalierly dismissing such police behavior as presumptively a subterfuge." *Id.* The officer's search was clearly not investigatory in nature, and was meant only to secure the possessions of those taken into custody and to insulate the Sheriff's Office from any later claim of misuse or misappropriation of the vehicle's contents.

While the above disposes of the Complainant's allegations, SMCSO's internal review noted two other potential policy violations. While detaining Ms. [REDACTED], Dep. [REDACTED] can be heard muttering "god damn it." This arises in the context of him realizing she had a cast and that traditional restraints would not work as a result, necessitating the use of zip ties instead. The remark, heard clearly on the Dep's BWC, was clearly not meant to antagonize or chide Ms. [REDACTED]. While profane, we concur with the Sheriff that it is the product of an officer encountering a roadblock in what was already a tense, frustrating experience. We do not feel it appropriate to administratively charge for that human slip of the tongue, particularly in light of the officer's otherwise patient, respect, and professional demeanor throughout the encounter.

The second and final potential policy violation identified by SMCSO's internal review is Cpl. [REDACTED] inadvertent failure to active his BWC as soon as he opened the door to Complainant's vehicle when preparing it for towing. Cpl. [REDACTED] is captured on Dep. [REDACTED] Mobile Vehicle Recorder approaching the Complainant's vehicle, opening the front door, and seeming to realize his BWC needs to be activated as soon as the door is open. He pauses briefly, activates his BWC,

and then proceeds to begin the search. Cpl. [REDACTED] does not enter the vehicle until the BWC activates. Again, we concur with the Sheriff's recommendation that the Corporal should not be administratively charged for the momentary, unintentional lapse in policy when Cpl. [REDACTED] opened the vehicle door with an inactive BWC – particularly in light of his quick realization and correction of the error.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes the following determinations in this matter:

With respect to **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 100.3.1(b)(3) Arrest Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure. Searches	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8(r) Use of Profane Language	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

With respect to **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 100.3.1(b)(3) Arrest Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure. Searches	UNFOUNDED
Policy 421.2(a) Portable Audio/Video Recorders	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

Discipline

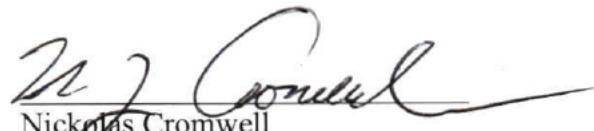
As the ACC does not make a decision to administratively charge for any of the allegations in this matter, no discipline is recommended.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision contributing to this incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 26 day of Feb, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

The complaint in this matter was made verbally by telephone on March 27, 2024. A transcript of the complaint in its entirety is included in the investigatory file and was reviewed by the ACC. Also included was the draft of a complaint made by Complainant through SMCSO's Public Portal. Though never formally submitted, this draft complaint was included and repeats the same general themes of the prior phone call. The draft complaint is reproduced in full below:

"I was at the store I cashed in a lottery ticket the lady, so I have money she was a friend of a friend, so we got talking and we went down to her residence. This other girl decided to take my phone, so I kindly knocked on the door to recover my phone, they opened it. The girl was hiding in the closet And said she wasn't there. We then said we knew she was there with my phone so she comes out we start fighting the police get called. They were cover my phone from the girl, but since I had keys in my possession, they thought I was driving. They had no grounds to search my car cause I was not near my car , but they illegally did they recovered the phone from my girl after searching my car and threw my keys in the back of car and had me off to jail and charged me with a DUI burglary when I was not driving just cause I'm carrying around a set of keys doesn't give you grounds to search my car The officer proceeded to throw my keys in the back of my vehicle because when I got released, I had to go with my dead phone to get a charge from a civilian catch a Uber to the tow lot. He couldn't find my keys, bto my interior light was going off when you open the door so I found my keys in the trunk because I have a van. The tow person wrote down no keys but I payed for the tow because they were about to leave for the day. He took my car out of the back. I then left. I called my friend that I was with down there. She needed a ride her house because she didn't have her keys and had to wait for the landlady to let her back in the house. The police followed me over to Peg Road and pulled me back over after I just left from blowing a zero he asked me to do a sobriety check test I said officer, now I just came from jail. And blew a zero She was getting loud with him. I told her to be quiet so I was not slurring my words. There was no misinterpretation I asked him clearly why he was pulling me over he said because I wasn't displaying my light on my tag. I said it's old car. I didn't even realize that you have lights on a tag and only reason I couldn't display my license which i immediately got fixed because I new there would be another reason to pull me over was because you just taken it and I had to find it so I had no problem with showing my registration, but my license was paper about anything the report was false he asked me can I do a test I said I'll do your ass test, but I can't walk a straight line because I have a bad gate , my leg and back or bad he wanted me to do all these tests that I can't do anytime but I told him I would try he clearly said my eyes were brown after he shined a light in they and they're green. He checked the box off, saying he didn't smell any alcohol but still wanted to lock me up because I didn't pass the tests so I had to sit again in jail. Sit there only to pay another 580 for to get my car out of impoundment not only did the officer relieve my phone in the car which hindered me from getting anywhere after I got released I was put on Pretrial After that I got back the jail the second time the officers laughed about it like they were setting me up and it was a joke of course I was going to refuse the blow. I had just been out less than 4 hrs and your punking me again... now I'm on Pretrial which is set up I get no good time I waste my gas riding there hours out of my way from PG County not only did I spend \$1000 on towing now I have to pay for a lawyer and the gas all because the officer got my phone back ugly lady stole my thousand dollar phone then wants to counter suit on me. Why didn't they lock her up when they knew she sole my

phone why did they illegally search my car when I wasn't driving light in them and they're green. They have been since birth so when you check the box on the test, he said no sense in alcohol, but he still wanted to lock me up because I could"

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“After careful review of the enclosed case file and related evidence, below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy [REDACTED]** # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 100.3.1(b)(3) Arrest Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure. Searches	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8(r) Use of Profane Language	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

Below are my recommended finds as they relate to allegations made against Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 100.3.1(b)(3) Arrest Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure. Searches	UNFOUNDED
Policy 421.2(a) Portable Audio/Video Recorders	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-1700

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 1/29/2025; 2/26/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- DFC [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Sgt. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: June 16, 2023

Complaint Date: March 21, 2024

Incident Location: [REDACTED], Solomons

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders (DFC [REDACTED], Sgt. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights (DFC [REDACTED], Sgt. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.3 – Discrimination (DFC [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing (Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8(a) – Misrepresent Facts (DFC [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Cpl. Daniel Sidorowicz, #328

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 12/18/2024
- Copy of St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policy 319
- Copy of St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policy 401
- CAD Call Information Report, 10/22/24
- Incident Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Incident Report, DFC [REDACTED]
- CPS Intake Worksheet
- Search and Seizure Warrant, 6/12/23
- Search and Seizure Warrant, 6/28/23
- Arrest Report, [REDACTED] 6/7/23
- Arrest Warrant, 6/5/23
- Charge Sheet, [REDACTED]
- Indictment, [REDACTED]
- Request for MVA/BWC Data, 6/13/23
- Crime Lab Report, CLT. [REDACTED]
- Maryland Judiciary Case Search, [REDACTED]

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Photos of Complainant's Boat
- Photos of Complainant's Cell Phone
- Calvert County Sheriff's Office Case Report, 4/17/24
- Notification of Investigation, DFC [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Sgt. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o [REDACTED], 11/5/2024
 - o DFC [REDACTED], 11/25/24
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED], 11/13/2024

Appendices to this Written Determination:

- #1: Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Office Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

Complainant alleges that personal property – namely, a watch – was removed from a boat he resided in during execution of a search warrant on June 13, 2023 by Sheriff's Office personnel. Following final resolution of the associated criminal charges ultimately brought against him, Complainant contacted SMCSO on March 21, 2024 to make his complaint. In following discussions with Complainant, SMCSO identified four allegations that Complainant made:

- That an Aviator watch was removed during the search warrant and replaced with an Armitron watch;
- That the Sex Offender Registry was “utilized to target” Complainant due to his status as a registered sex offender
- That Cpl. [REDACTED] misrepresented facts in her original report and that it was written with the intention to mislead any ultimate finder of fact in a prosecution;
- That the cell phone seized from Complainant’s boat was not his, and that SMCSO remotely deleted evidence from his Google One account.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

Following review of the investigative file prepared in this matter, including all documentary evidence and body worn camera (“BWC”) footage, the Administrative Charging Committee concurs with the Sheriff's recommended outcomes of unfounded.

Complainant was indicted by a grand jury for Sex Offense in the Third Degree and Sexual Abuse of a Minor on June 5, 2023, and arrested on June 7, 2023. The arrest was made at a boat that Complainant appears to have used as his residence. Following consultation with an Assistant State's Attorney, SMCSO sought and received a warrant to return to the boat to seize

Complainant's cell phone. There is more than sufficient probable cause in the materials reviewed to justify SMCSO's belief the cell phone would contain evidence related to the charges brought against Complainant. On June 16, 2023, SMCSO personnel executed the search warrant at the boat.

Body worn camera of both the June 7 arrest and June 16 search and seizure exist and were reviewed by the ACC. On June 7, the Complainant can be seen with a watch on his wrist. Complainant seemingly removes his watch and places it in his boat approximately ten minutes into the BWC of the arrest. This is the last the watch is observed on any BWC.

The search and seizure was also recorded on BWC and observed in full. The officers in question enter the boat and search for the cell phone, ultimately locating it under a mattress. DFC [REDACTED], who was the officer who actually stepped foot in the boat to execute the search, denies taking any personal property of the Complainant's, other than the authorized removal of the cell phone. At no time is a watch mentioned by the officers present. At no time is a watch observed on camera. At no time is there any suggestion of activity other than the search and removal of a cell phone. We note that the interior of the boat was highly cluttered and disorganized.

Accordingly, the allegation SMCSO removed Complainant's watch is unfounded.

As to Complainant's other allegations, considering the nature of underlying charges we decline to repeat, with exacting specificity, the entirety of the record that supports SMCSO's application for a search warrant and investigation of the criminal matter. We trust the following summary will suffice: (1) BWC of interviews with the victim and victim's special education teacher confirm the accuracy of Cpl. [REDACTED] initial report, (2) DFC [REDACTED] discovery that Complainant had a prior criminal record in the state of Missouri did not violate any right of the Complainant nor lead SMCSO to depart from any regular investigative policy it would have otherwise followed, and (3) there is no evidence that the cell phone seized from Complainant's boat was replaced with another cell phone, and (4) there is no evidence that Complainant's "Google One" account was accessed remotely by SMCSO.

Accordingly, we find all other allegations in this matter to be unfounded as well.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, we make the following decisions in this matter:

With respect to **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.3 Biased-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (a) Misrepresent Facts	UNFOUNDED

With respect to **Sergeant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED

With respect to **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination
Policy 319.5.8 (a) Misrepresent Facts

UNFOUNDED
UNFOUNDED
UNFOUNDED

Discipline

As the ACC does not make a decision to administratively charge for any of the allegations in this matter, no discipline is recommended.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision contributing to this incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 26 day of FEB, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

Appendix:

- #1: Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Office Recommendation

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

On March 21, 2024, Complainant sent the following messages to SMCSO personnel by text message:

[03/21/2025, 08:55]: “This is [REDACTED], first of all my daughter needs the spare phone you took from my boat that hadn’t even powered up since 2021 , and 2 my \$1200.00 citizen watch is missing I have had that watch nearly 15 years and I want it back”

“When you searched my boat someone left a Armitron watch in it place I haven’t even owned a Armitron watch since I was 11 years old”

“It was on my table on my boat when I was arrested a long with my wallet and other personal effects . Like I told you at our “talk” at boomerangs my phone was already secured in an offsite in a secured location .”

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Corporal**
████████ # █ for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.3 Biased-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (a) Misrepresent Facts	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended finds as they relate to allegations made against **Sergeant**
████████ # █ for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended finds as they relate to allegations made against **Corporal**
████████ # █ for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (a) Misrepresent Facts	UNFOUNDED

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-5306

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 2/26/2025; 3/26/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: Unknown date(s) in 2024

Incident Location: [REDACTED] New Market Turner Road, Mechanicsville

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights

Agency Review Conducted by:

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 10/16/2024
- Field Case Report, Dep. [REDACTED]; 9/6/2024
- Field Case Report Supplement; DFC [REDACTED], 9/13/2024
- Field Case Report Supplement; DFC [REDACTED], 10/2/2024
- Petition for Emergency Evaluation; [REDACTED]; 9/6/2024
- Endorsement and Order Regarding Petition for Emergency Evaluation
- Certification by Peace Order
- Return of Service by Peace Order
- Photos of [REDACTED]
- Behavioral Health Unit Patient Visitor Log
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On September 6, 2024, Complainant [REDACTED] (hereinafter referred to as "Complainant"), while undergoing evaluation at St. Mary's MedStar Hospital as the subject of an Emergency Petition, alleged that she had been the victim of sexual abuse by a SMCSO officer.

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

SMCSO subsequently investigated the allegations and interviewed members of Complainant's family.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

On September 6, 2024, SMCSO interview Complainant for an allegation of sexual assault. Because of the highly personal and private nature of the case, the ACC will forego detailed discussion of the facts and provide a broad summary only.

Complainant has a long history of mental and emotional disorders. Investigation by SMCSO determined she had not been taking her medications as prescribed at the time the allegations were made. On their face, Complainant's allegations were implausible, if not outright impossible.²

Even so, SMCSO conducted a complete and thorough investigation. No physical evidence of assault was discovered. The investigating officer confirmed that Complainant had been in a hospital to undergo a court-ordered emergency petition in recent months; the hospital's visitor logs contained no trace or evidence the officer in question ever physically visited her. This was corroborated by interviews with Complainant's family, who also confirmed how compromised Complainant's mental health was at the time she made her allegation. BWC footage of SMCSO's interviews with Complainant also make a plain case for the severe deterioration of Complainant's mental state during this time.

Of note, SMCSO's investigation determined that the accused officer had previously participated in a criminal investigation of Complainant's older sister. Complainant's family shared that she had remembered the officer from that investigation and retained a fixatedly hostile view of him.

In short, a thorough, complete investigation did not produce any evidence to support Complainant's allegation. Accordingly, we find the allegations in this case to be unfounded.

Outcome

With respect to Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED], we make the following findings in this matter:

Policy 319.5.1 – Laws, Rules & Orders – **UNFOUNDED**

Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights - **UNFOUNDED**

Discipline

As none of the allegations are to be administratively charged, no recommendations of discipline are made in this matter.

² For example, Complainant alleged the accused officer assaulted Complainant in a hospital room with "black mamba" snakes, injected her with a "bottle of HIV," and that she birthed a child during the incident. These are by no means a complete list of the allegations made by Complainant that were untethered to reality.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision that contributed to this matter.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 26 day of March, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.

Nickolas Cromwell

Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

Complainant's allegations were made verbally to SMCSO during an interview on September 6th at Complainant's dwelling. For reasons of privacy, we decline to transcribe relevant portions here.

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“After careful review of the enclosed case file I concur with the recommended findings of **UNFOUNDED** as it relates to the following violations of Sheriff’s Office Policies for **Corporal** [REDACTED]:

Sheriff’s Office Policy 319.5.1 Laws, Rules and Orders
Sheriff’s Office Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-3743

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 2/26/2025; 3/26/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: June 12, 2024

Incident Location: [REDACTED] South Shangri La Drive, Lexington Park

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders (Sgt. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Dep. [REDACTED])
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights (Sgt. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Dep. [REDACTED])
- 311.3 – Search and Seizure (Sgt. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Dep. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.3 – Discrimination (Sgt. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Dep. [REDACTED])
- 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing (Sgt. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Dep. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Cpl. Daniel Sidorowicz, #328

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 12/16/24
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies:
 - o 401, 311, 319
- SMCSO Criminal Intelligence File, [REDACTED]
- CAD Call Information Report, 3/29/24
- CAD Call Information Report, 4/8/24
- CAD Call Information Report, 5/11/24
- CAD Call Information Report, 6/12/24
- Incident Report, Sgt. [REDACTED] 3/29/24
- Incident Report, Sgt. [REDACTED] 4/5/24

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Incident Report, Sgt. [REDACTED] 5/8/24
- Incident Report, Cpl. [REDACTED] 5/25/24
- Incident Report, Cpl. [REDACTED] 5/10/24
- Incident Report, Cpt. [REDACTED], 8/8/24
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED] 4/9/24
- Threat-Assess EST Request Report
- Request to Seal Affidavit, 4/23/24
- Request to Seal Affidavit, 5/10/24
- Application for Search and Seizure Warrant, 5/10/24
- Search Warrant Return, 5/11/24
- Application and Affidavit for Search and Seizure Warrant, 8/2/24
- Application and Affidavit for Search and Seizure Warrant, 4/30/24
- Search Warrant Return, 5/31/24
- Application for Search and Seizure Warrant, 6/5/24
- Affidavit in Support of Application for Search and Seizure Warrant
- Search and Seizure Warrant, 6/5/24
- Search Warrant Return, 6/11/24
- Affidavit in Support of Application for Search and Seizure Warrant, 6/13/24
- Search and Seizure Warrant, 6/13/24
- Search Warrant Return, 6/13/24
- Traffic Citation, [REDACTED], 5/11/24
- Show of Force Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- K9 Utilization Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Traffic Violation Warning for [REDACTED], 6/12/24
- Adult Temporary Detention Log, [REDACTED]
- Interview Log, [REDACTED] 5/11/24
- SMCSO Vehicle Tow/Storage Card
- Evidence Report, 8/8/24
- Crime Lab Request Form, 6/7/24
- Crime Scene Photos, 4/8/24
- Property Record Forms from the Following Dates:
 - 4/1/24
 - 4/3/24
 - 5/11/24
 - 8/7/24
 - 4/9/24
 - 7/10/24
- Notification of Investigation, Sgt. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 4/2/2024 Assault and Reckless Endangerment Investigation
 - DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 6/12/2024 Vehicle Stop
 - Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 6/12/2024 Vehicle Stop
 - Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 6/12/2024 Vehicle Stop
 - DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 6/12/2024 Vehicle Stop
 - Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 6/12/2024 Vehicle Stop
 - Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 6/12/2024 Vehicle Stop

- Det. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 5/11/2024 Search Warrant Execution
- DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 5/11/2024 Search Warrant Execution
- Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 5/11/2024 Search Warrant Execution
- Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 5/11/2024 Search Warrant Execution
- Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 5/11/2024 Search Warrant Execution
- Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 5/11/2024 Search Warrant Execution
- Det. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 5/11/2024 Vehicle Stop
- Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 5/11/2024 Vehicle Stop
- Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 5/11/2024 Vehicle Stop
- Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]; 5/11/2024 Vehicle Stop

- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - Dep. [REDACTED], 11/6/24
 - Sgt. [REDACTED], 10/31/24
 - Cpl. [REDACTED], 11/4/24
 - Cpl. [REDACTED], 11/6/24
 - Cpl. [REDACTED], 11/12/24
 - Dep. [REDACTED], 11/6/24

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On June 15, 2024, [REDACTED] submitted a complaint through SMCSO's public portal. She alleged that her son, [REDACTED], (hereinafter referred to as "Individual #1," for ease of reference), had been detained and searched by SMCSO personnel on two occasions without probable cause.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

Complainant alleges that Individual #1 was targeted by SMCSO personnel and detained on May 11 and June 12, 2024 without sufficient probable cause. For the reasons noted below, we find these allegations to be unfounded. We will discuss each incident in turn below.

On May 11, Individual #1 was approached by SMCSO as he sat in a parked vehicle in Lexington Park, MD. SMCSO's purpose approaching him was to execute search and seizure warrants on Individual #1 and his vehicle; those warrants were the product of two criminal investigations initiated earlier that year, for which sufficient probable cause can be found in the investigative file. The approach to the vehicle, detention of Individual #1, questioning of Individual #1 at the nearby SMCSO district office on Great Mills Road, and search of Individual #1's vehicle were recorded on BWC. The ACC observed SMCSO personnel to be professional in their interactions with Individual #1 and to follow agency policy at all times. All activity remained within the parameters set by the search and seizure warrants. Copies of the warrants were provided to Individual #1.

Approximately a month later, Individual #1 was detained a second time by SMCSO personnel. On June 12, Individual #1 was a passenger in a vehicle operated by a female companion when that female companion ran a red light and was subsequently pulled over. Multiple SMCSO personnel in the immediate area responded. Both the driver and Individual #1 were ordered to exit the vehicle, and both complied. While exiting, Individual #1 asked if SMCSO had a warrant on

this occasion and was told they did not. Individual #1 grew agitated. An officer conducted a brief *Terry* frisk.

As one deputy completed the necessary checks and administrative paperwork to process the traffic stop, a K9 conducted a sniff on the exterior of the vehicle. The K9 alerted near the driver's door and, after the K9's officer opened the driver door, fixated its attention on a black handbag left by Individual #1 in the vehicle. The vehicle was subsequently searched and officers located a digital scale and torn plastic bags. Individual #1 was also patted-down again. No contraband was located.

Though conducted without a warrant, the detention and search on June 12 operated well within the parameters of established case law. There was a valid law enforcement reason to conduct the traffic stop; law enforcement officers are allowed to order occupants of a vehicle out of the vehicle during a lawful traffic stop pending completion of the stop (*Maryland v. Wilson*, 519 U.S. 408, 419 (1997)); an unrelated canine search during a lawful traffic stop, even absent probable cause, is constitutional as long as the traffic stop is not unnecessarily extended or lengthened to effectuate the canine search (*Rodriguez v. United States*, 575 U.S. 348 (2015)); an alert of potential contraband by a trained canine is sufficient to establish probable cause for a warrantless search of a vehicle during a lawful traffic stop (*State v. Wallace*, 372 Md. 137 (2002)). We believe SMCSO's detention and search of Individual #1 on June 12 – all of which were observable, in their entirety, on the officers' BWC – fall squarely within the above legal canons.

