



**MINUTES  
PUBLIC WORKSHOP  
of THE MARY ESTHER CITY COUNCIL  
March 25, 2026 - 6:00 PM**

195 Christobal Road – North, Mary Esther, FL 32569

**CITY COUNCIL PRESENT**

Chris Stein, Mayor  
April Sutton, Councilmember  
Susan Coxwell, Councilmember

Bernie Oder, Mayor Pro Tem  
Larry Carter, Councilmember  
Richard Lawson, Councilmember

**CITY STAFF PRESENT**

Jared Cobb, City Manager  
Hayward Dykes, City Attorney (Virtual)  
Dillon Morris, City Clerk

Kelvin Cherry, Code Compliance Officer  
Heather Day, Finance Director  
Shawn Lindsey, Public Works Director

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Michael Rader, OSCO Captain

Jeff Wagner, OCWFD Chief

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Stein at 6:00 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Stein led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. ROLL CALL**

The City Clerk called the roll as reflected above.

**4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

**4.1. Wastewater Force Main Project Update**

City Manager Jared Cobb presented the wastewater force main project, discussing why the topic is being brought to council, the previous project timeline, the options for council, the force main funding plan, comparative annual cost analysis, and annual rates. Mark Wise, Deputy Director of Okaloosa County Water Sewer, discussed the current plant at the county and the current plans of Hurlburt Field. Scott Jernagin, Jacobs, discussed the capabilities of Mary Esther's current water treatment plant. Mark Wise continued discussing potential changes in Florida regulations. City Manager Cobb continued discussing key considerations. There was some discussion among the council.

**4.2. Law Enforcement Services Review**

City Manager Jared Cobb presented the law enforcement services review (presentation attached), discussing why it is being brought before the council, the current contract, and baseline coverage. Michael Rader, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, discussed the current services the sheriff's office is providing to the city, patrols around the city, the difference between Mary Esther and the county, what policing in the community looks like to him, and community relations. There was some discussion among the council. Chad Rewis, of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, discussed the deputies, the services they provide to the city, and what enhanced services entail. There was more discussion among the council. City Manager Cobb continued discussing call data, service activity highlights, supplemental public safety tools, and questions for council discussion. Captain Rader presented numbers to the council comparing Mary Esther to others (presentation attached). There was more discussion among the council.

**5. CLOSING REMARKS**

Council came to the consensus that the wastewater force main project update needed to come back in the April regular meeting, and the law enforcement services agreement in the May regular meeting.

Josh Robinson, Jacobs, provided some comments on lines that had sand coming in again, needing to be

recleaned and recamera'd, and on getting quotes for repair.

City Manager Cobb discussed the plaque for the new city hall and what is wanted on it, presenting a mock-up (see attachment).

**6. OTHER COMMENTS**

Councilmember Sutton said she hopes everyone enjoys their coasters.

Councilmember Coxwell had no additional comments.

Councilmember Lawson had no additional comments.

Mayor Stein had no additional comments.

Councilmember Carter welcomed Captain Ranger.

Mayor Pro Tem Oder had no additional comments.

City Attorney Dykes had no additional comments.

City Clerk Morris asked for direction on how to proceed with the city submitting yard of the month candidates.

City Manager Cobb had no additional comments.

**7. ADJOURN**

The council meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Minutes approved at the  
meeting.

4/6/2026

Dillon Morris

Dillon Morris, City Clerk



# Law Enforcement Services Review

## Law Enforcement & Supplemental Tools

City of Mary Esther, Florida

City Council Workshop | March 25, 2026

*Understanding our law enforcement arrangement, reviewing crime data,  
and exploring options to serve our community effectively.*

# Why We Are Here

This workshop is an opportunity to better understand our law enforcement arrangement, review what the data tells us about crime in Mary Esther, and discuss how to serve our community most effectively going forward.

1

## Our Coverage

How does Mary Esther fit into the OCSO's patrol structure?

2

## Our Data

What do crime trends tell us about public safety in Mary Esther?

3

## Our Options

What tools can address traffic and commercial corridor concerns?