Accordingly, we find the allegations that SMCSO's personnel operated outside the scope of their policy or applicable law to be unfounded.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** as to the following allegations:

With respect to **Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1.(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure
Policy 319.5.3 – Discrimination
Policy 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing

With respect to **Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1.(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure
Policy 319.5.3 – Discrimination
Policy 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing

With respect to **Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1.(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure

Policy 319.5.3 – Discrimination
Policy 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing

With respect to **Cpl.** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.5.1.(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure
Policy 319.5.3 – Discrimination
Policy 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing

With respect to **Dep.** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.5.1.(c) - Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure
Policy 319.5.3 – Discrimination
Policy 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing

Discipline

As the ACC makes no finding that any officer should be administratively charged, there are no recommendations of discipline in this matter.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision that contributed to this matter.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 26 day of March, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.

Nickolas Cromwell
Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

No original complaint is available for reproduction in this matter. Complainant's allegations were made in an interview between Complainant and OPR on June 28, 2024.

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Sergeant** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.3 Bias-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Corporal** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.3 Bias-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Corporal** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.3 Bias-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Corporal** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.3 Bias-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.3 Bias-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-3469

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 3/26/2025; 4/30/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: August 5, 2023

Complaint Date: June 19, 2024

Incident Location: Point Lookout Road and Camp Cosoma Road

Complainant: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.5.3 – Discrimination
- 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 311.3 – Search and Seizure
- 501.5 – Traffic Accident Reporting
- 421.4 – BWC – Ending a Recording (Sgt. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Lt. Joshua Krum, #260

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 1/14/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 311, 319, 501, and 421
- Notice of Claim, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- Motor Vehicle Crash Report; Cpl. [REDACTED], 8/5/2023
- Motor Vehicle Crash Report; Sgt. [REDACTED], 8/5/2023
- Traffic Citation; [REDACTED], 8/5/2023
- BWC Marker Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- BWC Marker Report, DFC [REDACTED]
- BWC Marker Report, Sgt. [REDACTED]
- CAD Call Information Report, 8/5/2023
- Photos of Accident Scene
- Maryland Transportation Code Ann. § 20-104
- The following Case Law:
 - o Cady v. Dombrowski

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- South Dakota v. Opperman
 - Caniglia v. Strom et al.
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, DFC [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Sgt. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - Cpl. [REDACTED], 10/30/2024
 - DFC [REDACTED], 11/25/2024
 - Sgt. [REDACTED], 11/25/2024

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On May 23, 2024, St. Mary's County government received a claim letter from counsel representing [REDACTED] (“Complainant”). The letter alleged that on August 5, 2023, Complainant was riding his motorcycle when he was struck by a motor vehicle operated by [REDACTED] (“Driver”) that failed to stop at a stop sign. Complainant’s counsel alleged, *inter alia*, that St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office personnel responding to the scene refused to take an accident report or provide any information until Complainant, who is African-American, provided insurance information, that officers rifled through Complainant’s clothes and belongings in search of his wallet without his consent, and removed accident debris from the scene. Complainant’s counsel faults the Sheriff’s Office for refusing to investigate whether any controlled substances were a factor in the collision. Finally, Complainant’s counsel alleges SMCSO’s personnel acted with racial bias.

Though received by County government in the form of a demand letter for compensation than a direct complaint to the Administrative Charging Committee, the Sheriff’s Office determined the allegations, if true, would meet Public Safety § 3-101’s definition of “police misconduct.” Accordingly, the ACC has the duty to determine what, if any, discipline of the involved officers is warranted.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

The allegations are made against Dep. [REDACTED] (“Officer #1”), Cpl. [REDACTED] (“Officer #2”), and Sgt. [REDACTED] (“Officer #3”), the SMCSO personnel who responded to the scene and had contact with Complainant at the scene. Each of the three officers had a body-worn camera (“BWC”) that recorded the entirety of their time spent at the scene and with the Complainant. As discussed further below, upon review of the associated footage, accident report, interviews, and other supporting documentation in the investigatory file, the ACC finds Complainant’s allegations to be unfounded, but does agree with the Sheriff’s recommendation that Officer #3 be administratively charged for a technical violation related to his failure to reactive his BWC at the end of his investigation.

Per the timestamps on each officer's BWC, the three arrived separately between 2:30pm and 2:34pm on August 5, 2023. By the time the first officer to arrive – that being Officer #3 – reached the scene, medical EMS were already on site to assess Complainant and render assistance, and a crowd of public onlookers had congregated around the accident scene. Debris was strewn across the road where the accident occurred. As the other officers arrived, BWC shows the officers took appropriate steps to investigate an accident: they ascertained the health and status of each involved party, questioned each party, secured the scene of the accident, and took other customary and routine steps associated with investigating a motor vehicle accident.

Officers are never, in the entirety of the BWC footage, observed removing debris or crash material from the scene of the accident.

The officers' interactions with Complainant, Complainant's wife, and the other members of the public were, at all times observed by the ACC, professional and polite. At no point do any of the officers treat any member of the public discourteously. At no point in the observed BWC footage does an officer refuse to investigate the accident until proof of Complainant's insurance could be found -- rather, the opposite is shown to be the case, and the officers quickly ascertained Driver to be the party at-fault. This finding was shared with Complainant's wife at the scene and included in the Maryland Crash Report submitted the day of the accident.

As to the allegation that officers searched Complainant's clothes for his wallet for the purpose of determining his insurance status, the moment officers are observed coming into temporary possession of the wallet comes as Complainant is loaded into Trooper 7 for medevac. At that point, Officer #3 requested the Fire/EMS personnel preparing Complainant for transport hand Officer #3 Complainant's wallet and a knife that was on Complainant's person; the wallet for the reason of attaining Complainant's driver license to complete the accident information exchange documents and accident report, and the knife for the reason that weapons of any nature are forbidden on Trooper 7. Officer #3 immediately tendered the knife to Complainant's wife upon receipt, held on to the wallet in view of Complainant's wife, told Complainant's wife he needed Complainant's driver license from the wallet, was directed by Complainant's wife where to look for the license in the wallet, and tendered the wallet to Complainant's wife upon successful location of the driver's license. Officer #3's physical custody of the knife and wallet can be measured in seconds, and is the kind of reasonable, temporary physical custody of personal property allowed by the various "community caretaking" exceptions. See, e.g., *Wilson v. State*, 409 Md. 415, 439 (2009) (setting forth the applicable test in Maryland as, "... the officer must have objective, specific and articulable facts... the officer may take reasonable and appropriate steps to provide assistance... we consider the availability, feasibility and effectiveness of alternatives to the type of intrusion effected by the officer").

SMCSO does not appear to have investigated the incident in a negligent matter, nor does it appear their conduct was influenced by any racial animus. Driver was interviewed and quickly determined to be at-fault and was issued a citation for failing to yield with a finding that doing so contributed to an accident. Driver was alert and cogent, spoke clearly, did not slur his speech, immediately informed officers he was at fault, had a steady gait and demonstrated no outward signs of intoxication or impairment, be it from alcohol or a controlled substance. There is no factual predicate apparent to the ACC to justify any continued investigation of Driver's sobriety. Nor is there any apparent evidence of racial bias on the part of SMCSO: the scene was investigated quickly and professionally, appropriate care and attention was paid to Complainant and his wife, Complainant's wife was fully informed of the investigation's outcome and SMCSO's determination (including the determination Driver showed no observable signs of intoxication), and SMCSO's behavior, at all times, was professional, courteous, and responsive.

As mentioned in our opening summary, there is one technical infraction discovered by SMCSO in its investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation, after Complainant had been transported from the scene, Officer #3 observed that Complainant's motorcycle helmet had been inadvertently left at the scene. By this time, Officer #3's BWC had been deactivated as he believed his investigatory functions were completed. Without reactivating his camera, Officer #3 approached the motorcycle helmet, picked it up, and directed Officer #1 to photograph the helmet to document its condition. Though it held no bearing on the outcome of the investigation, inspection of the helmet was an investigatory function and Officer #3 should have reactivated his BWC once he undertook that function. There is no indication Officer #3's failure in this respect was intentional.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, with respect to the following allegations against Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED], the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** as to the following allegations:

- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.5.3 – Discrimination
- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- Sheriff's Office Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure
- Sheriff's Office Policy 501.5 – Traffic Accident Reporting

For the reasons noted above, with respect to the following allegations against Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED], the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** as to the following allegations:

- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.5.3 – Discrimination
- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- Sheriff's Office Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure
- Sheriff's Office Policy 501.5 – Traffic Accident Reporting

For the reasons noted above, with respect to the following allegations against Sergeant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED], the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** as to the following allegations:

- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.5.3 – Discrimination
- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- Sheriff's Office Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure
- Sheriff's Office Policy 501.5 – Traffic Accident Reporting

And finally, for the reasons noted above, with respect to the following allegation against Sergeant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED], the ACC makes a finding the following allegation should be **ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED**:

- Sheriff's Office Procedure 421.4 BWC – Ending a Recording

Discipline

The sole allegation to be administratively charged, and for which discipline shall be recommended, is the violation of Procedure 421.4 BWC – Ending a Recording by Sgt. [REDACTED]. The ACC concurs with the Sheriff's recommendation this violation is best classified as a Class A violation, per the Statewide Uniform Disciplinary Matrix. In light of mitigating circumstances – namely, that it appears to be an unintentional violation and that Sgt. [REDACTED] has no other Class A violations in the last 24 months – the ACC agrees that Formal Written Counseling is appropriate discipline for the violation.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no apparent failures of supervision contributing to the incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 30 day of APR, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 501.5 Traffic Accident Reporting	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Corporal** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 501.5 Traffic Accident Reporting	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Sergeant** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1(c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 501.5 Traffic Accident Reporting	UNFOUNDED
Policy 421.4 BWC – Ending a Recording	ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

I concur with the Assistant Sheriff this is a **Category A Violation** on the Statewide Disciplinary Matrix and the recommended discipline is a **Formal Written Counseling (FWC)**.

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



Nickolas Cromwell, Chair

Commissioners of St. Mary's County
James R. Guy, President
Michael R. Alderson, Jr., Commissioner
Eric S. Colvin, Commissioner
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Scott R. Ostrow, Commissioner

CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-2844

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 3/26/2025; 4/30/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]¹
- Station Clerk [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Incident Date: May 25, 2024, at 1708 hrs.

Incident Location: [REDACTED] Winward Circle [REDACTED], Lexington Park

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 606.1(b)(2) – Warrant Procedures (Dep. [REDACTED]; Dep. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8(k) – Act Bringing Discredit Upon Office (Dep. [REDACTED])
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights (Dep. [REDACTED]; Dep. [REDACTED])
- 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority (Dep. [REDACTED]; Dep. [REDACTED])
- 311.3 – Search and Seizure: Searches (Dep. [REDACTED]; Dep. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Cpl. Daniel Sidorowicz, #328

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 1/31/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 100, 311, 319, 325, 606
- Complainants Public Portal Submission, 5/25/2025
- CAD Call Information Report, 5/15/2024
- Arrest Report, [REDACTED]
- Copy of Criminal Summons, [REDACTED]
- Copy of Indictment, [REDACTED]
- SMCSO Warrants Report, 5/8/2024
- Notification of Investigation, Station Clerk [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o [REDACTED], 6/12/2024

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Lt. [REDACTED], 9/27/2024
- Records Supervisor [REDACTED], 11/6/24
- Station Clerk [REDACTED], 10/3/2024
- Dep. [REDACTED], 10/7/2024
- Dep. [REDACTED], 10/7/2024

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation
- #3: Open Warrants List Excerpt

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On May 16, 2024, the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office received a report by voicemail, followed by an email on May 25, from Complainant alleging that he had been mistakenly arrested on May 15, 2024. On that date, two SMCSO officers – Dep. [REDACTED] ("Officer #1") and Dep. [REDACTED] ("Officer #2") – arrested Complainant at his place of employment under a belief that a warrant for his arrest was outstanding. Very shortly after Complainant was taken into custody, Officer #1 was informed by headquarters that what he mistakenly believed was an outstanding warrant was, in fact, only a criminal summons. Complainant was thereupon promptly released from custody.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

While both officers appear to have acted in good faith, Officer #1's failure to verify the warrant status resulted in an improper arrest – for which discipline is warranted and shall be recommended. We discuss further below.

We include some background to ease understanding of the case. At the time in question Complainant had a pending criminal matter in St. Mary's County. Initially filed in District Court with a preliminary inquiry in District Court set for May 14, 2024, the District Court preliminary inquiry was cancelled when the criminal matter was indicted to Circuit Court on May 7, with a summons issued by the Circuit Court on the same day for a preliminary hearing in the Circuit Court on June 10. A summons is not an arrest warrant; it is a directive for a person to appear before the Court on a given day at a given time. A summons must be served upon a person to be effective.

Officers #1 and #2 sought out Complainant on the day in question as part of SMCSO's routine work of serving outstanding warrants and summonses. Complainant's name appeared on the pending week's "Open Warrants List," which the investigative file describes as a "comprehensive list of outstanding arrest warrants held by the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office." The Open Warrants List also included, apparently, open summonses. The Open Warrants List is accessible through the Mobile Data Browser ("MDB") in an officer's patrol vehicle. When the Open Warrants List is initially accessed through the MDB, warrants and summonses are not immediately distinguishable from each other on the Open Warrants List, but "clicking through" an individual entry will lead to more detailed information that will state whether an individual's appearance on the list is for a warrant or summons. SMCSO personnel are trained and expected

to verify the warrant status of any individual on the Open Warrants List before effectuating any arrest, and a warrant is not considered “confirmed” until headquarters confirms the actual document is “in-hand.”²

Officers #1 and #2 set out to serve three open warrants the evening in question, Complainant’s among them. Two of the three warrants were “confirmed;” the Complainant’s supposed warrant was not, although, as noted above, that individual’s name appeared on the Open Warrants List. Complainant was located at his place of employment, asked to step outside, and was informed by the officers that a warrant was outstanding for his arrest. Complainant appeared confused but remained, in that moment and nearly every moment thereafter, polite, calm, professional, and respectful towards the Officers while he questioned whether there was an open warrant for his arrest. Officer #2 informed Complainant he had missed court; Complainant informed the officers that “they said it was cancelled.” Complainant Officer #1 showed Complainant a copy of Maryland Judiciary’s Case Search webpage that showed the preliminary hearing for his District Court matter was “cancelled.” Complainant remained adamant he had not missed court, that he had recently spoken to the corrections officer in charge of his pre-trial release and not been told of any missed court date, and that he had spoken to his lawyer that morning and had not been told anything was awry.

The two officers investigated further and agreed, upon review, with Complainant that the preliminary inquiry had been cancelled for administrative reasons and not for Complainant’s supposed failure to appear. They noted the case had been indicted to circuit court and began opining the indictment may have been the trigger for an arrest warrant.³ At this point, Complainant appeared resigned to the arrest and asked if he could call his mother. Officers #1 and #2 readily consented.

As Complainant began to call his mother, Officer #2 turned to Officer #1 and asked Officer #1 to verify “that they actually have everything.” Officer #1 said he had already confirmed it and would recheck the Open Warrants List to see if it said “indictment.” Officer #2 remained with Complainant while Officer #1 returned to his patrol vehicle, accessed the Open Warrants List through the MDB, and saw on the initial list that the “warrant type” was “indictment.” In a breach of SMCSO policy and procedure, Officer #1 did not “click through” or take any additional steps to confirm the warrant status. He exited the vehicle, returned to Officer #2, and stated, “Yeah, it’s an indictment.” At that point, Complainant was arrested. Officer #1 searched the Complainant’s person and escorted him to the bathroom while Officer #2 moved his patrol vehicle to a location at the back of Complainant’s employer’s building, such that Complainant could be taken into custody as discreetly as possible. During this process Complainant stated he knew he had an appearance in Circuit Court on June 10 and asked, once more, if this was not a mistake. Officer #1 told him it was not a mistake. After leaving the bathroom Officer #1 escorted Complainant out the building through a backdoor, handcuffed him, and placed him in Officer #1’s vehicle.

Officer #1 called in the arrest to headquarters. After making it a quarter mile down the road, Complainant asked if his cell phones had also been retrieved. Officer #1 stated they had not, confirmed with Officer #2 they had not, and returned to Complainant’s work to retrieve the cell phones. In the time it took to turn around, return, and retrieve the phones, headquarters determined the “warrant” was, in fact, only a summons. Officer #1’s supervising officer promptly called him and told him to release Complainant. Officer #1 explained the error to the Complainant as he did so. At that point, for the first time that evening, Complainant grew understandably angry and

² For the Complainant’s, the PAB’s, and the public’s edification we include as an additional appendix a redacted copy of the Open Warrants List provided in the investigative file that demonstrates the initial display.

³ An arrest warrant may be, but is not always, issued in accompaniment to an indictment.

agitated, and castigated Officer #1 for the mistake. Officer #1 apologized, acknowledged his error, and also explained the error to Complainant's mother, who had arrived on site. In an attempt to de-escalate the situation and out of respect for Complainant, Officer #1 chose not to serve the criminal summons at the time.

In total, twenty-one minutes elapsed between the moment the officers first approached Complainant and his release from custody. Nine minutes separate the point Complainant was arrested and handcuffed from the moment he was informed of the mistake and released from Officer #1's vehicle.

Complainant should not have been arrested on the evening in question and needlessly suffered an indignity at his place of work. For that, Officer #1 should be administratively charged, and appropriate discipline will be recommended. We fall short of choosing to administratively charge for any of the allegations other than 606.1(b)(2) – Warrant Procedures and 319.5.8(k) – Act Bringing Discredit Upon Office. He did not specifically target Complainant, act with malice towards Complainant, or deliberately violate agency policy. By all appearances, a quick glance at the information available to Officer #1 would indicate an arrest warrant was, in fact, outstanding. Officer #1's failure to follow procedure and confirm the status of the "warrant" was a breach of policy and procedure and a failure to heed his training, but was not a product of bad faith or ill intention.

We do not find cause to administratively charge Officer #2. Upon learning an indictment had been issued, Officer #2 asked Officer #1 to verify there was still an active warrant while Officer #2 stayed with Complainant. Officer #2 acted in reliance on what Officer #1 told him; we do not think it reasonable to have asked Officer #2 to do more, or to have personally re-confirmed the "warrant" after asking Officer #1 to do so and Officer #1's representation the pending arrest was lawful.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, with respect to the following allegations against Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED], the ACC makes a finding that the following should be **ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED**:

- Sheriff's Office Procedure 606.1(b)(2) – Warrant Procedures
- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.5.8(k) – Bringing Discredit Upon Office

For the reasons noted above, with respect to the following allegations against Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED], the ACC makes a finding that the following should **NOT BE ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED**:

- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- Sheriff's Office Policy 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority
- Sheriff's Office Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure, Searches

For the reasons noted above, with respect to the following allegations against Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED], the ACC makes a finding that the following should **NOT BE ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED**:

- Procedure 606.1(b)(2) – Warrant Procedures
- Sheriff's Office Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights

- Sheriff's Office Policy 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority
- Sheriff's Office Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure, Searches

Discipline

With respect to Deputy [REDACTED], we agree with the Sheriff's classification of the violation as Class C violation under the Statewide Police Disciplinary Matrix. The violation was serious, intentional or not. But mitigating factors include the absence of ill-will on the Deputy's part, his civil and professional demeanor with Complainant, and the genuinely confusing data display on the MDB. We also highlight the Deputy's sound choice not to immediately serve Complainant with his summons upon his release from custody, recognizing that leaving performance of that duty at a later date would be prudent given the circumstances. While these do not excuse Deputy [REDACTED] breach of policy, they do lead us to agree with the Sheriff's recommended discipline of **three (3) days' loss of leave.**

As we make no findings that Deputy [REDACTED] should be administratively charged for any allegation, no discipline against him is recommended.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

This is the second case the ACC has reviewed since it began operating on July 1, 2022 that involves a criminal summons mistaken for an arrest warrant. The investigative file states the Records Management System in use at the time of this incident is no longer in active service, and has been superseded by a newer and more straightforward system. We are unaware of further details of the new system and whether it "solves" the common issue in these two cases. However, if the new system taking the place of the old Records Management System has any flaws that require an officer to dig down into the individual warrant to verify the type of warrant like the old system, the ACC recommends emphasizing training in order to avoid future issues such as those encountered in this matter.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 14 day of May, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.

Nickolas Cromwell
Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

The complaint in this matter was made through SMCSO's Public Portal. The complaint is reproduced in full below:

“Dear Sheriff Hall I hope this message finds you well. My name is [REDACTED], and I am writing to request an in-person meeting with you regarding a recent incident involving my arrest, which I believe was conducted under false pretenses. On May 15th, 2024, I was arrested by officers from your department, and I have since gathered substantial evidence that suggests the arrest was unwarranted and improper. This situation has caused me significant distress and inconvenience, and I believe it is crucial to address these concerns directly with you to seek clarity and resolution. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the details of this incident, present my evidence, and understand the steps that can be taken to rectify the situation. I am confident that a face-to-face conversation will be the most effective way to ensure all aspects are thoroughly reviewed and addressed. Please let me know your availability for a meeting at your earliest convenience. I am willing to”

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]** for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Procedure 606.1(b)(2) <i>Warrant Procedures</i>	ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 319.5.8(k) <i>Act Bringing Discredit Upon Office</i>	ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure. Searches	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

The recommended discipline for violation of Sheriff’s Office Procedure 606.1(b)(2) is a Level One Category C Violation on the Statewide Disciplinary Matrix – **Three (3) Days Loss of Leave (LOL)**. Regarding Policy 319.5.8(k) *Act Bringing Discredit Upon Office*, I am recommending the discipline be **MERGED** with 606.1(b)(2).

I recommend the following findings as they relate to **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]** for allegations he violated the below Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure. Searches	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Procedure 606.1(b)(2) <i>Warrant Procedures</i>	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

The allegation pertaining to Station Clerk [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] does not fall under the purview of the ACC and will be handled internally.

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”

APPENDIX 3 – OPEN WARRANTS LIST EXCERPT

Open Warrant List - Circuit Court Warrants

Date: 5/13/2024

Name	DOB	Court Case Number	Issue Date	SMCSO Case #	Warrant Type	Charge	Issued by
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	5/7/2024	[REDACTED]	INDICTMENT	ASSAULT	CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

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CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-3365

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 4/30/2025; 5/21/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- Sgt. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: June 10, 2024

Complaint Date: June 12, 2024

Incident Location: Immediately south of the intersection of Three Notch Road and Pegg Road, Lexington Park

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.5.3 – Discrimination
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing
- 319.5.8 (n) – Exceeding Police Powers
- 319.5.8 (r) – Use of Profane Language (Dep. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Cpl. Daniel Sidorowicz, #328

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 3/7/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 319 and 401
- CAD Call Information Report, 6/10/2024
- Motor Vehicle Crash Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Traffic Citation, [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Sgt. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], 1/16/2025

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On the morning of June 10, 2024, Deputy [REDACTED] ("Officer #1"), Deputy [REDACTED] ("Officer #2"), and Sergeant [REDACTED] ("Officer #3") responded to a motor vehicle collision on Three Notch Road. At the scene they encountered [REDACTED] ("Complainant"), who the investigation determined to be the at-fault driver. During the investigation, Officer #1 administered field sobriety tests and certain additional tests to assess whether Complainant was under the influence of any substance, tests which Complainant passed. Complainant, an African American who identifies as a trans person, alleges Complainant was targeted for the sobriety tests on account of Complainant's race and gender-identity. Separate from Complainant's allegations, SMCSO's internal review also uncovered evidence that Officer #2 uttered a profanity, in violation of agency policy, during her interactions with Complainant.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

For reasons discussed further below, the ACC finds Complainant's allegations to be unfounded. There is ample evidence, based upon Complainant's actions and behavior, to support a reasonable suspicion Complainant may have been under the influence of a substance on the morning in question.

The motor vehicle accident in question occurred at approximately 06:30 on June 10, 2024. Complainant merged Complainant's vehicle into the far-right lane of Route 235 and, in so doing, struck a vehicle traveling in that lane. Though Complainant's car suffered enough damage from the collision to be rendered disabled, there were little to no apparent injuries. The victim suspected a "minor injury" to himself and was transported to Medstar St. Mary's Hospital and Complainant had no apparent injuries and refused medical attention. Both Complainant and victim were able to communicate with the officers when they arrived on the scene. A Maryland Motor Vehicle Crash Report was completed and, ultimately, a payable traffic citation for shifting lanes in an unsafe manner was issued to Complainant.

Complainant's allegations stem from the officers' decision to administer field sobriety tests during their investigation of the accident. Under prevailing case law, the officers' administration of the field sobriety tests is justifiable so long as they possessed a reasonable articulable suspicion Complainant may have been under the influence of alcohol or some other illicit substance. *Blasi v. State*, 167 Md. App. 483, 511 (2004) (holding that "although the administration of field sobriety tests by a police officer during a valid traffic stop constitutes a search within the meaning of the Fourth Amendment, the conduct of those tests is constitutionally permissible when the officer has reasonable articulable suspicion that the driver is under the influence...").

More than adequate facts exist to support such a suspicion in this instance. While Complainant had just been in an accident and at times presented well, walked steadily, and spoke to officers in a clear and articulate manner, there were many instances of mannerisms, idiosyncrasies, exaggerated behavior, and other visually observable cues that would likely give a reasonable person pause. Examples of these behaviors include Complainant's oftentimes unsteady gait, exaggerated movements, multiple falls or other instances Complainant could not remain upright and balanced, and Complainant's frequent confusion and disorientation, including a litany of verbal non-sequiturs and failures to effectively respond to questions or prompts from the officers. In one instance, Complainant, ordered to remain at the scene by the officers, attempted to leave and walk to a nearby gas station for the stated purpose of purchasing a cigarette. During the investigation, Complainant stated that Complainant was prescribed medication for bipolar and "schitzo" conditions, but denied having the medications with Complainant. On the whole, Complainant's observable behavior is more than sufficient to justify a suspicion that Complainant may have been under the influence of some manner of substance. The officers did not act in haste to administer the field sobriety tests, and took ample time to investigate the accident and speak to Complainant about the behaviors Complainant was demonstrating before administering the tests.

Upon successful completion of the field sobriety tests, Complainant was again offered medical attention. After Complainant refused, Officer #1 printed Complainant's citation, provided it and an accident Information Exchange to Complainant, and released Complainant. No officer had further contact with Complainant after that point. Throughout their interactions, all Sheriff's Office personnel were observed on BWC footage to be polite, courteous, and professional to Complainant. There is no evidence of racial bias or improper animus of any kind, and we conclude the allegations the officers acted in a biased, discriminatory manner or that they acted beyond their lawful powers to be unfounded.

The only remaining allegation is with respect to Officer #2. During a conversation between Officer #2 and Complainant, Complainant exasperatedly asked aloud why Complainant's fiancé was not answering his phone. Officer #2, who previously had been able to observe Complainant using Complainant's phone, asked "Is he the one you have labeled as 'Piece of Shit' in your phone?" Officer #2 and Complainant then both laughed about how Complainant had labelled the fiancé. While the label Officer #2 repeated is a profanity, we agree with the Sheriff's recommendation that it was a comment deliberately made to build rapport and lessen tension, and uttering it was not, in context, an unprofessional or derogatory action. Accordingly, we decline to administratively charge for the allegation.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

- Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination
- Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights
- Policy 401.3 Bias-Based Policing
- Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Police Powers

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

- Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination
- Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights

Policy 401.3 Bias-Based Policing
Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Police Powers

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Deputy** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.5.8 (r) Use of Profane Language

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Sergeant** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 401.3 Bias-Based Policing
Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Police Powers

Discipline

As no allegations are administratively charged, there is no recommendation of discipline to be made.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision that contributed to this incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 21 day of May, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

“I was in a accident and I admit I was wrong because I was merging and that's how the law works several times but I was still treated like a criminal put through a bunch of unnecessary test after I explained to them I had a mental condition and the reason I'm down here is for work because I was fired from my last job because of my sexuality I know I'm wrong but bare with me my head is not right I get emotional and animated when I'm upset I even passed out according to officer I hit my head so they tried everything to prove I'm on drugs because they didn't like the fact that a trans colored person kept saying this is racial profiling forced me to get off my phone so I didn't have evidence of what they were doing and refused to let me use a legal coping mechanism to calm myself so I could get mad and go off on them so they could have a reason to lock me up and also refused to let me take pics of the other persons car when I passed everything they threw at me one said well I guess you're not going to jail with disgust on his face as he said it after saying nobody's to blame and the beginning because of the sun glaring we didn't see each other he give me a ticket I want body cam footage and everything I'm sick of the racism and homophobic behavior of men especially law enforcement and also body cam need to be pulled because I'm not sure but the tow truck driver told me they saw the police two of them and a man with a dog near my car while it was on tow truck after I walked away the first time I hope they wasn't checking my car cause that's illegal I passed there test case number is [REDACTED] so you can pull up the officers present at that time one is [REDACTED] location three notch rd”

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Sergeant**
[REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.3 Bias-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Police Powers	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy**
[REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.3 Bias-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Police Powers	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy**
[REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.3 Bias-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Police Powers	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (r) Use of Profane Language	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-3637

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 5/21/25, 6/25/25

Officer(s) Involved:

- Capt. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Sgt. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: June 27, 2024, at 0822 hrs.

Incident Location: [REDACTED] Spring Hill Road, Lexington Park

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights (Capt. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force (Capt. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 431.3 – Provide Medical Aide (Capt. [REDACTED])
- 421.3 – BWC-Notification
- 319.5.5(t) – Loss of Property (Cpl. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Sgt. William Ray, #131

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Public Portal Complaint Submission Review, 6/27/2024
- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 3/6/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 431, 425, 319
- Photos of Complaint
- Petition for Warrant of Restitution; [REDACTED], 6/24/2024
- SMCSO Face Sheets
- Incident Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Arrest Report; [REDACTED], 6/24/2024
- Arrest Warrant
- Statement of Charges
- Application for Statement of Charges
- SMCSO Threat Assess-EST Request Report, Sgt. [REDACTED]

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Maryland Real Property Code Ann. § 8-401
- Use of Force Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Capt. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Sgt. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Capt. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Capt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED] 2/18/2025
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED], 2/27/2025
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED], 2/11/2025
 - o Capt. [REDACTED], 3/6/2025

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On June 24, 2024, St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office personnel Captain [REDACTED] (Officer #1), Sergeant [REDACTED] (Officer #2), Corporal [REDACTED] (Officer #3), and Corporal [REDACTED] (Officer #4) carried out the eviction² of [REDACTED] ("Complainant") from a mobile home. Following his eviction, Complainant submitted a complaint that alleged the following:

1. The officers involved assaulted Complainant;
2. Officer #1 used excessive force against Complainant;
3. Officer #1 conspired in a scheme to steal Complainant's property;
4. A phone belonging to Complainant was misplaced by Officer #1;
5. The officers refused to allow medical personnel into the residence to assess Complainant.

DETERMINATION

² A brief explanation of the Sheriff's Office's role in eviction proceedings: prior to any involvement by the Sheriff's Office, landlords work through landlord-tenant docket in the local District Court. If successful, a landlord ultimately obtains a judgment called a Warrant of Restitution. These warrants constitute a court's finding that the landlord is entitled to retake possession of the property. A Sheriff's role in any landlord-tenant proceeding is limited to enforcing warrants of restitution after they have been issued. Notice requirements must be complied with prior to effectuating a warrant of restitution, such that a resident should have at least several days' notice of a scheduled eviction date. Typically, a landlord is responsible for hiring personnel who will be responsible for removing a tenant's personal property on the day in question. A sheriff's deputy (or deputies, if the case merits it) is present at the eviction to remove persons, if necessary, and keep the peace during an eviction.

Discussion and Findings

On June 24, 2024, following protracted litigation between Complainant and his landlord, SMCSO personnel arrived at [REDACTED] Spring Hill Road to execute a court-ordered eviction on Complainant. Body worn camera footage of the full eviction from all involved officers was provided in the investigatory file and reviewed.

Officers arrived at Complainant's residence at approximately 08:22am. Complainant was uncooperative and, only allowed the officers entry to the residence after approximately twenty minutes of knocking, speaking to Complainant through the door, and several threats and attempts to force entry if necessary. The officers informed Complainant they had a "valid warrant" that was "signed by the judge." Although officers initially did not inform Complainant he was being recorded, they did inform him approximately fourteen minutes into the process of trying to gain entry to the residence.

Once in the residence, Complainant argued with the officers about whether the eviction was lawful or not. He refused the officers' request to leave the home, responding at one point by telling the officers they'll have to lock him up. Officers continued pleading with Complainant to leave the residence voluntarily.

Complainant then informed the officers that a prior "spinal cord injury" prevented him from exercising full control of his bowels. Informed of this and of a pressing need to use the restroom, the officers provided Complainant a space to relieve himself, and accommodated several other medically-related requests made by Complainant. These included finding a wheelchair for Complainant when he told officers he could not readily stand up, and calling an ambulance for Complainant when he requested one because he felt lightheaded. While using the restroom, body worn camera ("BWC") footage shows Complainant apparently placing calls to the Emergency Communications Center and asking state police to intervene. In total, the officers' allowed Complainant approximately forty minutes to use the restroom.

Several minutes after the ambulance personnel arrived in response to the officers' summons, the officers assisted Complainant into the wheelchair and transported him outside. He was assessed by the medical personnel present and refused transportation to the hospital.

While outside, Officer #1 and Complainant engaged in another conversation where Officer #1 attempted, again, to explain the eviction process to Complainant. Officer #1 explained to Complainant that the court order required Complainant to physically leave the trailer park. He told Complainant that if Complainant did not "make an effort" to move towards the exit of the trailer park he would be arrested for trespass. Officer #1 repeated this demand five times, and Complainant failed to heed the order. At that point, Complainant was placed under arrest and handcuffed, wrists secured in the front.

During his transport to the hospital, and again from the hospital to the detention center, Complainant complained of various medical complications or injuries, including complaints of chest pains and difficulty breathing. Complainant was released from the hospital to be transported to the detention center after two hours.

During the arrest, Complainant's pockets were searched by Officer #1 and a cell phone was recovered. Officer #1 handed the cell phone to Officer #4. From BWC footage, Officer #4 placed the cell phone on the roof of the police vehicle Complainant was placed inside. The phone appears to have been left on the roof of the vehicle as it drove away.

Approximately an hour and a half passed between the officers' entry onto the property and the arrest. During that time Complainant made no attempt to secure or safeguard any of the property in the trailer home. Complainant's mother appeared with a U-Haul after the arrest, and after the private eviction crew began dismantling the trailer. After some discussion, Officer #2, who had remained onsite to oversee the remainder of the eviction, allowed Complainant's mother to remove personal property from the site.

In short, the above summary of facts shows all but one of Complainant's allegations to be unfounded. SMCSO personnel went above and beyond, and a great distance out of their way, to accommodate Complainant insofar as possible on the morning in question. They explained they were there to execute a court ordered eviction, repeatedly. They showed extreme patience as Complainant contested and delayed that eviction. They assisted Complainant in moving himself about and repeatedly allowed him to move at his own pace, up and until he refused clear, repeated commands to leave the property or be arrested for trespassing. Medical assistance was summoned as requested by the Complainant.

In a similar vein, the officers' collective failure to inform Complainant that BWCs were recording as they attempted to gain entry to the residence does not appear intentional. They encountered the complication of a pseudo-barricade barring their way into the residence, and he was informed of the recording well before they made face-to-face contact. Considering the context and the difficulty of this eviction, we find this technical infraction excusable.

The Complainant's allegation that officers misplaced his phone appears to be sustained, however. As stated above, Officer #1 retrieved Complainant's cell phone and handed it to Officer #4, who then placed the cell phone on top of the patrol vehicle and forgot to retrieve it before the vehicle drove off. The phone was not located. This was hardly intentional on Officer #4's part, but it is a failure adequately safeguard the property – and, accordingly, a violation of policy.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Captain [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

- Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- Policy 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force
- Policy 431.3 – Provide Medical Aid

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes a finding of **NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED** with respect to the following allegations against **Captain [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

- Procedures 421.3 – BWC- Notification

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Sergeant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

- Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- Policy 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force
- Policy 431.3 – Provide Medical Aid

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes a finding of **NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED** with respect to the following allegations against **Sergeant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Procedures 421.3 – BWC- Notification

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force
Policy 431.3 – Provide Medical Aid

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED** with respect to the following allegations against **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Procedures 421.3 – BWC- Notification

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes a finding of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force
Policy 431.3 – Provide Medical Aid

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes a finding of **NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED** with respect to the following allegations against **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Procedures 421.3 – BWC- Notification

For the reasons noted above, the ACC make a findings of **ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED** with respect to the following allegations against **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.5(t) – Loss of Property

Discipline

As to the single allegation to be administratively charged, the ACC concurs with SMCSO's classification of it as a Category A violation. It is the officer's first in the three-year look-back period. In light of mitigating factors, including the lack of any discernible malice, intention, or gross negligence, we concur with the recommended discipline of Formal Written Counseling. We also note the Sheriff's statement that a property claim will be filed on behalf of Complainant for reimbursement of the value of his lost cell phone.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision contributing to this incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 25 day of 25, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell

Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

The complaint in this matter was made through SMCSO's Public Portal. The complaint is reproduced in full below:

“On such date Captain [REDACTED] and the eviction team along with officer [REDACTED] badge number [REDACTED] arrived at [REDACTED] Spring Hill Road to serve a second eviction eviction that started in December of 2023 however at that time they force entry into the house physically assaulted Mr [REDACTED] who was disabled in wheelchair bound pulled them out of the house in his under clothes no shirt put them in a wheelchair demanded he get off the property while the eviction occurred by serving him a criminal complaint he was now trespassing and could not watch the eviction at that time Mr [REDACTED] was trying his best to leave the premises however he requested his feet for his wheelchair Captain [REDACTED] then meet the determination to forcefully arrest Mr [REDACTED] in his wheelchair and remove him and throw him in the back of a police car with several other offices assistance at that time while Mr [REDACTED] set in the police car Captain [REDACTED] came and search them for his personal property taking his cell phone phone number [REDACTED] as such time Mr. [REDACTED] ws then being transported to St Mary's County Detention Center however had an anxiety attack in the back of the patrol car patrol car pulled over Mr [REDACTED] was then transported to the hospital via ambulance at this time officer [REDACTED] accompanied Mr [REDACTED] at the hospital explain it to him he was going to turn the criminal complaint into a warrant to make it easier on him and I however Mr [REDACTED] was taken to jail held on no bond for 3 days as they demolished the home with a cream and eviction crew stole all of Mr [REDACTED] property with Captain [REDACTED] assisting the eviction crew Mr [REDACTED] mother waited with the U-haul to take his belongings to put in safe keeping however she was only able to retrieve minimum items that was left outside Captain [REDACTED] assured Mr5 [REDACTED]s mother as she informed that she will be there with for you all that the all property will be there in time waiting for her to pick it up however that did not happen Mr [REDACTED] is now suffering with no medication nor identification nor personal documents pertaining to his medical history also would like to know how come his phone disappeared from all his property along with all court documents pertaining to the eviction that Mr [REDACTED] has been investigating with his attorneys though Maryland legal aid for fraudulent eviction this will be the third time that Corporal [REDACTED] aided in the action of eviction removing property insisting locks be drilled into the doors and Etc before the eviction has been concluded leaving Mr [REDACTED] homeless for several months starting January 11th Mr [REDACTED] utilities were cut off and his doors were screwed locked as the process continued we're still in court as of now my pill shall be filed no later than the 30th of this month I asked that you investigate the situation and also fine me property I've lost four vehicles and countless to the tune of \$100,00 worth of property and sentimental value that is non-negotiable can someone please contact me via phone when my mother's phone for the sheriff's department will not turn my phone over as it is lost as Captain [REDACTED] physically removed it from me for the fact that I told him I was recording as well as his body cameras I will ask that you pull all body cameras from every officer he still has Authority to act as an eviction attendant I would ask that you investigate all officers involved and find Mr [REDACTED] property it was a shame that a captain would not let a disabled person have the feet for his wheelchair and have clothing on his body as he was told to leave the residence the neighborhood and sit on the side of the road I asked that this department fine under the Disability Act that Captain [REDACTED] used unnecessary Force and conspired in a theft scheme that has now left Mr [REDACTED] not just homeless but penniless medication list identificationist”

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Captain** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
319.5.8 (m) Excessive Force	UNFOUNDED
Policy 431.3 Provide Medical Aide	UNFOUNDED
Procedures 421.3 BWC-Notification	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

I recommend the following findings as they relate to **Sergeant** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for allegations, he violated the below Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Procedures 421.3 BWC-Notification	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

I recommend the following findings as they relate to **Corporal** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for allegations, he violated the below Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
319.5.8 (m) Excessive Force	UNFOUNDED
Procedures 421.3 BWC-Notification	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

I recommend the following findings as they relate to **Corporal** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for allegations, he violated the below Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
319.5.8 (m) Excessive Force	UNFOUNDED
Procedures 421.3 BWC-Notification	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED
Policy 319.5.5 (t) Loss of Property	ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

The recommended Discipline for Corporal [REDACTED] is a **Category A Level One Violation – Formal Written Counseling (FWC)**. A property claim will be filed with the Sheriff’s Office’s insurance company (LGIT) on behalf of Mr. [REDACTED] for reimbursement of his lost cell phone.

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-3939

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 5/21/25; 6/25/25

Officer(s) Involved:

- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]

Incident Date: July 11, 2024, at 1425 hrs.

Incident Location: 21775 Great Mills Road, Lexington Park (Lexington Park Social Services Office)

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 100.2 – Abuse of Authority
- 319.5.3 – Discrimination
- 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force
- 421.3 – BWC-Notification (Dep. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Lt. Joshua Krum, #260

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 1/28/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 100, 319, 408, 409, 421
- CAD Call Information Report, 7/11/2024
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Petition for Emergency Evaluation, [REDACTED]
- Certification by Peace Order
- Return of Service by Peace Officer
- Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Witness Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Emergency Situation Disclosure, 7/11/2024
- Missing Person Report Form, [REDACTED] 7/11/2024
- Maryland Code, Health – General § 10-620
- Maryland Code, Health – General § 10-622
- Maryland Code, Health – General § 10-624

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On July 11, 2024, St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office personnel Deputy [REDACTED] ("Officer #1"), Cpl. [REDACTED] ("Officer #2"), and Deputy [REDACTED] ("Officer #3") responded to the Lexington Park Social Services Office, for the report of a subject threatening suicide. There, they encountered [REDACTED] ("Complainant"). Upon determining Complainant had made suicidal threats and was experiencing mental distress, Officer #1, with Officer #2's assistance, took Complainant into custody, handcuffing her, in preparation to transport her to Medstar St. Mary's Hospital to undergo an emergency evaluation. In a subsequent use of-of-force review Complainant alleged Officers #1 and #2 used excessive force when taking her into custody.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

Maryland's statutory scheme for emergency mental health evaluations, and the constitutional framework undergirding it, are well settled. On review of Officers #1, #2, and #3's body worn camera ("BWC") recordings, we concur that there was sufficient factual predicate to take Complainant into custody for a mental health evaluation, and that the force employed by Officers #1 and Officers #2 was reasonable and necessary.