*No formal action is required today. Council direction will be brought back for formal action at a regular meeting.*

# The Current Contract

**\$321,061**

Annual Cost  
(FY 2026)

**2**

Dedicated  
Deputies

**\$80.63**

Per Capita  
Cost

**47%**

Cost Increase  
Since FY2020

## What the contract provides:

- Two patrol deputies (~11 hrs/day avg; schedule is flexible; not backfilled)
- One school crossing guard (4 hrs/day, 180 days/yr) at no additional charge
- Designated OCSO Captain serves as City's point of contact
- City retains right to request deputy replacement; Sheriff retains personnel control
- Two deputies is the minimum — a one-deputy contract is not available
- Either party may cancel with 90 days' notice

# Baseline Coverage: A Structural Question

*"Every unincorporated area within the county is staffed and patrolled regularly. When contract deputies are not on duty, there is no regular active patrol within Mary Esther."*

— OCSO Information Request Response, March 2026

	Zone 21 (Mary Esther)	Zone 23 (Unincorp.)
Active Patrol	~11 hrs/day avg (flexible)	24/7 baseline patrol
Off-Hours	Reactive calls only	Active patrol continues
Annual Cost	\$321,061	\$0

This is not a question about the quality of deputies or services. It is a question about how services are structured — and whether baseline coverage should exist independently of the contract.

***Staff recommends requesting formal zone assignment regardless of the contract decision.***

# Crime-Related Calls: Trending Down

Source: OCSO CAD/RMS dispatch data. These are calls responded to, not confirmed offenses.

	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026 (5 mo)
Property Crime Calls	157	105	47
Violent Crime Calls	14	16	8
Total Calls	171	121	55

- Property crime calls declined ~33% from FY2024 to FY2025, coinciding with Santa Rosa Mall store closures
- Initial analysis: ~70% commercial corridors (Hwy 98 and Mary Esther Blvd), ~30% residential
- OCSO confirmed Target generated 30 property crime calls and follow-ups in 6 months
- Violent crime calls are low and stable — zero murder calls across the entire reporting period
- **Next step: Work with OCSO to obtain UCR/NIBRS confirmed offense data for benchmarking**

*These numbers cannot be compared to other communities. CFS data measures something different from the published crime rates used by the FBI and FDLE.*

# Service Activity Highlights

## Priority 1 Response

Contract deputies handle **~40%** of Priority 1 calls

Non-contract OCSO units handle the remaining ~60%

2,460 P1 calls over 6 months  
(Sep 2025 – Feb 2026)

## Traffic Stops

**278 stops** (Dec 2025 – Feb 2026)

86% warnings

9% citations

3% arrests

*Revenue from off-duty speed details  
should be discussed with the OCSO  
before projecting budgets.*

**Bottom line: Crime-related calls are trending down. The question for Council is how to build on this positive trend and allocate resources where they will have the greatest impact.**

# Options for Council

The OCSO will not offer a one-deputy contract. Each option can be supplemented with the tools in Sections 5–6.

## Option 1: Continue Contract

~\$321,000/yr

- Two dedicated, community-familiar deputies
- Designated Captain as City point of contact
- School crossing guard included
- Full sworn authority; ~40% of P1 calls
- Costs have increased 47% since FY2020
- Only source of proactive patrol in city

## Option 2: No Contract

~\$321,000/yr redirected to general fund

- Request formal zone assignment for baseline patrol
- OCSO still responds to all dispatched calls
- Off-duty deputies available via RollKall
- Enhanced Code Compliance presence
- Loss of crossing guard & designated Captain
- City operated without contract in FY2018

# Supplemental Public Safety Tools

These tools can enhance public safety under either option.

## Off-Duty Deputy Details (RollKall)

**\$4K–\$10K/yr**

Speed enforcement on US 98,  
neighborhood patrols, park  
presence.  
City-controlled scheduling.

## LPR Cameras

**\$4K–\$8K/yr**

Flock Safety at key entry/exit.  
OCSO already uses Flock.  
Shared law enforcement portal.

## Code Compliance Vehicle Upgrade

**\$3K–\$8K once**

Community service officer-style  
vehicle. Visibility and deterrence.  
Not a law enforcement role.

## Park Security Cameras

**\$2K–\$6K + fees**

Law enforcement-integrated.  
OCSO direct portal access.  
Evidence-grade video.