The officers in question responded to the Department of Social Services ("DSS") office in Lexington Park shortly before noon. They responded to a 911 after DSS employees contacted SMCSO and reported that a DSS client was in the office and had made threats of harming herself, ending her life, and wanting to drive her and her daughter into "the biggest tree." At the time they arrived, Complainant was in the office of a DSS employee who had spoken to her. That employee told officers that Complainant told the employee that Complainant would be "leaving this world," that she was "ready to leave this world," and that she was "done." The employee also told the officers that Complainant had "made a specific threat to pick up her daughter, 4-year-old and drive directly into a big tree to end it all."

As the officers entered the office where Complainant was waiting, Complainant can be heard on the BWC recording saying that she would refuse to tell anyone where her daughter is. Officer #1 slowly, calmly, and professionally introduced himself to Complainant. After brief introductions, Complainant stated she would be leaving. Officer #1 informed her she could not leave, based on concern for her well-being. Complainant quickly grew agitated, elevated her voice,

- refused further cooperation, and denied making suicidal statements – arguing that she had said she “wanted” to perform the actions described by the DSS employee, not that she would, in fact, perform them.

Attempts at de-escalation proved unsuccessful and Officer #1 informed Complainant she would be taken into custody and transported to Medstar St. Mary’s Hospital to undergo an emergency evaluation. With Complainant refusing to be taken into custody, Officer #1 grabbed Complainant’s left wrist, which Complainant resisted by pulling her arm away. Officer #2 assisted Officer #1 in physically securing Complainant, which consisted of securing Complainant’s arms behind her back. It appears from BWC that Complainant briefly came into contact with the office wall, only a few inches away from the seat she had been occupying. It cannot be readily determined if this was the result of her own action, while she resisted, or the officers, attempting to secure her. In any event, the entirety of the use-of-force incident lasted moments, and resulted in Complainant being taken into custody. Officers clearly appear to have used the minimum amount of force necessary to secure Complainant.

Md. Health-General § 10-622 authorizes a peace officer to subject an individual to a petition for an emergency mental health evaluation when that peace officer has “reason to believe” an individual has a mental health disorder and presents a danger to the life or safety of herself or another. Federal courts recognize “reason to believe” as analogous to “probable cause,” and that it is a constitutionally sound burden of proof for a process such as a mental health evaluation. *S.P. v. City of Takoma Park*, 134 F.3d 260, 271-272 (4th Cir. 1998). From the statements provided by witnesses, officers’ personal observations of Complainant, and Complainant’s own actions and words as presented on the BWC footage, probable cause could be found that Complainant satisfies the criteria of Health-General § 10-622.

The physical force used to bring Complainant into custody consisted of Officers #1 and #2 physically restraining Complainant’s arms behind her in order to handcuff her, amidst her resistance. Priorly, Complainant was told she would be taken into custody and given reason for that action. BWC footage shows the officers acted appropriately and professionally, and that physically restraining her was necessary in light of her non-cooperation. Accordingly, the use-of-force satisfies both Maryland’s statutory requirements for the use of force and the constitutional framework surrounding uses-of-force to effectuate legitimate law enforcement purposes.

As a final matter, a technical violation was uncovered by OPR during their investigation of the matter. When initially entering the DSS office, Officer #1, speaking with DSS employees to ascertain where Complainant was, failed to notify these employees his BWC was active and recording. Strictly speaking, this was a violation of SMCSO’s policy on BWC recordings. The investigation file also contains record of OPR’s audit of Officer #1’s BWC recordings after this revelation, which show Officer #1 generally complies with this policy. In consideration of that record, the limited expectations of privacy the employees could reasonably have in a public space, and the fact that the interactions were limited to seeking directions, we also concur with the Sheriff’s recommendation not to administratively charge for this technical infraction.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 100.2 - Abuse of Authority
Policy 319.5.3 – Discrimination

Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED** with respect to the following allegations against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Procedures 421.3 – BWC - Notification

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 100.2 - Abuse of Authority
Policy 319.5.3 – Discrimination
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force

Discipline

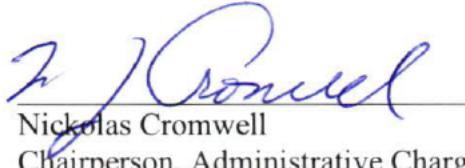
As no allegations are administratively charged, there is no recommendation of discipline to be made.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes OPR's inclusion in the investigatory file of attempts to create a patch or symbol to be worn on the uniform, in the future, to apprise members of the public that an officer's BWC may be active and may be recording. This will help mitigate any inadvertent technical infractions like that observed in this matter.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this Jun day of 25, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 100.2 Abuse of Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (m) Excessive Force	UNFOUNDED
Procedures 421.3 BWC-Notification	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

I recommend the following findings as they relate to **Corporal** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] for allegations, he violated the below Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 100.2 Abuse of Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.3 Discrimination	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (m) Excessive Force	UNFOUNDED

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-4426

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 5/21/25; 6/25/25

Officer(s) Involved:

- Cpl. [REDACTED], [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: July 21, 2024

Incident Location: [REDACTED] Radford Lane, Lexington Park

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders (Cpl. [REDACTED] and Dep. [REDACTED])
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights (Cpl. [REDACTED] and Dep. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8 (m) – Excessive Force (Cpl. [REDACTED] and Dep. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8 (n) – Exceeding Police Powers (Cpl. [REDACTED] and Dep. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8 (r) – Use of Profane Language (Cpl. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8 (x) – Conduct Unbecoming (Dep. [REDACTED])
- 425.6 – Body Worn Camera – Activation (Dep. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Lt. Joshua Krum, #260

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 4/2/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 300, 319, 425
- CAD Call Information Report, 7/21/2024
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]; 7/25/2024
- SMCSO Permission to Search
- Arrest Report, [REDACTED]
- Arrest Warrant, [REDACTED]; 7/21/2024
- Statement of Charges, [REDACTED]; 3/28/2023
- Statement of Charges, [REDACTED]; 2/4/2024
- SMCSO Property Record Form
- Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, DFC [REDACTED]

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- CAD Call Information Report, 3/26/2023
- Office of the State's Attorney Data Request
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED] 4/9/2023
- Incident Report, Det. [REDACTED]; 5/8/2023
- Incident Report, Det. [REDACTED]; 5/29/2023
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], 3/20/2025

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On July 21, 2024, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (“Complainant”) was apprehended by St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office (“SMCSO”) personnel. Complainant alleges Corporal [REDACTED] (“Officer #1”), Deputy [REDACTED] (“Officer #2”), and Deputy [REDACTED] (“Officer #3”), the officers who physically restrained Complainant during the arrest, used excessive force while taking him into custody.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

On July 21, 2024, SMCSO personnel responded to [REDACTED] Radford Lane, Lexington Park, for a report of a potential assault involving a firearm. Arriving at the scene, deputies were informed by the victim of the alleged crime that his assailant was accompanied by Complainant, who was familiar to at least Officer #3 from previous interactions. The victim knew complainant by street monikers Complainant was known to use and, using a picture from social media, positively identified Complainant. The victim also stated that his assailant had directed Complainant during the alleged assault to “get his .40” from the Complainant’s vehicle’s truck.

Complainant was wanted on several outstanding warrants at this time. Officer #3 confirmed these warrants were still outstanding with the Emergency Communications Center.

The SMCSO personnel initially left the area, but returned after receiving information that Complainant had returned to Radford Lane. Officers deployed in a perimeter in case of flight. Officer #3 identified Complainant as he entered a nearby residence, which he promptly fled from through its rear entrance. Officers pursued on foot.

The pursuit, intercept, and subsequent apprehension are recorded on the involved officers' body worn cameras ("BWC"). Hours of body worn camera footage, from multiple officers, are included in the investigatory file, and include both the incident, the investigation before it, and its immediate aftermath. The initial apprehension and physical contact was made by Officer #1. Officer #1's BWC abruptly begins at timestamp 13:43:59 and Officer #1 can immediately be overheard saying "he's running, he's running." BWC shows Officer #1 running. At approximately 13:44:03, Officer #1 rounds the corner of a nearby building; at timestamp 13:44:04 Complainant comes into view, rounding the opposite corner of the building; between 13:44:04 and 13:44:06 Officer #1 moves to intercept Complainant, yelling "Hey, hands up! Hands up!" while Complainant continues to run; at 13:44:06 the two make physical contact, with Officer #1 running into Complainant's shoulder, colliding with significant force and speed. In the next two seconds, Complainant and Officer #1 both fall to the ground. As they fall, Officer #1's left hand, originally placed on Complainant's torso, lost its grip and briefly brushed across Complainant's face.

In these same seconds, Officers #2 and #3 arrived and began assisting in the apprehension of Complainant almost immediately after the collision and fall. Officer #2 kneeled and briefly positioned his left shin across the back of Complainant's left shoulder to help restrain him, taking care to keep weight off his left shin.

Throughout, Complainant was ordered to cease movement and cooperate. Several seconds after the collision, Complainant repeatedly claimed he couldn't breathe. His speech does not appear labored on BWC. At this time, a large crowd began gathering on Radnor Lane, which is a residential area, and the decision was made to evacuate Complainant from Radford Lane to a nearby charter school on Great Mills Road for medical treatment by EMS. Complainant was subsequently transported to Medstar St. Mary's and, after evaluation there, to the Detention Center. Several scrapes and scratches were noted to Complainant's hand, and Complainant also disclosed a preexisting shoulder injury from a prior accident.

Complainant's allegation is that excessive force was used against him during the apprehension; namely, that his face was injured, a foot placed on his back, and that he was "clotheslined." Whether force is "excessive" is a question for both state and constitutional law.

Maryland's use of force statute, Public Safety § 3-524, requires force used by a law enforcement officer to be necessary and proportional to effectuate a legitimate law enforcement objective. In this case, we find these requirements satisfied: Complainant was suspected of participating in a recent assault involving a potential firearm, was wanted on outstanding warrants, and was actively fleeing officers attempting to apprehend him. Complainant, by his own admission in interviews recorded on BWC, knew he was being sought by SMCSO. He is seen actively attempting to escape apprehension. In the seconds that Officer #1 had when he rounded the corner, Complainant showed no signs of stopping or cooperating. Officer #1's physical interception appears necessary to have accomplished the legitimate goal of apprehending Complainant.

At the constitutional level, the seminal case for governing whether force is "excessive" is *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386 (1989). The test laid out in *Graham*, in so many words, subjects uses-of-force to a test of objective reasonableness. It disavows a bright line rule, but guides courts

and law enforcement officers to consider the severity of the underlying offense or matter, the immediacy of any threat to the officer or others, whether the suspect was actively resisting or evading officers, and any other salient contextual factors that may emerge in dynamic and fast-developing situations. Given the facts outlined above, *Graham*'s balancing test also appears to be satisfied.

During the course of their investigation, OPR uncovered several additional technical infractions that were not bases of Complainant's allegation of misconduct:

1. Officer #3's failure to active his body worn camera during initial arrival and contact with the victim. In his interview with OPR, Officer #3 claimed he believed he had activated his camera, and expressed frustration with himself. Officer #3 explained his failure as follows: "That, uh, I mean, error on my part. I thought I had it activated, but it obviously did not, uhm, didn't know I- it was kind of a lot, I guess a lot going through my mind going to the call. Um, yeah, not intentional, but that's my fault." We concur with the Sheriff's recommendation that the officer not be administratively charged for the violation, and that this is a breach better handled by remedial training than administrative discipline.
2. Officer #1 uttered the words "mother fucker" when he collided with Complainant. Facially, this is a violation of SMCSO's policy on profanity. Considering the circumstances, we find the utterance excusable and concur with the Sheriff that Officer #1 should not be administratively charged.
3. Officer #2, while assisting in the apprehension of Complainant, said "don't f-kin' move." In other words – for one reason or another, he distinctly does not say the full word, but comes vanishingly close. A reasonable person could conclude he meant to utter, and intended what he did utter to function as, the more commonplace profanity it closely resembles. In light of the tense and highly-charged atmosphere, we concur with the Sheriff that administratively charging for this potential violation is not proper.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force
Policy 319.5.8(n) – Exceeding Police Powers

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED** with respect to the following allegations against **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.8(r) – Use of Profane Language

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED** with respect to the following allegations against Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.5.8(r) – Use of Profane Language

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED** with respect to the following allegations against Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Procedure 425.6 – Body Worn Camera-Activation

Discipline

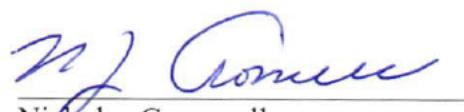
As no allegations are administratively charged, there is no recommendation of discipline to be made.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision contributing to this incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 15 day of 25, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

P.O. BOX 653 ♦ GOVERNMENTAL CENTER ♦ 41770 BALDRIDGE STREET, LEONARDTOWN, MD 20650
PHONE 301.475.4200 x1700 ♦ FAX 301.475.4660 ♦ www.stmarysmd.com

"Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]** for violating Sheriff's Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (m) Excessive Force	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Police Powers	UNFOUNDED
Police 319.5.8 (r) Use of Profane Language	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

I recommend the following findings as they relate to **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]** for allegations he violated the below Sheriff's Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (m) Excessive Force	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Police Powers	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (x) Conduct Unbecoming	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

I recommend the following findings as they relate to **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]** for allegations he violated the below Sheriff's Office Policies:

Procedure 425.6 Body Worn Camera-Activation **NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED**

Remedial training will be held and documented with Deputy [REDACTED] pertaining to the importance of verifying his Body Worn Camera (BWC) is activated when required by policy.

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff."



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-4425

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 5/21/25; 6/25/25

Officer(s) Involved:

- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: March 2, 2024

Complaint Date: July 31, 2024

Incident Location: [REDACTED] Rousby Hall Road, Lusby

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 421.2 – Portable Audio/Video Recorder – Authorized Use
- 901.4 – Non-Custodial Referral Juvenile Services

Agency Review Conducted by: Cpl. Daniel Sidorowicz, #328

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 3/24/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 319, 421, 901
- Mutual Aid Agreement Between the Charles County Sheriff's Office, The Calvert County Sheriff's Office, and The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office
- St. Mary's County Ordinance No. 2012-55
- CAD Call Information Report, 3/5/2024
- CAD Call Information Report, 7/18/2024
- CAD Call Information Report, 8/1/2024
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]; 3/10/2024
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]; 4/19/2024
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]; 5/8/2024
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]; 6/12/2024
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]; 6/26/2024
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]; 7/18/2024
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]; 7/22/2024
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]; 8/5/2024
- Referral to Juvenile Services, [REDACTED]
- Juvenile Detention/Release Form

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Referral to Juvenile Services, [REDACTED]
- Referral to Juvenile Services, [REDACTED]
- SMCSO Property Record Form
- Photos from Burglary Investigation
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] 2/21/2025

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On March 5, 2024, Deputy [REDACTED] ("Officer #1") responded to La Grande Estates Campground for reported vandalism and burglary. In the investigation that followed, Officer #1 identified several juvenile suspects. On July 14, 2024, Officer #1 interviewed one suspect ("Suspect") in the presence of his mother ("Mother") and uncle ("Complainant"). In a subsequent interview attempted on July 18, 2024, Officer #1 was confronted by Complainant, who stated he did not consent to being recorded and accused Officer #1 of trespassing. Complainant followed with a written complaint submitted to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office ("SMCSO") by email on July 31, 2024.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

State and constitutional frameworks for when a law enforcement officer may freely approach a residence, absent a warrant, are well-settled. For the reasons discussed further below, we do not find Officer #1 trespassed or violated Complainant or his nephew's expectations of privacy.

In general, officers – as well as members of the general public – possess a general license to approach the front door of a residence, knock, and ask to speak to any occupants. See, e.g., *Kentucky v. King*, 563 U.S. 452, 469 (2011). That license exists until revoked, either directly by bidding an officer to leave the property or by taking clear and obvious signs that the general public are forbidden from entry, such as erecting a gate over the property. *Jones v. State*, 178 Md. App. 454 (2008).

Applying those precepts to the facts of this case, review of the investigatory file and body worn camera ("BWC") footage show that the officer uncovered surveillance video that showed the alleged acts of vandalism. That footage showed three juveniles participating in the acts. Suspect, who appears to have lived at the trailer park in question with his mother at the time, matched the physical characteristics of one of the suspects. Acting upon this, Officer #1 sought to interview Suspect at his and his mother's new place of residence in Calvert County. He arrived to the new residence, did not find the way to the front door barred or closed off, made contact with the

suspect's mother, explained the purpose of his visit, asked to interview Suspect, and proceeded to interview Suspect with the consent of, and in the presence of, Suspect's mother.

In his subsequent attempted interview a few days later, Officer #1 was greeted first by Complainant and accused of trespassing and illegally recording the interview with the use of his BWC. Officer #1 denied the allegations and attempted to explain the relevant laws in question, but was asked by Complainant to leave the property. Officer #1 immediately did so.

No violation of any involved party's constitutional right is implicated in the above recitation of facts. Accordingly, we find Complainant's allegations against Officer #1 to be unfounded.

OPR's review of the matter did uncover a separate violation of agency policy, however. One of the other juvenile suspects Officer #1 identified in the case was four days shy of his 13th birthday when Officer #1 made a referral to the Department of Juvenile Services over the alleged acts of vandalism. SMCSO policy is that referrals shall not be made for juveniles aged 10 to 12, unless the underlying offense would qualify as a crime of violence. Mitigating factors in the investigatory file include the complexity of the investigation – involving multiple witnesses and suspects across county lines – and Officer #1's relative inexperience with independent field work. The error was also, fortunately, harmless: Officer #1's mistake in issuing the referral was noticed by supervision and intercepted before reaching the Department of Juvenile Services. In light of these considerations, we concur with the Sheriff's recommendation that not administratively charging Officer #1 over this error is proper, and that this lapse is better handled through remedial training than formal discipline.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders

Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights

Procedure 421.2 – Portal Audio/Video Recorder – Authorized Use

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED** with respect to the following allegations against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 901.4 – Non-Custodial Referral Juvenile Services

Discipline

As no allegations are administratively charged, there is no recommendation of discipline to be made.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision contributing to this incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this JUN day of 25, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.


Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

The complaint in this matter was submitted through an email to St. Mary's County Sheriff Steven Hall. The aforementioned email is reproduced in full below:

“To the St. Mary’s County Sheriff Elect,

I am writing to file a formal complaint against Officer [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and to request your immediate attention to a serious situation that directly affects your standing in the community, your position as an elected official, and the oath all officers under your command are required to uphold.

Officer [REDACTED] has, on at least four separate occasions, trespassed on private property in order to collect biometric facial recognition data on children. This data was intended to be shared with AXOM, a publicly traded for-profit company. Furthermore, he has conducted these actions while armed with a semi-automatic weapon equipped with a high-capacity magazine.

When asked to cease his actions and leave the property, Officer [REDACTED] asserted his personal authority to violate the constitutional rights of the public. By claiming this authority, he has effectively forfeited his right to act as a agent of the state.

This complaint is filed in direct opposition to any policy or directive that permits such actions by your office. I must refer you to the following:

- The Fourth Amendment: Guarantees the right to privacy in one’s person, home, and effects.
- The Oath You Swore: To uphold the Constitution and the laws of the United States.
- Presidential Orders 3331-5: Concerning Oaths by government officials also see; Article 5 acts.

If your office is using AXOM cameras to illegally upload the data collected from children, I demand that you cease and desist all such actions immediately. This practice is in violation of both state and federal law.

It is my understanding that no policy, procedure, or “law of the land” can deprive a citizen of their constitutionally protected rights. Furthermore, I want to bring to your attention the following relevant laws:

- Common Law Privacy: Protects individuals from unauthorized intrusion into their personal affairs.
- The Fourth Amendment: As previously mentioned, protects against unreasonable searches and seizures.
- Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA): Prohibits the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information from children under 13 without parental consent.
- Maryland Data Security Act (MDDSA): Requires businesses to implement reasonable security measures to protect personal information, including biometric data.

I pointed out these regulations to Officer [REDACTED], who was acting in concert with a party now found to be committing extortion against [REDACTED]. This follows a previous incident where [REDACTED], a child present during a window-breaking incident, has been unjustly targeted.

After assisting with the Deputies' investigation, Officer [REDACTED] made clear his intention to "charge" [REDACTED] with a crime simply because I asserted the rights afforded to my family as citizens of the United States.

I thank you for your time and service. I write with urgency because this situation, whether Officer [REDACTED] realized it or not, was extremely dangerous for all parties involved.

Please take immediate action to address this serious breach of the public trust and the law."

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]** for violating Sheriff’s Office Policies:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Procedure 421.2 Portable Audio/Video Recorder – Authorized Use	UNFOUNDED
Policy 901.4 Non-Custodial Referral Juvenile Services	NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY CHARGED

Remedial training has already been conducted by supervision with Deputy [REDACTED] [REDACTED] regarding the clerical error.

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-3951

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 6/25/25

Officer(s) Involved¹:

- Lt. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED] (Resigned)

Incident Date: April 15, 2023

Complaint Date Received: July 18, 2024

Incident Location: Area of St. Andrews Church Road and Bellwood Lane, California

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 319.5.8 (q) – Discourteous / Discriminatory Treatment
- 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority (Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Dep. [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8 (a) – False or Misleading Statements (Cpl. [REDACTED], Cpl. [REDACTED], Dep. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Sgt. William Ray, #131

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 4/15/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 100, 319, 500, 503, 301
- Copy of Tort Filed in the Circuit Court for St. Mary's County, 7/24/2024
- State of Maryland Vehicle Crash Report, 4/15/2023
- SMCSO Vehicle Tow/Storage Card
- Alcohol Influence Report Form, [REDACTED]
- Traffic Citation; [REDACTED]
- Intoximeter Worksheet
- CAD Call Information Report, 4/15/2023
- Interior Photos of Complainant's Car
- Criminal Summons on Charging Document, [REDACTED]
- Warrants Report, 6/26/2023

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Pre-Arrest Screening Presentation
- Concepts and Principles of the Standardized Field Sobriety Tests
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Lt. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Lt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED], 9/18/2024
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED], 9/17/2024
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], 9/18/2024
 - o Lt. [REDACTED], 9/17/2024
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], 9/17/2024

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On April 15, 2023, officers from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office ("SMCSO") responded to the area of St. Andrews Church Road and Bellwood Lane for a reported suspicious incident. Arriving at the scene, officers encountered [REDACTED] ("Complainant") and [REDACTED] ("Civilian"). As a result of the following investigation, Complainant was arrested for Driving a Vehicle While Impaired and issued a citation for Following a Vehicle Closer than Reasonable and Prudent.

SMCSO received a Notice of Claim sent by Complainant's counsel on July 18, 2024, alleging police misconduct on the April 15, 2023 incident. Suit was subsequently filed by Complainant's counsel on July 24, 2024, and received by the County on August 14, 2024.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

Complainant's notice and suit do not specify individual officers, but seemingly direct their allegations against all officers involved in the matter. Deputy [REDACTED] ("Officer #1") was the principal case officer.² Deputy [REDACTED] ("Officer #2"), Cpl. [REDACTED] ("Officer #3"), Cpl. [REDACTED] ("Officer #4"), and Dep. [REDACTED] ("Officer #5") were

² Per the investigatory file, Officer #1 separated from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office approximately six months before the filing of Complainant's action.

all present at the scene and assisted handling this incident in some manner. Lt. [REDACTED] (“Officer #6”) administered an intoximeter test to Complainant at SMCSO Headquarters.

The events of this matter seem to begin on eastbound Route 234, as Complainant and Civilian entered St. Mary’s County. As she would further relate to officers that night, Complainant apparently began to suspect that she had been followed by several vehicles as she entered Maryland from Virginia. Civilian would later relate that Complainant was driving erratically, and that Civilian made the decision to pass her on the left. Complainant apparently mistook this maneuver as an attempt to box her in and began, in Civilian’s words, a pattern of activity that included tailing her, exiting her vehicle while stopped at the Route 5/Route 245 intersection in Leonardtown to throw an unknown item at Civilian’s vehicle, and, ultimately, ramming the back of Civilian’s vehicle as they drove on St. Andrews Church Road. As these events unfolded, Complainant and Civilian placed contemporaneous calls to 911 - Complainant to report that she was being followed by unknown vehicles, and Civilian to report that she had been rammed twice from behind by a car.

Officers were able to locate the vehicles in question while they were traveling on St. Andrews Church Road, turned on lights and sirens, and both Complainant and Civilian – as well as a third vehicle, a silver-colored vehicle resembling a Crown Victoria – pulled over. An investigation recorded on the responding officers’ body worn cameras (“BWC”) followed, which we summarize below.

Officers #3 and #5 were the first to arrive on the scene, at approximately 10:12 p.m., while Officers #1, #2 and #4 appeared shortly after. In her conversations with officers, Complainant spoke frantically, appeared disheveled and distraught, and related a belief that several vehicles had followed her for an extended period of time. Her shirt was inside out. Several times she appears to point to vehicles traversing southbound St. Andrew’s Road and saying that “they followed me into Maryland.” Complainant grew out-of-breath at times, and appeared to begin to cry at least twice. She alleged that the Crown Victoria pulled over in front of her had followed her from Virginia; when asked by officers, the driver of that vehicle denied having been in Virginia that evening, or of knowing either Civilian or Complainant. Officer #3 noted damage consistent with a motor vehicle collision on the front of Complainant’s red Toyota Camry. Complainant explained that she was a travel nurse coming to St. Mary’s County to begin a work assignment. She said that if officers retrieved video from a Sheetz in Virginia near the crossing into Maryland that they would see the cars following her.

Officers noted an open Smirnoff Ice bottle containing liquid in the front cupholder of Complainant’s vehicle. There were no other occupants of the vehicle. Asked by officers how many drinks she had consumed that night Complainant said she only had one drink, and had discarded the others she had with her.

Civilian, meanwhile, appeared shaken and confused when first approached. The first words she said were, “I don’t know what that woman’s problem is, I am literally scared for my life right now.” Officers spoke with Civilian, who relayed the events on the road as described above. Damage on the rear of Civilian’s vehicle was noted that was consistent with her allegation that she had been rammed by Complainant.

Officer #1 was the lead officer and decided to administer field sobriety tests. The first test administered was the Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus (“HGN”). As shown on Officer #1’s BWC footage, Complainant appeared unable to complete the test because she could not or would not follow the officer’s instructions not to move her head. Complainant told officers that she had eye surgery approximately a decade ago, and that it affected her. In the first of several deficiencies by

Officer #1 in this matter, Complainant appeared to be chewing gum throughout the HGN, and was not stopped by Officer #1.

Officer #1 then administered the Walk and Turn Test. After being shown a demonstration of the test, Complainant appears to miss heel-to-toe on six steps, made an improper turn, stepped offline twice, raised her arms twice, and took an incorrect number of steps.

Lastly, Officer #1 administered the One-Legged Stand test. Complainant abandoned attempting to complete this test herself, stating she could not do it.

After failure to complete the field sobriety tests, Officer #1 informed Complainant she would be placed under arrest. Complainant became irate and initially refused orders to cooperate, although ultimately complied. She refused to undertake a preliminary breath test.

Taken into custody and transported to SMCSO headquarters, Complainant was administered an intoximeter test by Officer #6. Two breath samples were tested; both resulted in .00 Breath Alcohol Content readings. Officer #6 did not recall any other signs of impairment on Complainant's part at headquarters, and a Drug Recognition Expert was not consulted. Officer #6 was not informed there were allegations Complainant intentionally rammed Civilian. Once paperwork had been completed Complainant was released, and Officer #1 transported her in his vehicle, in handcuffs, to the Extended Stay Hotel where she would be staying. Once there, he unsecured her, then issued Complainant's paperwork to her before leaving for the night.

During the incident, Officer #1 appears to have never investigated the incident as a potential assault, despite the allegations in the matter. He never filled out an assault report, nor did he collect evidence of the alleged assault (such as taking pictures of the damage on Complainant and Civilian's vehicles, or documenting the paint transfer from the front of Complainant's vehicle to the rear of Civilian's).

As the above recitation of facts should demonstrate, we believe the officers acted properly with respect to Complainant. She was not targeted or harassed, and officers did not act with any aggression towards her, and demonstrated professionalism in their dealings with her. Probable cause existed for Complainant's arrest: officers noted the presence of an open container in her vehicle, Complainant admitted to having consumed an alcoholic beverage, and Complainant failed or was unable to complete all field sobriety tests. As reviewed on BWC footage, her behavior and speech appear extremely erratic, an assessment apparently shared by the officers and call center responders who interacted with her that evening. All reports and statements from the officers appear to be accurate and truthful recitations of the events of this matter, as borne out by the ACC's review of all officers' BWC footage.

Though independent of the claims made by Complainant in her Notice of Claim and suit, the ACC must note Officer #1 failed in his basic duty to investigate the allegations of assault Civilian made against Complainant. His failure to investigate the alleged assault is an abject lapse in duty. However, Officer #1 is no longer under the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office's or Administrative Charging Committee's jurisdictions. Accordingly, while we find unfounded all charges against Officers #2, #3, #4, #5, and #6, we make no determination as to any allegation against Officer #1, considering the mootness of those allegations following his separation from SMCSO.

Outcome

With respect to **Dep.** [REDACTED], # [REDACTED], the Administrative Charging Committee makes no determination as to any allegations, as all are moot in light of his separation from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office.

With respect to **Dep.** [REDACTED], # [REDACTED], the Administrative Charging Committee finds **UNFOUNDED** the following alleged violations of agency policy:

Policy 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.5.8(a) – False or Misleading Statements
Policy 319.5.8(q) – Discourteous/Discriminatory Treatment

With respect to **Cpl.** [REDACTED], # [REDACTED], the Administrative Charging Committee finds **UNFOUNDED** the following alleged violations of agency policy:

Policy 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.5.8(a) – False or Misleading Statements
Policy 319.5.8(q) – Discourteous/Discriminatory Treatment

With respect to **Cpl.** [REDACTED], # [REDACTED], the Administrative Charging Committee finds **UNFOUNDED** the following alleged violations of agency policy:

Policy 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.5.8(a) – False or Misleading Statements
Policy 319.5.8(q) – Discourteous/Discriminatory Treatment

With respect to **Dep.** [REDACTED], # [REDACTED], the Administrative Charging Committee finds **UNFOUNDED** the following alleged violations of agency policy:

Policy 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.5.8(a) – False or Misleading Statements
Policy 319.5.8(q) – Discourteous/Discriminatory Treatment

With respect to **Lt.** [REDACTED], # [REDACTED], the Administrative Charging Committee finds **UNFOUNDED** the following alleged violations of agency policy:

Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.5.8(q) – Discourteous/Discriminatory Treatment

Discipline

As no allegations are sustained, there is no recommendation of discipline in this matter.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

We have noted above the inadequacies of Officer #1's handling of the investigation of this matter. To the extent the outcome of this matter is attributable to inadequate supervision, inadequate review of an investigating officer's work, inadequate training, or some combination of the three, we encourage SMCSO to review this matter thoroughly to find process improvements.

We do note the modification of existing policy to require consultation with a DRE when subjects register .00 BrAC, but show levels of impairment inconsistent with that result.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 17th day of July, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.

Nickolas Cromwell

Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against Lieutenant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (q) Discourteous / Discriminatory Treatment	
UNFOUNDED	

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (q) Discourteous / Discriminatory Treatment	UNFOUNDED
Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (a) False or Misleading Statements	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Corporal [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (q) Discourteous / Discriminatory Treatment	UNFOUNDED
Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (a) False or Misleading Statements	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (q) Discourteous / Discriminatory Treatment	UNFOUNDED
Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (a) False or Misleading Statements	UNFOUNDED

Deputy [REDACTED] is no longer an employee of this Sheriff’s Office and Resigned prior to the Tort being filed on July 18, 2024. He was contacted and offered an opportunity to provide a statement and he declined to do so. I do not have any purview over Deputy [REDACTED] to compel him to provide a statement. The recommended policy violations listed in this investigation pertaining to Deputy [REDACTED] do not rise to the level of serious misconduct and are not germane to the allegations listed in the Tort.

As detailed in the Office of Professional Responsibilities (OPR) Report of Investigation, a change to Sheriff’s Office Procedure 500.7 (d) *Under the Influence / Impaired Driving Procedures* will be made.

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”

ST. MARY'S COUNTY
ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGING COMMITTEE

Nickolas Cromwell, Chair



Commissioners of St. Mary's County
James R. Guy, President
Michael R. Alderson, Jr., Commissioner
Eric S. Colvin, Commissioner
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Scott R. Ostrow, Commissioner

CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-5102

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 7/23/25; 8/27/25

Officer(s) Involved:

- DFC [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: September 7, 2024

Complaint Date: September 14, 2024

Incident Location: [REDACTED] Shoreview Drive, Mechanicsville

Complainant: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 319.5.8 (m) – Unreasonable and Unwarranted Force
- 319.5.8 (n) – Exceeding Lawful Police Powers

Agency Review Conducted by: Lt. Joshua Krum, #260

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 4/10/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 100 and 319
- Geographical Boundaries, Patrol Area Map
- Maryland Family Law Code Ann. § 4-509
- Maryland Criminal Procedure Code Ann. § 2-204.1
- Public Portal Complaint Submission
- Photos of Complainants Facebook Posts
- Field Case Report; DFC [REDACTED], 9/7/2024
- Use of Force Report, DFC [REDACTED]
- Photos of Complainant
- Interim Protective Order, 9/4/2024
- Addendum to Petition for Protective Order, 9/1/2024
- Petition for Protection, 9/1/2024
- Temporary Protective Order, 9/4/2024
- Record of Service of Protective Order, 9/4/2024
- Final Protective Order, 9/11/2024
- Record of Service of Protective Order, 9/11/2024
- Offender Arrest Information, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Personal Property Receipt, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- Incident Details, 9/7/2024
- Administrative Investigation Report
- Maryland Judiciary Case Search, State of Maryland v. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, DFC [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On September 14, 2024, [REDACTED] (“Complainant”) submitted a complaint through the Sheriff’s Office’s Public Portal System alleging DFC [REDACTED] (“Officer #1”), during an arrest, used excessive force, violated protocol, and otherwise deprived Complainant of her rights. Contemporaneously, SMCSO became aware of Facebook posts made by Complainant in which she alleged Officer #1 unlawfully arrested her. All accusations pertain to an incident during the evening of September 7, 2024, during which Complainant was arrested for allegedly trespassing and violating the terms of a protective order.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

The events on September 7, 2024, were recorded in full by Officer #1’s body worn camera (“BWC”). Following review of these videos and the other evidence and testimony contained within the investigative file, the Administrative Charging Committee determines all allegations against Officer #1 to be unfounded. Our reasoning follows.

On September 4, the St. Mary’s County District Court granted a temporary protective order that, among other things, forbade Complainant from entering the residence at [REDACTED] Shoreview Drive (“the Property”). The order specified that “residence” included the Property’s “yard, grounds, outbuildings and common areas surrounding the dwelling.” That order remained in effect through September 11.

On the evening of September 7, SMCSO received a report via 911 call that Complainant had been transported to the Property and was “standing on the front porch.” When Officer #1 arrived to the Property he noted the existence of a pile of personal effects outside the Property and made contact with Complainant’s mother, who informed Officer #1 that Complainant had recently been dropped off at the Property, provided proof that Complainant had been served a copy of the temporary protective order, provided a copy of a Notice Not to Trespass previously issued to Complainant, and told Officer #1 that the several black trash bags he noticed piled outside the dwelling were the Complainant’s personal effects that had been transported with her.

After speaking to Complainant's mother, Officer #1 approached Complainant, who was lying on the ground against a neighbor's dwelling. In his following conversation with Complainant, Complainant claimed she had been dropped off by an Uber and showed Officer #1 pictures on her phone of the black trash bags. The pictures were taken from the porch of the Property, from immediately in front of the front door. After Complainant confirmed, several times, that she had taken the pictures herself, Officer #1 informed Complainant she would be placed under arrest for trespassing and violating the terms of the protective order. Complainant immediately grew argumentative and combative and did not place her arms behind her back as directed. On BWC, Officer #1 can be seen placing his right arm above Complainant's left shoulder to secure her left arm behind her back. Officer #1's directives to Complainant to "stop resisting" went unheeded.

As Officer #1 continued to effectuate the arrest, Complainant's head, at one point, briefly brushed the side of the neighboring dwelling she had been leaning against it. There is no evidence this brief contact was willful or caused by any slamming, pushing, or deliberate action by Officer #1. From the BWC and pictures taken of Complainant, no physical evidence of bruising or injuries of any kind appear.

After she was handcuffed, Complainant continued to resist Officer #1 and push against him. At no point was she dragged. After placing Complainant in Officer #1's vehicle, Officer #1 proceeded to complete his investigation, speaking to three additional eyewitnesses present. Video taken during Complainant's transports to the Detention Center, Hospital, and back to the Detention Center show nothing remarkable or out-of-the-scope of a lawful arrest and processing. Officer #1 timely completed a Use of Force Report, which is included in the investigative file.

The evidence in this file vindicates Officer #1. More than sufficient evidence exists to justify the arrest – and state law mandates a law enforcement officer arrest an individual when there is probable cause to suspect he or she is in violation of a protective order. The amount of force used may fairly be characterized as minor, and was certainly no more than that reasonably necessary to secure an uncooperative and combative arrestee. The arrest, and the force used to effectuate it, pass muster under both the Maryland Public Safety § 3-524 (commonly referred to as the Maryland Use of Force Statute) and the test articulated in *Graham v. Connor*, which remains the standard to judge whether a given use of force exceeds what is permitted under the United States Constitution.

In short, the evidence in this matter shows the officer in question used a minor amount of force to effectuate a legitimate arrest, contra Complainant's allegations. Accordingly, we find allegations against Officer #1 to be unfounded.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** as to the following allegations against DFC [REDACTED] (# [REDACTED]):

- Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders
- Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights
- Policy 319.5.8 (m) Unreasonable and Unwarranted Force
- Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Lawful Police Powers

Discipline

As no allegations are to be administratively charged, the ACC makes no recommendations of discipline in this matter.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision which contributed to this incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 27 day of Aug, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

“I was dropped off by an Uber to my dad’s house which my address is listed. I helped the driver get out my bags which I immediately made sure I went to my neighbors and sat on the side of the house off of the property. Then the officer was called and he asked to see when the Uber driver dropped me off I showed him and he quickly grabbed my arms and threw me onto my neighbor wall and I asked him what he was doing I was treated like I was trash and a 300 lb man. I am [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and I am in no way a threat to anyone. He dragged me to his vehicle and he had to pull over bc he didn’t follow protocol and my neighbors called the police bc they saw what he did. I am [REDACTED] and he caused this all. I’ve called everyday to leave messages and get my property back.”

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy First Class [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (m) Unreasonable and Unwarranted Force	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Lawful Police Powers	UNFOUNDED

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-7025

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 7/23/2025; 8/27/2025; 9/17/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- DFC [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]

Incident Date: August 24, 2024

Complaint Date: December 9, 2024

Incident Location: Near [REDACTED] Ada Way, Mechanicsville

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 311.2 – Search and Seizure
- 319.5.8 (n) – Exceeding Police Powers
- 319.5.8 (x) – Conduct Unbecoming

Agency Review Conducted by: Sgt. William Ray, #131

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 4/22/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 100, 311, and 319
- Email of Complaint from [REDACTED], 12/9/2024
- Public Information Act Request Denial Letter and Associated Email Correspondence, 12/9/2024
- Public Information Act Request Denial Letter and Associated Email Correspondence, 9/9/2024
- Public Information Act Request Denial Letter and Associated Email Correspondence, 11/13/2024
- Notification of Investigation, DFC [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On August 24, 2024, DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] (“Officer # 1”) and Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] (“Officer # 2”) performed a neighborhood canvas in the vicinity of Ada Way as part of an ongoing burglary investigation. Neighborhood canvases “aim to contact neighbors who reside adjacent to the incident location to gain additional information, obtain relevant video surveillance, or secure information concerning suspicious/peculiar persons or vehicles in the area during the preceding days/weeks/months prior to the commission of the crime.” During this particular neighborhood canvas, the officers came into contact with at least two neighbors, Complainant among them. Officers spoke with complainant for a little over fifteen minutes. Some time later, and after unsuccessfully requesting copies of the BWC through Maryland’s Public Information Act, Complainant submitted a complaint alleging, *inter alia*, that deputies had not identified themselves and had required Complainant to show his identification in violation of his rights as a private citizen.”²

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

For the reasons that follow we find Complainant’s allegation that his rights were violated to be unfounded.

The ACC was provided copies of the body worn camera (“BWC”) footage from both Officer # 1 and Officer # 2 and was able to review them in their entirety. They portray a polite, professional, and entirely consensual interaction between the officers and Complainant. Beginning shortly before 8:00 p.m. on August 24, both officers arrive and immediately encounter Complainant. Complainant was not treated as a suspect nor detained by the Officers. They were not rude or discourteous to him.

The recordings also contradict Complainant’s specific accusation he was “forced” to provide identification. Officers did not “demand” he produce any identification at any time. Roughly seven minutes into their conversation Officer # 2 asks Complainant, who it appears had begun to access security camera footage on his home in an effort to assist the officers’ investigation, “Do you mind if I just get your name?” Complainant proceeds to voluntarily give his name and phone number to Officer # 2. There is nothing in the conversation, at this moment or another, that strikes the ACC as coercive or intimidating. Officer # 1, who was acting as a supervisor to Officer # 2 during his Field Training Officer program, gave Complainant Officer # 2’s name and contact information and informed Complainant that further inquiries could be directed to Officer # 2.

² Complainant made his frustrations with SMCSO’s continued refusal to supply a copy of the BWC footage as long as the investigation remained “open” a central part of his complaint. Any complaints related to SMCSO or its execution of the MPIA’s “open investigations” exception are not within the jurisdiction of the ACC.

Complainant never voiced a complaint or objection during his interaction with the officers. Nor can we, in our review of the recordings and interviews, find a reason for him to. We find the allegations against both officers in this matter to be unfounded.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 311.2 – Search and Seizure
Policy 319.5.8 (n) – Exceeding Police Powers
Policy 319.5.8 (x) – Conduct Unbecoming

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 311.2 – Search and Seizure
Policy 319.5.8 (n) – Exceeding Police Powers
Policy 319.5.8 (x) – Conduct Unbecoming

Discipline

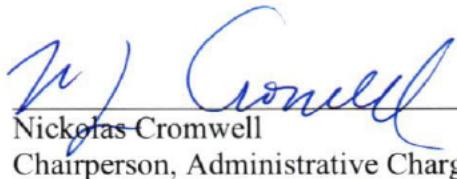
As no allegations are administratively charged, there is no recommendation of discipline to be made.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision which contributed to this incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 17 day of SEP, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

“I am writing to formally submit a complaint regarding an encounter with two deputies from the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office that occurred on my private property on August 24, 2024, at approximately 8:00 PM. While I have attempted to resolve my concerns informally and waited to review body-worn camera (BWC) footage prior to filing this complaint, repeated delays and denials of my Maryland Public Information Act (PIA) requests for the footage have left me with no choice but to proceed with a formal complaint.

Summary of the Incident

On the evening of August 24, 2024, Sheriff Deputy [REDACTED] and his partner entered my private property near [REDACTED] Ada way, Mechanicsville, MD. During this encounter, the deputies demanded that I provide personal identification, including my name, date of birth, and phone number, despite the fact that I was not involved in nor a witness to any alleged criminal activity. Furthermore:

1. Failure to Identify and Provide Contact Information:
 - a. One of the deputies did not provide her name when asked.
 - b. No formal contact cards were provided. Instead, some contact information for Deputy [REDACTED] was handwritten and given to me.
2. Improper Demand for Identification:
 - a. I was informed that I was “required” to provide my identification, despite being on my own private property and not involved in any criminal investigation.
 - b. This raises significant concerns about whether the deputies misrepresented their authority or lacked understanding of Maryland law, which does not require individuals to provide identification unless they are being lawfully detained or arrested.
3. Possible Lack of Training:
 - a. Based on their conduct, the deputies appeared inexperienced and possibly fresh out of the academy. Their approach undermined community trust and suggested a need for additional training to ensure proper handling of civilian interactions, particularly on private property.
4. Delays in Access to Body-Worn Camera Footage:
 - a. Despite assurances by Deputy [REDACTED] that I could request and review the BWC footage, my PIA requests have been repeatedly denied on the grounds that the investigation is still “open.” This indefinite delay raises concerns about transparency and accountability, especially when the footage is critical to verifying the details of this encounter.

Policies and Laws Implicated

- St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office Policies: Deputies are required to identify themselves and provide a contact card when requested during interactions with civilians. Failure to do so violates professional standards and erodes public trust.

- Maryland Law: Under GP § 4-351, the withholding of public records, such as BWC footage, is permissible for open investigations. However, indefinite delays without a clear timeline or justification for the “open” status may be unreasonable and contradict transparency obligations under the Maryland Public Information Act.
- Civil Rights Concerns: The demand for identification without legal justification violates my rights as a private citizen and sets a concerning precedent for overreach by law enforcement.

Request for Resolution

I am not seeking punitive action but rather improvements to ensure the following:

1. Comprehensive Retraining: Both deputies should receive additional training on proper protocols for interacting with civilians, particularly regarding the handling of interactions on private property, the limits on their authority to demand identification, and the importance of providing full identification and contact cards upon request.
2. Transparency and Accountability: Expedite the release of the requested BWC footage or provide a concrete timeline for when it will be available.
3. A Formal Apology: An acknowledgement of the issues raised and an assurance that steps will be taken to prevent similar occurrences in the future would go a long way in restoring trust.

Conclusion

I am submitting this complaint not to have anyone dismissed but to ensure that these deputies and the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office as a whole maintain the community’s trust through adherence to professional standards and legal protocols. I trust you will take this matter seriously and investigate the concerns raised here.

I have also copied the ACLU of Maryland to ensure transparency and awareness of this issue. Please feel free to contact me if further information is required.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response”

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF'S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy First Class [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.2 Seach and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Police Powers	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (x) Unbecoming Conduct	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.2 Seach and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (n) Exceeding Police Powers	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (x) Unbecoming Conduct	UNFOUNDED

This investigation is a clear example of how the Sheriff's Office Complaint Process can be used with malice and as a retaliatory platform for people who are unhappy with a process, policy or clearly established law. The interaction with Mr. [REDACTED] on the Deputies' Body Worn Cameras (BWCs) speaks for itself and is completely opposite of the allegations submitted to OPR. It is unfortunate my investigators had to divert their valuable time away from other pressing matters.

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-6054

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 7/23/2025; 8/27/2025; 9/17/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Cpl. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: September 7, 2024

Complaint Date: October 16, 2024

Incident Location: [REDACTED] Webb Lane, Leonardtown

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.5.8 (m) – Unreasonable / Unwarranted Force
- 311.3 – Search and Seizure – Searches

Agency Review Conducted by: Cpl. Daniel Sidorowicz, #328

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 5/19/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 311 and 319
- Incident Details, 9/7/2024
- Field Case Report; Dep. [REDACTED], 9/7/2024
- SMCSO Domestic Violence Supplemental
- Domestic Violence Lethality Screening
- Petition for Emergency Evaluation; [REDACTED], 9/7/2024
- Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Sgt. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Maryland Judiciary Case Search, State of Maryland v. [REDACTED]
- Photos of [REDACTED]
- Photos of [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Notification of Investigation, Cpl. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - Dep. [REDACTED], 4/24/2025

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On September 7, 2024, Deputy [REDACTED] (“Officer # 1”) responded to [REDACTED] Webb Lane, Leonardtown, Maryland (“the Property”) for a reported domestic disturbance. At the residence, Officer # 1 found complainant and her domestic partner embroiled in a physical altercation. Several other SMCSO personnel would shortly arrive on scene to assist Officer # 1, including Cpl. [REDACTED] (“Officer # 2”). Following SMCSO’s investigation, Complainant was taken into custody. Complainant alleges she was assaulted and subjected to undue physical force during the arrest.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

Officer # 1 responded to the Property shortly after 8:00 a.m. on September 7 for a reported domestic disturbance. His body worn camera (“BWC”) was active for the entirety of his interaction with Complainant, and the Administrative Charging Committee (“ACC”) had the benefit of being able to review the full video record of Officer # 1 and other SMCSO personnel’s interactions with complainant that morning. For the reasons discussed further below, we find all allegations made by Complainant to be unfounded.

From Officer # 1’s arrival at the scene, Complainant was verbally combative and noncompliant. She initially denied Officer # 1’s entry to the dwelling, could be observed physically aggressing her boyfriend through the window, and left the front door barricaded by furniture. Complainant’s boyfriend can audibly be heard on BWC recordings imploring the officer to effect entry to the house. After an extended delay, Complainant eventually opened the door after being told the door would be forced if Complainant remained noncompliant.

Once inside, Officer # 1 found both Complainant and her boyfriend bearing signs of injury. Complainant’s boyfriend had a minor laceration on his forehead, which he claimed to be from a glass Complainant broke during the altercation. Complainant presented with bruising to her eye and scratching on her neck. Both made countering allegations as to who was to blame for

“starting” the incident. Complainant alleged the incident began when she accused her boyfriend of using drugs and of being unfaithful, at which point he pushed Complainant; Complainant’s boyfriend, for his part, told officers that the first act of aggression occurred when Complainant “smacked a glass,” which led him to retreat to the Property’s bathroom, pursued by Complainant. Both largely agree that Complainant was able to “overpower” Complainant’s boyfriend.

Notably, Complainant’s boyfriend alleged that Complainant’s injuries were the result of self-harm.

The investigation was complicated by Complainant’s continued aggression and failure to abide instructions. At several points, she attempted to exit the Property and verbally assault her boyfriend, who was standing outside. After a lengthy investigation, Officer # 1 determined Complainant was the primary aggressor in the interaction. Complainant was advised she was under arrest. She was not, in the following interactions, cooperative. Complainant refused to place her hands behind her back and resisted Officer #1 and Officer # 2’s attempts to take her into custody. After being restrained, Complainant was taken to Officer # 1’s vehicle. She continued to argue, urinated on herself, and refused to be seated in the vehicle. The officers were forced to physically move and shift her legs to place her in the vehicle.

Complainant continued yelling and physically bashing herself against the interior of the vehicle. Officers made the determination to transport Complainant to St. Mary’s Hospital for an emergency evaluation, rather than transport her immediately to the Detention Center. At the hospital, Complainant was taken outside of the vehicle and immediately proceeded to lunge into the nearby wall, striking the left side of her head against it. From BWC of the officers present, it appears this was entirely self-inflicted. Officers retained a physical hold on Complainant as they walked her into an emergency room. When Complainant again attempted to strike her head against a window, Officer # 2 grabbed Complainant’s hair in an attempt to restrain her movement and prevent her from purposely striking her head again. Challenged to explain his motivation for doing so by Complainant, he said, “Well, please don’t hit your head” before releasing his grip. Complainant then proceeded to strike her head against a nearby glass door. Complainant was, at some length, eventually able to be taken to an emergency room and restrained to a hospital bed.

The force used by the officers as the above facts transpired appear justified from the factual record before the ACC. Any use of force must pass muster under both Maryland’s Use of Force Statute (Public Safety Article § 3-524) and the United States Constitution’s guarantees of due process. Under the state law, any use of force must be necessary, proportional, and reasonable under the totality of any given circumstances and must be used only to prevent an “imminent” threat of physical injury or to effectuate a legitimate law enforcement objective. The due process analysis, analyzed through the familiar framework of *Graham v. Connor*, employs a similar “totality of the circumstances” test to determine whether a given use of force is appropriate. The legitimate law enforcement objective is the effectuation of Complainant’s arrest, supported by ample factual predicate that she was the primary aggressor in the underlying domestic disturbance. Officers used the reasonable minimum of force required to take Complainant under arrest when faced with her resistance. They used a similarly appropriate amount of force to transport her, even in the face of her continued resistance and resorting to attempts at self-harm.

In short: we find Complainant’s allegations of assault and excessive force unfounded by the hours of video recording and interview transcripts provided as part of the investigatory file.

Outcome

P.O. Box 653 • GOVERNMENTAL CENTER • 41770 BALDRIDGE STREET, LEONARDTOWN, MD 20650
PHONE 301.475.4200 x1700 • FAX 301.475.4660 • www.stmarysmd.com

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.5.8 (m) – Unreasonable / Unwarranted Force
Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure – Searches

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.5.8 (m) – Unreasonable / Unwarranted Force
Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure – Searches

Discipline

As no allegations are sustained, the ACC makes no recommendations of discipline in this matter.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no direct failures of supervision which contributed to this incident. We do note, however, Officer # 1's delayed entry into the Property during the initial minutes he responded to the scene, and the length of the subsequent investigation. The ACC understands this incident occurred very recently after that Officer's completion of SMCSO's Field Training Program. We note that it seems additional training will be provided to this officer.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 17 day of SEP, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.


Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy**
[REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (m) Unreasonable / Unwarranted Force	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure – Searches	UNFOUNDED

Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Corporal**
[REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (m) Unreasonable / Unwarranted Force	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure – Searches	UNFOUNDED

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-5478

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 7/23/2025; 8/27/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: June 22, 2024

Complaint Date: September 25, 2024

Incident Location: 22780 Three Notch Road, California

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 319.5.8 (m) – Unreasonable / Unwarranted Force
- 311.3 – Search and Seizure – Searches
- 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority
- 600.3.1 – Investigation – Evidence Collection
- 319.5.8 (q) – Discourteous, Disrespectful Treatment

Agency Review Conducted by: Sgt. William Ray, #131

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 5/6/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 319, 100, 310, and 305
- Public Portal Complaint Submission
- Incident Report, Dep. [REDACTED]; 6/22/2024
- Domestic Violence Lethality Screening
- SMCSO Domestic Violence Supplemental
- Incident Report; Det. [REDACTED], 7/3/2024
- Incident Report; Dep. [REDACTED], 7/26/2024
- Incident Report; Dep. [REDACTED], 8/3/2024
- Incident Report; Dep. [REDACTED], 8/9/2024
- Photos of [REDACTED]
- Photos of [REDACTED]
- Statement of Charges
- Statement of Probable Cause
- Request for Witness Summons
- Arrest Report; [REDACTED], 6/22/2024

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Maryland Criminal Procedure Code Ann. § 2-204
- Maryland Family Law Code Ann. § 4-701
- Warrants Report
- Offense Report
- Maryland Judiciary Case Search, State of Maryland v. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o [REDACTED], 10/3/2024
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] 4/30/2025

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On September 22, 2024, [REDACTED] / [REDACTED] (“Complainant”) submitted a complaint against Dep. [REDACTED] / [REDACTED] (“Officer #1”) through the Sheriff’s Office’s Public Portal, with a three-page letter attached. The complaint alleges, in summary, that Officer # 1 inappropriately intervened in what Complainant and her husband believe ought to have been treated solely as a “family matter” and acted unlawfully when he placed Complainant under arrest on June 22, 2024. SMCSO rendered the complaint into five distinct allegations:

1. SMCSO should not have intervened in a “family conflict;”
2. Officer # 1 did not have sufficient facts and evidence to support Complainant’s arrest;
3. Complainant was wrongfully detained;
4. Complainant was “forcibly arrested;” and,
5. Officer # 1 was rude.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

Based on the factual record contained in the investigative file, the ACC finds all allegations against Officer # 1 to be unfounded. Our summary and reasoning follows.

On June 22, 2024, SMCSO responded to the Sheetz gas station at the corner of Three Notch Road and Chancellors Run Road for a report that a male and a female had been engaged in a physical altercation in the parking lot. Upon arrival, officers contacted an eyewitness who identified Complainant and her husband (hereinafter, “Husband”) as the subjects of that report.

Officer #1 was the lead investigative officer on this matter. Review of the body worn camera ("BWC") and his conversations with Complainant and Husband lay bare the language barrier that existed in this matter. Most communications with Husband were facilitated by Language Line Solutions.

The basic narrative that unfolded over the course of the investigation is that Complainant and Husband became embroiled in an argument over who should drive their vehicle. Complainant and Husband were apparently on the way, with their children, to Washington, DC but had fallen behind schedule. This caused a verbal altercation in the car that left Complainant pronouncedly upset. Husband told the officers that he, believing Complainant was "not emotionally stable to operate the vehicle," had turned the car off while Complainant was in the driver's seat and removed Complainant from the vehicle by her waist, and that Complainant reacted to this viscerally, scratching Complainant deeply enough to draw blood. Pictures of the injury were taken and included in the investigative file.

An eyewitness interviewed by SMCSO described the altercation in the parking lot as "flailing" and "yelling." SMCSO also determined the wounds sustained by Husband were made, most likely, before Complainant was removed from the vehicle.

At the conclusion of the investigation, Officer # 1 informed Complainant she was to be arrested for assault. Both Complainant and Husband disagreed with this outcome. Complainant was taken to a more private location to be taken into custody, outside the view of her children.

There is no merit to Complainant's allegation that the arrest was unlawful because Complainant and Husband wanted to confine the incident to a "family matter." "Crimes are committed against society as well as against the victim." *Clark v. State*, 97 Md. App. 381 (1993). A victim's reluctance or refusal to press charges is not grounds for law enforcement to refuse to perform its duty when presented with probable cause a crime has occurred. Here, there is sufficient evidence to support a finding that probable cause existed for Complainant's arrest. Both parties admitted an altercation had taken place; eyewitnesses reported the altercation; there were wounds left upon Husband as a result of the altercation. Law enforcement is not required to turn a blind eye to such facts because the victim would will it.

Because custody of Complainant was at all times predicated upon a legitimate law enforcement objective – either the investigation of an alleged domestic assault, or the arrest for it -- it is inaccurate to claim Complainant was at any point "wrongfully" detained.

As to the factual allegations that Complainant was "forcibly" arrested and that Officer # 1 was rude, there is no evidence on the BWC to suggest either. Officer # 1 conducted an appropriate investigation, in spite of difficulties imposed by the language barrier between SMCSO and the parties in question. To the extent Complainant's allegation suggests Officer # 1 used excessive or undue force in effectuating the arrest, review of the BWC shows force was not employed at the arrest. After initially verbally protesting the arrest, Complainant was otherwise compliant. She was handcuffed and placed in a vehicle for transport without incident. All officers, including Officer # 1, were polite and professional during all stages of the investigation and arrest.

Accordingly, we find the complaints against Officer # 1 to be unfounded.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** as to the following allegations against **Deputy** [REDACTED] (# [REDACTED]):

Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.8 (m) Unreasonable / Unwarranted Force
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure – Searches
Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority
Policy 600.3.1 Investigation – Evidence Collection
Policy 319.5.8 (q) Discourteous, Disrespectful Treatment

Discipline

As no allegations are to be administratively charged, the ACC makes no recommendations of discipline in this matter.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision which contributed to this incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 27 day of Aug, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

“My name is [REDACTED]. I am a resident of St. Mary’s County. I currently live at [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. My contact number is [REDACTED], my workstation is [REDACTED] and I am an active-duty service member. I moved to live in St. Mary’s County on 21 June 2024 for my work. On 22 June 2024, I was arrested by your police department for the so-called “assaulted second degree” and was charged with criminal charges. On 29 August 2024, I was found not guilty after a trial in the St. Mary’s County Court.

Facts of the complaint:

On the evening of 21 June 2024, our family came to a hotel in the small town of California in St. Mary’s County and stayed there. Since it was still early to report to my command, we decided to take the children to the capital Washington the next day. On the morning of the 22 June 2024, our family had breakfast and prepared to leave. Generally, my husband drives us when we go out. My husband is [REDACTED]. At that time, my husband could not find the address after entering it into the GPS, so I was a little impatient because we had an appointment and said that he was too stupid and could not drive without GPS. I asked him to drive to Washington first and then find the address. My husband was a little unhappy about this, so there was some quarrel.

Due to the car needing to be refueled, my husband drove the car to a nearby gas station. After I refueled the car, I asked my husband to sit in the A driver seat. I was ready to drive myself and started the engine. My husband felt I was not in a good mood and was worried it would be unsafe for me to drive, so he suggested that he drive and reached out to turn off the engine, which made me a little angry, so there was some dispute. During the dispute, I accidentally scratched a small wound on the back of my husband’s right hand, and there was slight scratch bleeding. Later, after my husband’s persuasion, I sat in the A driver seat again.

My husband sat in the driver’s seat, entered the GPS, started the car and started our journey. This is the whole story of the conflict between my husband and me. This is a conflict between husband and wife that every family often encounters in daily life. We solved it by ourselves and started our normal journey.

But we didn’t expect that we would be stopped by the police car just after we started our journey. My husband and I were very surprised at that time, because we didn’t have any traffic violations at that time. After being stopped, we heard from police that they stopped us because someone called the police.

When the police explained the reason to us, my husband and I expressed our understanding and cooperated with the police investigation. We explained the reason and process of the matter to the police and told the police. This is our family conflict, and we have solved it ourselves. We have started our journey. We didn’t call the police ourselves, and we didn’t want the police to intervene. If the matter ended like this, it would be very reasonable, and there would be no complaint today.

But the subsequent development of the matter was completely beyond our imagination, which made us feel very incredible and unable to understand it with normal logical thinking. For such an ordinary family conflict, the police first separated my husband and me and repeatedly questioned us. We repeatedly explained that this was just a small family conflict and that we had solved it ourselves. We did not need the police to intervene. However, the police insisted on not giving up. They repeatedly questioned and investigated us and went to the gas station to retrieve the video footage of the day. The whole morning was deadlocked. As a result, not only did our family itinerary for the day be delayed, but in the absence of sufficient facts and evidence, the police forcibly arrested me for “second-degree assault”, handcuffed me, and took me to the detention center, and filed a criminal prosecution against me.

Reasons for the complaint:

First, my husband and I had conflicts and disputes over trivial matters in life. This is completely normal in life and something that happens in every family. We are both rational adults and we can solve it ourselves. There is no need for the police to intervene forcibly. After the police stopped us, my husband and I repeatedly explained the cause and process of the incident to the police, and repeatedly stated that we had solved it ourselves, we did not call the police, and did not need the police to intervene. Under such circumstances, the police still intervened forcefully. This is a blatant offense to our family and a rude interference in our married life with public power. We cannot understand or accept this at all.

Second, my husband and I had a conflict and quarrel because of our trip. This is a common thing in married life, and it is also a matter of mutual consent between husband and wife. After the police investigate and understand, they can criticize, educate, fine, and warn. But in any case, this is completely unrelated to criminal offenses and intentional injury. The police convicted me on this ground, forcibly arrested, detained, and prosecuted me. This is an obvious qualitative error. This not only violated my personal dignity and had a negative impact on my reputation, but also caused serious harm to my body and mind.

Third, I am the mother of two children, the life support and spiritual support of my children. The police questioned me in front of my two young children, handcuffed me, forcibly took me to the police car, and took me to the detention center. This hurt the image of a mother in the young hearts of my children and left an indelible shadow on the young hearts of my two children.

Fourth, I am an active-duty military service member. I am serving the country. I have always abided by the law and have no criminal record or strain in my life. However, on the first day I stepped into St. Mary's County, I was arrested for the first time in my life, handcuffed for the first time, entered the detention center for the first time, and stood in the dock as a defendant in the court for the first time. This is the greatest shame in my life, which makes me ashamed to face my sacred duties, my colleagues, and my superiors.

My complaint request:

On 29 August 2024, the St. Mary's County Court has made a not guilty verdict on this case, and the law has proved that I am not guilty. The county court's ruling also proves that your police department's arrest, detention, and prosecution of me on 22 June 2024, were completely wrong. The police department should bear full responsibility for this wrong arrest, detention, prosecution, and the adverse effects and consequences caused by it:

1. In order to maintain the dignity of the law and to safeguard the legitimate rights and interest of citizens, the county police department is required to make a public written apology for this wrong law enforcement, wrong arrest, wrong detention, and wrong prosecution.
2. I request the county police department also revoke all relevant files and written records of this case and take specific measures to eliminate all adverse effects and consequences caused to me by this case.
3. Due to the wrong arrest, wrong detention, and wrong prosecution o the police department, my work, my family, my life, and my children have all been negatively affected and caused unnecessary trouble. In particular, the county police department's wrongful arrest, wrong detention, and wrong prosecution of me have caused me great mental pressure, so I request the police department make necessary financial compensation for this."

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Below are my recommended findings as they relate to allegations made against **Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (m) Unreasonable / Unwarranted Force	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure – Searches	UNFOUNDED
Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 600.3.1 Investigation – Evidence Collection	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (q) Discourteous, Disrespectful Treatment	UNFOUNDED

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2024-6635

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 9/17/25; 10/29/25

Officer(s) Involved:

- Sgt. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]

Incident Date: November 17, 2024

Complaint Date: December 25, 2024

Incident Location: [REDACTED] N. Sandgates Road, Mechanicsville

Complainants:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force
- 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority
- 425.6 – Activation of Portable Recorder

Agency Review Conducted by: Sgt. William Ray, #131

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 8/4/2025
- Copy of Complaint Form Submitted through the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Public Portal, 12/25/2024
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 100, 319, 425, and 421
- Final Protective Order
- Record of Service of Protective Order, 10/15/2024
- Field Case Report; Dep. [REDACTED] 11/17/2024
- Supplement Field Case Report; Dep. [REDACTED] 12/15/2024
- Supplement Field Case Report; Dep. [REDACTED] 12/29/2024
- Supplement Field Case Report; Dep. [REDACTED] 1/16/2025
- Supplement Field Case Report; Dep. [REDACTED] 11/17/2024

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- SMCSO Domestic Violence Follow-up, 11/19/2024
- Arrest Report, [REDACTED]
- Arrest Details, [REDACTED]
- Statement of Charges; [REDACTED]
- Statement of Probable Cause; [REDACTED]
- Request for Witness Summons
- Arrest Details, [REDACTED]
- Statement of Charges, [REDACTED]
- Statement of Probable Cause, [REDACTED]
- Request for Witness Summons
- Arrest Details, [REDACTED]
- Arrest Warrant, [REDACTED]
- Statement of Charges, [REDACTED]
- Application for Statement of Charges, [REDACTED]
- AXON Evidence Audit Trail; Dep. [REDACTED] 11/17/2024
- Still Photos from BWC Footage of the Incident
- Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Use of Force Report, Sgt. [REDACTED]
- Writ of Summons
- Complaint/Application and Affidavit in Support of Judgment
- General Liability Loss Report
- Third Party Property Damage/Bodily Injury Statement General Liability
- CAD Notes Dissemination, 11/17/2024
- Notification of Investigation, Sgt. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o [REDACTED], 12/30/2024
 - o [REDACTED], 11/26/2024
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED], 6/27/2025

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On November 17, 2024, Sheriff's Office personnel responded to [REDACTED] N. Sandgates Road ("the Property") for a reported domestic disturbance. Upon arrival, Sgt. [REDACTED] ("Officer #1") and Deputies [REDACTED] ("Officer #2") and [REDACTED] ("Officer #3") contacted [REDACTED] ("Family Member #1") and his ex-girlfriend. Upon investigation, the officers determined Family Member #1 violated a protective order between he and his ex-girlfriend. When the officers moved to place Family Member #1 under arrest, a heated physical confrontation between the Officers, Family Member #1, Family Member #1's father [REDACTED] ("Complainant"), [REDACTED] ("Family Member #2"), [REDACTED] ("Family Member #3"), and [REDACTED] ("Neighbor #1") ensued.

Approximately a month later, Complainant submitted a complaint through the Sheriff's Office's public portal alleging, among other things, that the officers used excessive and unlawful force, and failed to adequately investigate the underlying domestic disturbance complaint.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

The Administrative Charging Committee ("the Committee") finds the allegations in this case unfounded. In summary, the Officers appear to have possessed an adequate factual predicate to take Family Member #1 under arrest; that Family Member #1 actively resisted that lawful arrest; that several other family members present deliberately interfered in the effectuation of that arrest; that a general physical altercation between the officers and the assembled family members and neighbors present ensued, the entirety of which appears to have been captured on a combination of body worn camera ("BWC") and home security footage made available to the Committee for viewing; that the physical altercation was not instigated by the officers; and that the force used by the officers in the ensuing altercation was necessary and proportional not only to effectuate the arrest, but to protect the officers from physical harm. Our more detailed discussion follows.

On November 17, 2024, Officers #1, #2, and #3 arrived at the Property to investigate a reported domestic disturbance. The Property appears to be a family residence belonging to Family Member #1's father, Complainant. Family Member #1 stated he was upset his ex-girlfriend had arrived an hour early to pick up their children. Family Member #1 acknowledged that a protective order is in place against him. Speaking to the ex-girlfriend, who was visibly upset and crying, she stated that Family Member #1 had "pushed" her and grabbed her by the neck and thrown her to the ground. Redness was observed on her neck. Other family members present would not speak to the officers and Complainant refused access to home security footage.

The officers determined Family Member #1 should be placed under arrest. Family Law § 4-509(f) states a law enforcement officer "shall" arrest any person whom the officer has probable cause to believe is in violation of a protective order. Approaching Family Member #1 once more, Officer #1 informed him he would be placed under arrest. On Officer #3's BWC, at timestamp 16:54:59, Family Member #1 can clearly be seen resisting Officer #1, placing his hands on Officer #1 and pushing him. The Officers and the assembled family members were in tight quarters in the driveway of the Property, hemmed in by several parked cars on either side. As Family Member

1 pushes Officer # 1, Officer # 1 and Officer # 3 quickly move to restrain and physically secure Family Member # 1. Family Member # 1 continued to resist, and the involved family members joined the altercation. Officer # 2, who was away from the two other officers as well, quickly moved to assist the other officers as the confrontation unfolded.

The following situation was chaotic. The three officers struggled to restrain Family Member # 1 and others who had joined the physical struggle. As Officer # 3 attempted to restrain Family Member # 1, Family Members # 2 and # 3 physically aggressed Officer # 3 from behind. Family Member # 2 appears to jump on the back of Officer # 3 to prevent him from arresting Family Member # 1. Neighbor # 1 and Complainant joined the fray as well. The officers continued to struggle to physically restrain the individuals and restore order.

In all, the altercation lasted approximately three and a half minutes. At some length, Officer # 2 produced his Taser and presented the laser, pointing it toward the ground. As the individuals were secured most, if not all, appeared to continue physically straining and resisting arrest.

In the ACC's review, the uses of force employed by the officers appear necessary to effectuate lawful arrests and quell a dangerously escalating scene. At the level of the federal Constitution, use of force is lawful so long as it is "reasonably" necessary, in the totality of the circumstances, to further a legitimate governmental interest, and should be weighed against such factors as the severity of the crime at issue, the immediacy and level of threat an individual presents to other, and the split-second nature of decision-making in rapidly involving, consequential moments. See, generally, *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386 (1989). At the state level, Maryland's Use-of-Force statute condones uses of force when it is necessary to effectuate a legitimate law enforcement purpose or to prevent an imminent threat of physical injury to a person, and so long as the use of force is ceased once an exigency passes or an individual is under control. Public Safety § 3-524. The ACC's review of the records – inclusive of body worn camera footage, home surveillance footage, interviews, and the other documentary evidence in the investigative file – leads the Committee to unwaveringly conclude use was necessary to control the situation, and that the level of force employed was commensurate to the involved individuals' resistance to arrest or interference in the lawful resist of others.

Accordingly, the ACC concurs with the recommendations of the Sheriff's Office and finds the allegations made by Complainant to be unfounded against all three officers.

Beyond the Complainant's allegations of excessive force, Complainant also alleged the officers intentionally activated and deactivated their BWCs. There is no substantiating evidence before the ACC. BWC was activated and deactivated in accordance with agency policy during the investigation, and officers made no deliberate efforts to deactivate BWC during the scuffle. Some inadvertent deactivations or displacements occurred – Officer # 3's BWC was dislodged when he was tackled, for example, and Officer # 2 inadvertently deactivated his BWC when reaching for his Taser – but there is no evidence suggesting these were intentional. Nor did any of the inadvertent activations prejudice the ACC's ability to review this matter; between all BWCs and the surveillance footage, a full video record of the altercation appears to be preserved. The ACC concurs with the Sheriff's Office and concludes no violations of agency policy with respect to body worn camera activation and deactivation occurred.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Sergeant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force
Policy 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority
Policy 425.6 – Activation of Portable Recorder

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Sergeant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force
Policy 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority
Policy 425.6 – Activation of Portable Recorder

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Sergeant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 319.5.8(m) – Excessive Force
Policy 100.3.1 – Arrest Authority
Policy 425.6 – Activation of Portable Recorder

Discipline

As no allegations are administratively charged, there is no recommendation of discipline to be made.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision which contributed to this incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 20 day of NOV, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

On December 25, 2024, one of the complainants listed in this investigation, [REDACTED] submitted a formal complaint submission through the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Public Portal. The complaint included the following text:

“On November 17, 2024 my Son [REDACTED] & I were working on his truck I observed his wife [REDACTED] arrive at our residence unannounced & uninvited, my Son had custody of his children through court protective order, he asked her to leave repeatedly, she did not he immediately called 911 & asked for an officer to come due to his restraining order, deputy [REDACTED] ID# [REDACTED] & Dep, [REDACTED] ID# [REDACTED] arrived at approximately 4:25 pm, dep. [REDACTED] questioned my son [REDACTED], while Dep, [REDACTED] questioned his wife [REDACTED], [REDACTED] repeatedly asked deputy [REDACTED] to have her leave deputy [REDACTED] questioned myself & others if we witnessed [REDACTED] assault his wife in any way we said no assault occurred & advised that there was home video that showed no assault occurred, Sgt [REDACTED] arrived approximately 4:35 pm, he requested that my son retrieve the court papers which he did they reviewed for 10 minutes peacefully while we continued to work on his vehicle, Sgt [REDACTED] walked over to Deputies & talked to them for appr, 5 minutes Deputy [REDACTED] walked away back to his vehicle, at this time [REDACTED] asked them to have her leave again, Sgt [REDACTED] approached my son [REDACTED] & pushed him backwards against the vehicle we were working on, this action caused them to fall on the ground, Deputy [REDACTED] helped Sgt [REDACTED] up & my son-in-law helped [REDACTED] up off the ground, at this point Sgt [REDACTED] placed my son into custody, I asked Sgt [REDACTED] what he was being arrested for, (As I Turned around with my back to Sgt, [REDACTED] & Dep, [REDACTED] DEPUTY [REDACTED] Approached & GRABBED both of my arms & threw me to the ground, about 4' away, as I was getting up off the ground I watched Dep, [REDACTED] throw my younger son (a minor under age 18 to the ground & he landed half under my vehicle cutting his head & arm, (which he was taken to the hospital in an ambulance treated and released)I grabbed dep, [REDACTED] vest straps to pull him off of my minor son, once he was off my son I let go of his vest & walked away appt, 3 to 4' he approached me again & told me to put my hands behind my back which I complied, Dep, [REDACTED] approached & pulled out his Taser, at this point my Daughter [REDACTED] [REDACTED] pointed at our cameras & advised him that this was being video recorded he immediately holstered his taser & walked away, Sgt, [REDACTED] approached & placed me in handcuffs, all these occurrences happened due to Deputy [REDACTED] escalating the situation. This whole situation could have been diffused & avoided if Deputy [REDACTED] or Sgt [REDACTED] would have looked at the Video & asked [REDACTED] to leave the premises. Sgt [REDACTED] is on video slamming my son [REDACTED] head into my vehicle while he was handcuffed with his hands behind his back this was blatant & intentional causing damage to the rear right corner panel & taillight, my son could have severe head trauma due to these actions.”

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Listed below are my recommended findings as they pertain to the allegations made against Sergeant [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8(m) Excessive Force	UNFOUNDED
Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 425.6 Activation of Portable Recorder	UNFOUNDED

Listed below are my recommended findings as they pertain to the allegations made against Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8(m) Excessive Force	UNFOUNDED
Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 425.6 Activation of Portable Recorder	UNFOUNDED

Listed below are my recommended findings as they pertain to the allegations made against Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8(m) Excessive Force	UNFOUNDED
Policy 100.3.1 Arrest Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 425.6 Activation of Portable Recorder	UNFOUNDED

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2025-0787

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 8/27/2025; 9/17/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- No Individual Officers Specified by SMCSO

Incident Date: January 29, 2025

Complaint Date: January 30, 2025

Incident Location: 20105 Point Lookout Road, Great Mills

Complainants:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 100.2 – Law Enforcement Authority
- 311.2 – Search and Seizure
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.5.8 – Exceeding Police Powers
- 319.5.8 (x) – Conduct Unbecoming
- 421.4 – BWC – Ending a Recording

Agency Review Conducted by: Lt. Joshua Krum, #260

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 7/18/2025
- Facebook Post from [REDACTED]
- Copy of Complaint Form Submitted through the Police Accountability Board, 1/31/2025
- Case Report Details
- Field Case Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Alcohol Influence Report Form, [REDACTED]
- Supplement Field Case Report, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Copy of Citations Issued to [REDACTED], 1/29/2025
- Order of Suspension of Drivers License, [REDACTED]
- Preliminary Breath Test Advisement of Rights, [REDACTED]
- Maryland State Police Forensic Sciences Report, 2/27/2025
- Incident Details, 1/29/2025
- CAD Notes Dissemination, 1/29/2025
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:

- Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- DFC [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Sgt. [REDACTED]

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On January 30 and 31, 2025, the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office received or became aware of multiple external complaints. These complaints were made through the Police Accountability Board's online portal, Facebook, and telephone. All complaints pertained to a recent traffic stop conducted in Great Mills by SMCSO personnel. The two young females, [REDACTED] ("Complainant # 1") and [REDACTED] ("Complainant # 2"), subject to the stop alleged that SMCSO personnel physically and sexually assaulted the subjects, compelled them to ingest controlled substances, and took other unlawful acts.

SMCSO began an investigation promptly and contacted both Complainants. Both Complainants recanted or otherwise distanced themselves from the allegations once contacted.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

The factual record contains no evidence to support the allegations made against the Sheriff's Office in this matter whatsoever.

On January 29, 2025, Complainant # 1 was pulled over for driving erratically. Complainant # 2 was a passenger in her vehicle. Several SMCSO officers were present at the traffic stop, and all appear to have had body worn cameras ("BWC") active for the duration of the stop and subsequent arrest. Complainant # 1 was subjected to field sobriety tests, which she failed to satisfactorily complete. Officers' BWC, as well as dash cameras in vehicles, appear to capture the entirety of SMCSO's interactions with both Complainants, including Complainant # 1's arrest and booking at the Detention Center. A female officer appears to have waited with Complainant # 2 until she could be picked up by another friend.

At no point is any officer observed assaulting or harassing either suspect. There is, in short, no evidence before the ACC that substantiates their claims in any way.

Interviews of the Complainants by officers who investigated the complaints are also included. In their separate interviews, the Complainants directly contradict the substance of their original complaints – Complainant # 2 explicitly saying, at one point, "No male officer touched

me." Complainant # 2 denied making allegations of assault or inappropriate touching at all. Complainant # 1 stated she did not want to pursue her complaint any further upon being interviewed.

Outcome

The allegations made in this matter are determined to be **UNFOUNDED**. The Complainants did not name any specific officers, and the Sheriff's Office did not list any deputy as a particular Respondent in this matter. We will not disturb this choice by the Sheriff's Office.

Discipline

As no allegations are to be administratively charged in this matter, the ACC makes no recommendations of discipline.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision which contributed to this incident.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 17 day of SEP, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

On January 31, 2025, one of the complainants listed in this investigation, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] submitted a formal complaint through the Police Accountability Board. The complaint included the following text:

“My friend and I were pulled over for a traffic violation. We explained we were dealing with an aggressive driver who we try to tell multiple times to pass us and the aggressive driver wouldn’t. The driver called the cops and claimed we were throwing things out the car windows and that I had a taser. We explained we only had our hands out the windows and I have a blue vape in my hand and yelled please just go around. After we got pulled over and explained to the officers what happened my friend was asked to do a sobriety test. It was told that she did not fail any of the tests given to her but she was still arrested and was handled harshly. When I asked what was going on I went to step out of my friend’s car and stepped on her purse and broke her bottle of medicine and her medication flew all over the side of the passenger car. We both explained that my friend is legally prescribed I legally can not take Xanax for I am bi polar and it throws me in a severe manic bi polar rage. I explained that to both the female officers that I did not take any of my friend’s medicine and that I had also broke her medication bottle as I was stepping out the car so I wouldn’t get in trouble. The female officers wouldn’t explain anything to me and one said she would arrest me because I was slurring my words when I was not. I was crying and scared and had no idea what was going on and asking the other female officers not to hurt my friend because they were very aggressive and put the handcuffs on way to tight. In the middle of all that a male officer gave me a full body search. He groped my breasts and I have a small bruise on one of my breasts. He then proceeded to shove his hand in my pants and past my underwear and he put 2 fingers inside of my vagina and fingered me. No other officer saw this or even payed attention. I was pulled away. I have bruises on my wrists from the male officer along with a bruise on my Breast and hips. The male officer then pulled out what I know is my friend’s prescription Xanax and there was 10 pills in his hand. He asked me if I knew what these were and I explained I did and told him I broke the bottle and gave him every detail information I could. The officer held my jaw open and forced me to swallow the pills. You’re supposed to make me feel safe. Now I’m scared and assaulted and was drugged by one of your officers and can never trust the police. They refused their name and badge # all of them”

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“The evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that the complainants reported to police felony offenses allegedly committed by deputies, which, upon investigation, were determined never to have occurred. These false reports triggered two separate investigations—criminal and administrative—placing an undue burden on both detectives and the Office of Professional Responsibilities (OPR) staff. Not only did these baseless allegations unjustly disparage the integrity of the deputies involved, but they also resulted in a significant expenditure of time and resources to investigate claims that were clearly unfounded.

When later interviewed by detectives, the complainants distanced themselves from the allegations previously made through recorded phone calls, the PAB Complaint Portal, and social media posts. One complainant explicitly stated that she never made the allegations at all. Based on these developments, I am not listing any of the deputies as Respondents in this matter. The following are my findings:

Policy 100.2 Law Enforcement Authority	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.2 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 Exceeding Police Powers	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (x) Conduct Unbecoming	UNFOUNDED
Procedures 421.4 BWC – Ending a Recording	UNFOUNDED

Criminal charges are being filed against both complainants for making a False Statement to a Police Officer.

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2025-0946

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 8/27/2025; 9/17/2025

Officer(s) Involved:

- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]

Incident Date: February 10, 2025

Complaint Date: February 12, 2025

Incident Location: [REDACTED] Jenna Court, Lexington Park

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 311.3 – Search and Seizure
- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 319.5.8 (q) – Discourteous Treatment (Dep. [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Cpl. Daniel Sidorowicz, #328

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 6/4/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies:
 - o 311 and 319
- Copy of Complaint Form Submitted through the Police Accountability Board, 3/12/2025
- CAD Notes Dissemination, 2/10/2025
- Incident Details
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o [REDACTED], 2/20/25
 - o Sgt. [REDACTED], 3/7/25
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], 3/11/25
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], 4/16/25

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On February 10, 2025, Dep. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] ("Officer # 1") and Dep. [REDACTED] ("Officer # 2") responded to [REDACTED] Jenna Ct., Lexington Park, MD 20653 for a child welfare check. [REDACTED] ("Complainant"), the child in question's mother, submitted a complaint through the Police Accountability Board's online portal that officers were rude and confrontational to her in the investigation that followed, and made the following specific allegations that she had been deprived of her rights:

1. Unreasonable search and seizure
2. Infringement upon her right to free speech and expression
3. Denial of equal protection under the law
4. Deprivation of Complainant's right to a fair and impartial investigation

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

For the reasons discussed below, the ACC finds the allegations made against the officers in this matter to be unfounded.

On February 10, Officer # 1 arrived at the property at roughly 4:30 p.m. He made contact with a neighbor who informed the officer that Complainant's 9-year old son had been standing at the front door of the Property and knocking, without being given entry, since being dropped off by his school bus. The temperature was approximately 41 degrees and neighbors reported that the son is typically dropped off by his bus at approximately 3:30 p.m. Officer # 1 was also informed that the son had an [REDACTED]. The neighbor informed Officer # 1 that the car at the Property was Complainant's and that she believed Complainant was home.

Officer # 1 observed the son and the neighbor knock at the front door and attempt to use a doorbell camera. Officer # 1 opened the Property's back gate, entered the fenced yard, and attempted to knock on the rear door, which was locked. Not receiving any response, Officer # 1 returned to the front. Shortly thereafter, Complainant opened the front door and her son entered the residence. Officer # 1 spoke to Complainant and advised her to keep the door open because he needed to speak to her. Complainant kept the door open approximately a foot and appeared to Officer # 1 to be on the verge of closing it, and Officer # 1 placed his foot in the door's threshold to prevent it from ever fully closing.

Officer # 1 engaged Complainant in a conversation about why she had not responded to her son's knocking on the door. She claimed that she had trouble getting downstairs due to a foot injury and denied having fallen asleep. When asked what time it was she reported it being "almost

four" when it was, in reality, about a half-hour later. Officer # 1 was also made aware of a previous call for service at the house from Child Protective Services approximately one month prior.

After some length, Officer # 2 arrived on the scene. Officer # 1 left Officer # 2 with Complainant while Officer # 1 spoke to neighbors to continue his investigation. Officer # 2 made minimal small talk with Complainant during the approximately half-hour Officer # 1 took to continue and complete his investigation. At the conclusion of his investigation, Officer # 1 returned to Complainant to tell her she was free to go.

Officer # 1's behavior and investigation appear reasonable in light of the circumstances. He arrived to the scene of a small child locked out of his home, with no apparent custodial figure in sight. Neighbors reported the child possessed special needs which would make him more vulnerable than a typical child of the same age. Complainant's explanation of why she took so long to respond to the front door, at a time her son would customarily be dropped off by his school bus, did not, understandably, immediately dispel Officer # 1's reasonable suspicion that an instance of child neglect had occurred.

A reasonable suspicion having been established, Officer # 1 was entitled to temporarily detain Complainant – and, in so far as keeping his foot in the door constituted a "search," to search Complainant's home – to allay that suspicion and ensure the child would not be placed at harm of further neglect if left in Complainant's custody. The "search," even if warrantless, can be justified in light of the officer's reasonable concern that Complainant's son, having just been left outside for an hour, was not safe being left with Complainant without further investigation. Maryland law recognizes exceptions to warrantless searches "when a substantial risk of harm ... to others would arise if the police were to delay until a warrant could be issued." *Williams v. State*, 372 Md. 386, 402 (2002). We believe the facts of this case warrant application of this exception.

As to Complainant's remaining allegations of discourteous conduct and deprivation of constitutional rights, Officer # 2 was consistently polite and professional. Officer # 1, at times, spoke to Complainant pointedly but never insultingly, nor unprofessionally. As to Complainant's claims of constitutional violations, there is no predicate whatsoever to sustain any allegation Complainant's First Amendment rights were violated – or even implicated by either officer's actions. Officer # 1's investigation was thorough, fair, and obviously motivated by concern for Complainant's child's welfare, rather than personal animus against Complainant herself.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

- Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure
- Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- Policy 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- Policy 319.5.8 (q) – Discourteous Treatment

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** with respect to the following allegations against **[REDACTED] # [REDACTED]**:

- Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure
- Policy 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights

Discipline

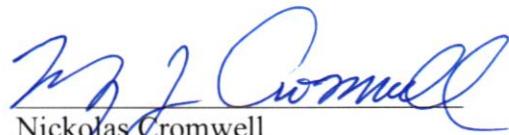
As no allegations are to be administratively charged, the ACC makes no recommendations of discipline in this matter.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision in this matter.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 17 day of SEP, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.


Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

On February 12, 2025, the complainant submitted a formal complaint through the Police Accountability Board. The complaint included the following text:

“I am writing to report an incident involving Deputy [REDACTED], a sheriff's deputy from St. Mary's County Sheriff's Department, who I believe violated my civil rights and caused me emotional distress. The incident occurred on 02-10-2025 on Monday at approximately 4:35 pm at my residence, [REDACTED] Jenna Court, Lexington Park, Maryland.

On 02-10-2025, I was late opening the door for my son after school. Officer Deputy [REDACTED] arrived at my residence and began questioning me in a rude and confrontational manner. Despite explaining that I was not appropriately dressed for the cold weather, he insisted that I keep the door open and wait for over an hour while he called Child Protective Services (CPS). I felt intimidated, harassed, and emotionally distressed by his behavior.

I believe that Officer Deputy [REDACTED] violated my civil rights, specifically:

1. *Fourth Amendment*: Unreasonable search and seizure
2. *First Amendment*: Infringement upon my right to free speech and expression
3. *Fourteenth Amendment*: Denial of equal protection under the law
4. *Due Process*: Deprivation of my right to a fair and impartial investigation

I have evidence of the incident, including a recording from my Ring camera, which captures the conversation between Officer Deputy [REDACTED] and me.

I request that your agency conduct a thorough investigation into this incident and take appropriate action against Officer Deputy [REDACTED]. I would appreciate it if you could provide me with information on the progress of the investigation and any subsequent actions taken.

If you require any additional information, media or documentation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your attention to this matter”

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF’S RECOMMENDATION

“Listed below are my recommended findings they pertain to the allegations made against
Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8 (q) Discourteous Treatment	UNFOUNDED

Listed below are my recommended findings they pertain to the allegations made against
Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2025-2539

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 9/17/25; 10/29/25

Officer(s) Involved:

- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: April 13, 2025

Complaint Date: April 13, 2025

Incident Location: Southampton neighborhood in Lexington Park

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing

Agency Review Conducted by: Sgt. Artina Alvey, #275

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 7/11/2025
- SMCSO Administrative Investigation Report, 4/13/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 319 and 401
- Traffic Violation Warning; [REDACTED], 4/13/2025
- Maryland Transportation Code Ann. § 13-411
- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o Dep. [REDACTED], 7/10/2025

APPENDIX:

#1: Original Complaint

#2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On April 13, 2025, [REDACTED] (“Complainant”) submitted a complaint against Dep. [REDACTED] (“Officer”) alleging that a traffic stop made by Officer earlier that day was the result of unlawful profiling. Namely, Complainant alleged she was pulled over because of the neighborhood she pulled into.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

On April 13, 2025, Officer was performing stationary traffic enforcement. The Officer positioned his vehicle in the entrance to Carver Heights Community Park, a little over a mile from the intersection of Route 235 and Route 246. Shortly after 4:10 p.m., Complainant passed Officer’s vehicle. Officer noted that the vehicle did not have a required front license plate, a feature required by Traffic Article § 13-411(a). Officer immediately prepared to follow Complainant and pulled out of his stationary position just as Complainant was turning right onto Lincoln Avenue, an entrance to the Southampton neighborhood.

Complainant’s allegation rests upon an assumption that Officer only chose to pursue Complainant when he saw her pulling into the Southampton neighborhood. The evidence in this matter does not support that assumption. Lincoln Avenue is approximately 500 feet south of where Officer stationed his vehicle. There are two southbound lanes on the particular section of Route 235 where this matter took place; there is a shoulder, but no dedicated turn lane. Complainant was traveling in the right-most southbound lane and appears to be traveling at a normal speed when she passes Officer. No turn signal or braking lights are visible on the exterior Motor Vehicle Recorder (“MVR”) when Complainant passes Officer. In an interview, Officer stated he did not see a turn signal. Complainant can be seen on the MVR making her turn into Southampton just as Officer pulls onto Route 235 from his parked position, approximately ten seconds after Complainant passed him. The interior Motor Vehicle Interior shows he immediately prepared to leave after Complainant passed his vehicle. He spent the few seconds after Complainant passed him placing a pair of binoculars held in his right hand into a bag on the passenger seat of his patrol vehicle, during which time his face and eyes are oriented forward; he does not appear to be tracking the Complainant’s vehicle closely. There is nothing in the video recordings of Officer that suggest he was tracking Complainant and waiting to see if she would turn before deciding to initiate the traffic stop.

Once he was on Route 235, Officer followed Complainant into the Southampton neighborhood and followed her. The traffic stop that followed was mutually polite, cordial, and professional. Officer explained the stop was conducted because there was no front license plate affixed to Complainant’s vehicle as required by law, something Complainant acknowledged. She explained that she recently got the car and that her dealer was in the process of ordering her a plate, and that she “kind of figured” that would be what the stop was for. Officer issued Complainant a warning for the missing front license plate and promptly left.

In all, the stop lasted approximately 7 minutes. The entirety of it was captured on Officer’s body worn camera (“BWC”). There is nothing in the recorded video that suggests the stop was initiated as a result of profiling or bias of any stripe, implicit or explicit.

Accordingly, we find the allegations unfounded in this matter.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** as to the following allegations:

With respect to Dep. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing

Discipline

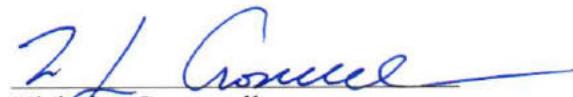
As the ACC makes no finding that any officer should be administratively charged, there are no recommendations of discipline in this matter.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision that contributed to this matter.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 29 day of OCT, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell
Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

On April 13, 2025, Complainant submitted a formal complaint submission through the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Public Portal. The complaint included the following text:

"Deputy [REDACTED] pulled decided to pull me over once I made the turn into South Hampton neighborhood. When I checked my rearview mirror when passing him he was still sitting in his spot. I was at my destination and he came around the corner with his lights on. His reason was for my tag not being attached but my vehicle is new and the dealer told me they would have to order me a bracket. Which I explained to him, but what I don't understand is why he waited until I made that turn into the neighborhood. I am very upset about the incident and no apologies can make me feel any better. It did not help that I had my son with me, who did not understand why he was behind us all of a sudden. I do believe I was profile because of that neighborhood. And I think if I did not turn into that neighborhood he would have never pulled me over."

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF'S RECOMMENDATION

“Listed below are my recommended findings as they pertain to the allegations made against Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.2 Biase-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”



CONFIDENTIAL

**PER PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE § 3-104(H), ALL CONTENTS TO BE KEPT
CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL FINAL DISPOSITION**

Matter Number: OPR2025-2549

Date(s) Reviewed by ACC: 9/17/25; 10/29/25

Officer(s) Involved:

- Dep. [REDACTED], # [REDACTED] 1
- DFC [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]
- DFC [REDACTED], # [REDACTED]¹

Incident Date: February 23, 2025

Complaint Date: April 16, 2025

Incident Location: 22530 Three Notch Road, California

Complainant: [REDACTED]

Allegations:

- 319.4 – Violation of Constitutional Rights
- 319.5.1 (c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
- 311.3 – Search and Seizure (Dep. [REDACTED] and DFC [REDACTED])
- 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing (Dep. [REDACTED] and DFC [REDACTED])
- 319.5.8(b) – Truthfulness (Dep. [REDACTED] and DFC [REDACTED])

Agency Review Conducted by: Sgt. David Potter, #255

Evidence in Administrative Investigatory File:

- Report of Investigation by St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, 6/5/2025
- Copy of Complaint Form Submitted through the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Public Portal, 4/17/2025
- SMCSO Administrative Investigation Report, 4/17/2025
- Copy of the following St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures:
 - o 311, 319, 401 and 520
- Field Case Report; Dep. [REDACTED], 2/23/2025
- Alcohol Influence Report Form, [REDACTED]
- Copy of Citations Issued to [REDACTED], 2/23/2025
- Order of Suspension of Drivers License, [REDACTED]
- Statement of Charges, [REDACTED]; 2/23/2025
- Statement of Probable Cause, [REDACTED]; 2/23/2025
- CAD Notes Dissemination, 2/23/2025
- Case Report Details
- Personal Property Receipt, [REDACTED]

¹ All law enforcement officers serve in the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, unless otherwise noted.

- Notification of Investigation, Dep. [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, DFC [REDACTED]
- Notification of Investigation, DFC [REDACTED]
- Body Worn Camera Footage of:
 - o DFC [REDACTED] #
 - o DFC [REDACTED] #
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] #
 - o Dep. [REDACTED] #
- Transcripts of SMCSO Interviews with:
 - o CO [REDACTED] 5/30/2025

APPENDIX:

- #1: Original Complaint
- #2: Sheriff's Recommendation

BACKGROUND

Summary of Complaint & Agency Investigation

On April 16, 2025, [REDACTED] (“Complainant”) submitted a written complaint alleging that on February 23, 2025 personnel from the St. Mary’s County Sheriff’s Office performed an unlawful traffic stop, arrested and charged Complainant without probable cause, illegally searched the vehicle Complainant was operating, unlawfully took a registration card from the vehicle, and made a false report against Complainant. Complainant speculated the personnel involved may have been influenced by racial bias against Complainant.

DETERMINATION

Discussion and Findings

At approximately 10:45 p.m. on February 23, Dep. [REDACTED] (“Officer #1”) performed a traffic stop on a vehicle operated by Complainant, after he observed the vehicle with inadequate lighting for rear license plate registration. With Officer #1 was Dfc. [REDACTED] (“Officer #2”), who was field training Officer #1 on the evening in question. Separately, Dfc. [REDACTED] (“Officer #3”) arrived at the scene as well.

Once Complainant came to a stop Officers #1 and #2 approached her vehicle. The officers’ body-worn camera (“BWC”) footage shows the rear license plate lights to be dim and display an inadequate level of illumination. Asked to produce her license, Complainant asked, “Oh my God, do you want me to be honest with you?” After Officer #2 stated he would like her to be honest, Complainant said her husband would need to come to get the car. Complainant was then asked to exit the vehicle.

Upon exiting the vehicle, BWC shows Complainant to be leaning against the back of it as she continued to speak to the officers. Among other things, Officer #2 asked Complainant if there was registration in the vehicle. Complainant said it was in the glove box; Officer #2 asked for permission to retrieve it; permission was granted. As Officer #2 approached the passenger door, Complainant retracted that permission – a retraction Officer #2 honored when he ceased, at that time, moving to retrieve the registration.

During the conversation, Officer #3 peered into the vehicle and observed what appeared to be a bottle of alcohol in the backseat. Complainant said, "Before you sit there and try to blame that one on me, I just dropped my sister off." She later stated she drank tequila several hours previously. Officer #1, in his report, stated that Complainant had "glossy" eyes and slow, slurred speech, both of which appear observable on BWC as well. Complainant refused to perform field sobriety tests. Officers then placed Complainant under arrest.

There appears to be probable cause for both the traffic stop and the arrest. The rear plate lights were inadequate, and the dim lighting can be seen on BWC. Upon her admission that she did not have a license there was more than reasonable suspicion to extend the stop and further investigate that admission. Complainant's behavior, actions, mannerisms, and the presence of a bottle of alcohol in the vehicle, in plain view from the outside, all support a finding of probable cause that Complainant may have driven the vehicle under the influence of alcohol on the evening in question.

There is no indication the officers were aware of Complainant's race before performing the traffic stop, and no indication their actions were animated by impermissible animus or bias.

Complainant's remaining allegations relate, chiefly, to what happened to the search of the vehicle and retrieval of the registration card in the vehicle after Complainant's arrest. Following her arrest, the officers conducted a lawful search of the vehicle incident to its operator's arrest. The search was conducted primarily by Officer #1, while Officer #2 instructed and guided Officer #1 – professionally and accurately – to the proper extent of a search. The registration card was located by Officer #2 in the glovebox and handed to Officer #1, who placed it on the dashboard of his patrol vehicle. Registration was required to complete the traffic citations which would be made against Complainant, and for other paperwork routinely prepared as part of processing. Shortly after the search of the vehicle, Complainant's husband arrived at the scene and was allowed to drive the vehicle away; Complainant's husband stated he would contact employees of the nearby Wawa to seek permission to park the vehicle there.

Upon arrival at the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center ("SMCDRC") Officer #2 can be seen, on BWC, handing the registration card to Correctional Officer [REDACTED] ("Correctional Officer #1") The registration card was returned to Complainant upon her release from the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center.

As before, there is nothing improper or unlawful about the search, the retrieval of the registration card, or the officers' handling of it upon retrieval. Warrantless searches of vehicles incident to an arrest – within reasonable limits – are recognized as constitutionally sound and lawful. See, e.g., *Arizona v. Gant*, 556 U.S. 332, 351 (2009) ("Police may search a vehicle incident to a recent occupant's arrest only if ... or it is reasonable to believe the vehicle contains evidence of the arrest."); *Taylor v. State*, 448 Md. 242 (2016) ("We do know that other courts have sustained passenger compartment searches, under *Gant*, following an arrest for driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated, on the premise that there is reason to believe that other evidence of that offense may be found in the vehicle... We agree with that result in this case") (internal citations omitted). There is more than sufficient evidence to establish reasonable articulable suspicion further evidence of the alleged crime may have been found in the vehicle; at a minimum, a container of alcohol could already be seen through the window of the vehicle, even before a search was conducted.

In summary, we find nothing improper or unlawful about the officers' behavior in this matter. Accordingly, we find the allegations in this matter to be unfounded.

Outcome

For the reasons noted above, the ACC makes findings of **UNFOUNDED** as to the following allegations:

With respect to **Dep.** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] :

Policy 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure
Policy 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing
Policy 319.5.8(b) – Truthfulness

With respect to **Dfc.** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] :

Policy 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 319.5.1(c) – Laws, Rules and Orders
Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure
Policy 401.3 – Bias-Based Policing
Policy 319.5.8(b) - Truthfulness

With respect to **Dfc.** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] :

Policy 319.4 - Violation of Constitutional Rights
Policy 311.3 – Search and Seizure

Cpl. [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] as a correctional officer, is not within the definition of "police officer" set forth in Public Safety § 3-201(f), and therefore is not within the ACC's jurisdiction.

Discipline

As the ACC makes no finding that any officer should be administratively charged, there are no recommendations of discipline in this matter.

Failures of Supervision Contributing to the Incident

The ACC notes no failures of supervision that contributed to this matter.

Conclusion

This constitutes the written determination of the St. Mary's County Administrative Charging Committee with respect to the above-captioned matter. The final written report is adopted on this 29 day of OCT, 2025, and will be delivered to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office within five (5) days.



Nickolas Cromwell

Chairperson, Administrative Charging Committee

APPENDIX 1 – ORIGINAL COMPLAINT

Original complaints will be appended to each opinion, in so far as possible. In cases where complaints cannot be readily reproduced (because, for example, they are made verbally or over the span of multiple communications) a summary will be provided. This appendix will cover an original complaint only and will not necessarily reflect how the investigation of an original complaint may evolve over time.

On April 17, 2025, Complainant submitted a formal complaint submission through the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Public Portal. The complaint included the following text:

"On Feb 23 I [REDACTED] had my friend [REDACTED] drive my husband Ford expedition for me to pick my daughter up for work. We shop by Hall's corner store an she went inside to buy something then we stopped by shells gas to gas up. Her sister [REDACTED] was riding with us to. while we were there they started arguing over something stupid. They were drinking I wasn't feeling too good and my license was suspended that was the whole reason I needed a driver. My daughter who just had a baby a sta ding outside at [REDACTED] where she works. I tried to get them to calm down bit they would not stop things got worse so I left them. While going down 235I noticed a sheriff car following me for quite a bit of time.So I switched lanes to see what the sheriff car would do. They pulled me over.Then dep [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] as well as dep [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] walking up on my husband expedition asking me how I was doing tonight I said ok. Then they told me they couldn't see the tags very well. Ask me for my license registration and insurance. I told dep [REDACTED] that my license were suspended.He lied on the police report an said he had to look it up. I was very respectful and anioish. Then they walked back towards the sheriff car talking then a third dep came dep [REDACTED] [REDACTED] All three officers body cameras will confirm what I a saying.Dep [REDACTED] walked back over I told him my license is suspended an I was trying to go to jail tonight.He asked me if I had something to drink I told him tequila shot earlier today. Then they started talking quietly again then dep [REDACTED] [REDACTED] asked me if I would like to take a sobriety test I refused. I have a extensive health historyI have been thru a lot.At That time I was placed under arrest an read my Miranda rights.Thru the whole experience I was nothing but respectful and anioish with all officers. I then ask dep [REDACTED] [REDACTED] if I could call my husband to come pick up the vehicle. He said yes so me let me call my husband. My husband is 71 years old he told my husband to hurry up or the truck will be towed. As my husband was on the way they illegally searched our truck without consent period. He told me they found alcohol in the truck. I had no idea what he was talking about . He let me smoke a cigarette thaths how respectful i was. He didn't give me a chance to tell him about my 2 friends I left the shell gas station. My husband came on the scene an dep [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] let my husband drive away with the open alcohol still in my truck.Then we get to Leonardtown I spend the night in jail. Dep [REDACTED] gave 6 charges placing the alcohol on me.charging me with driving under the influence. The reason why I don't know . My friends left the alcohol behind the drivers seat an he still charged me. upon my release I discovered dep [REDACTED] had removed my husband registration his vehicle while doing the illegal search. Putting my husband who is a senior citizen at risk to get in trouble driving around with no registration an open alcohol in the truck that they never poured out. He stole my husband's property without consent. So he did a illegal search, didn't tow the truck, didn't pour out the alcohol,took my husband registration to his truck then released it in my property once they released me, pulling my husband at risk a senior to get in trouble,Then to make matters worst he is asking states attorney to give me more punishment. I a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This officer needs to fired immediately. I think he mite be racist too.He wrote mthe report about me all lies then stole from my husband. Didn't do his job right. Making false reports on me,illegal searches. Please check his body footage for the nigh you will be surprised about the

report he made versus the camera footage. Dep [REDACTED] is a corrupt officer that breaks the law him self. Just look at the footage for 02/23/2025 I never blew he is going to be in court room 2 lying staying that he has a bac level for”

APPENDIX 2 – SHERIFF'S RECOMMENDATION

“Listed below are my recommended findings as they pertain to the allegations made against Deputy [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.2 Biase-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8(b) Truthfulness	UNFOUNDED

Listed below are my recommended findings as they pertain to the allegations made against **Deputy First Class** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.1 (c) Laws, Rules and Orders	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED
Policy 401.2 Biase-Based Policing	UNFOUNDED
Policy 319.5.8(b) Truthfulness	UNFOUNDED

Listed below are my recommended findings as they pertain to the allegations made against **Deputy First Class** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED]:

Policy 319.4 Violation of Constitutional Rights	UNFOUNDED
Policy 311.3 Search and Seizure	UNFOUNDED

The allegation made against Correctional Officer **Corporal** [REDACTED] # [REDACTED] does not fall under the purview of the ACC and will be handled internally.

Steven A. Hall, Sheriff.”