# Questions for Council Discussion

## 1 Zone Assignment

Should we formally request that the OCSO assign Mary Esther to an adjacent patrol zone?

## 2 The Contract

Continue as-is, continue with supplemental tools, or allow the contract to expire? What direction for staff?

## 3 Supplemental Tools

Which tools should staff explore further?  
(LPR cameras, park cameras, off-duty details, FHP)

## 4 Code Compliance

Should staff proceed with a community service officer-style vehicle and formalized OCSO reporting?

*No formal action required today. Direction will be brought back for formal action at a regular meeting.*

# Thank You

The full report, supporting data, and source documents are available for review.

City of Mary Esther | March 2026

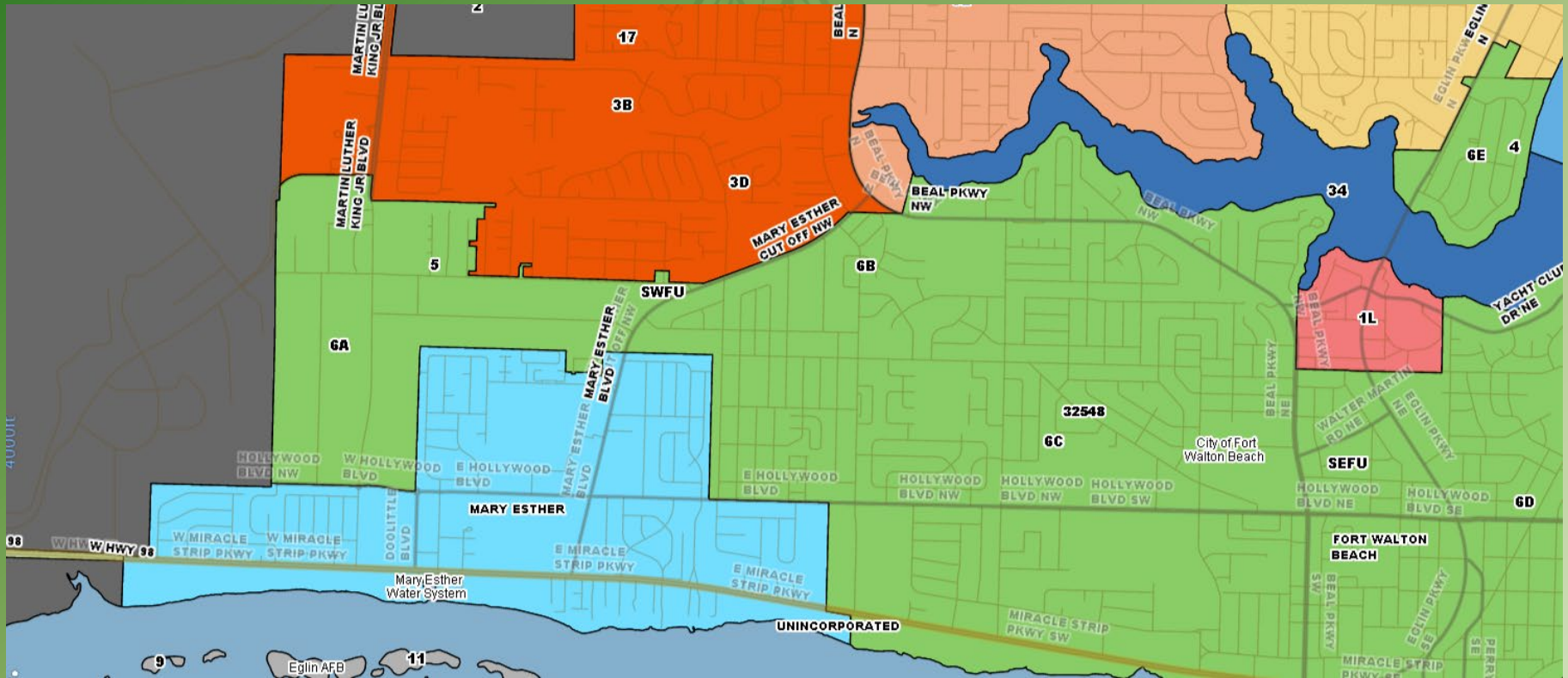
# Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office

## Mary Esther Contract Presentation

Captain Mike Rader  
Central District Commander

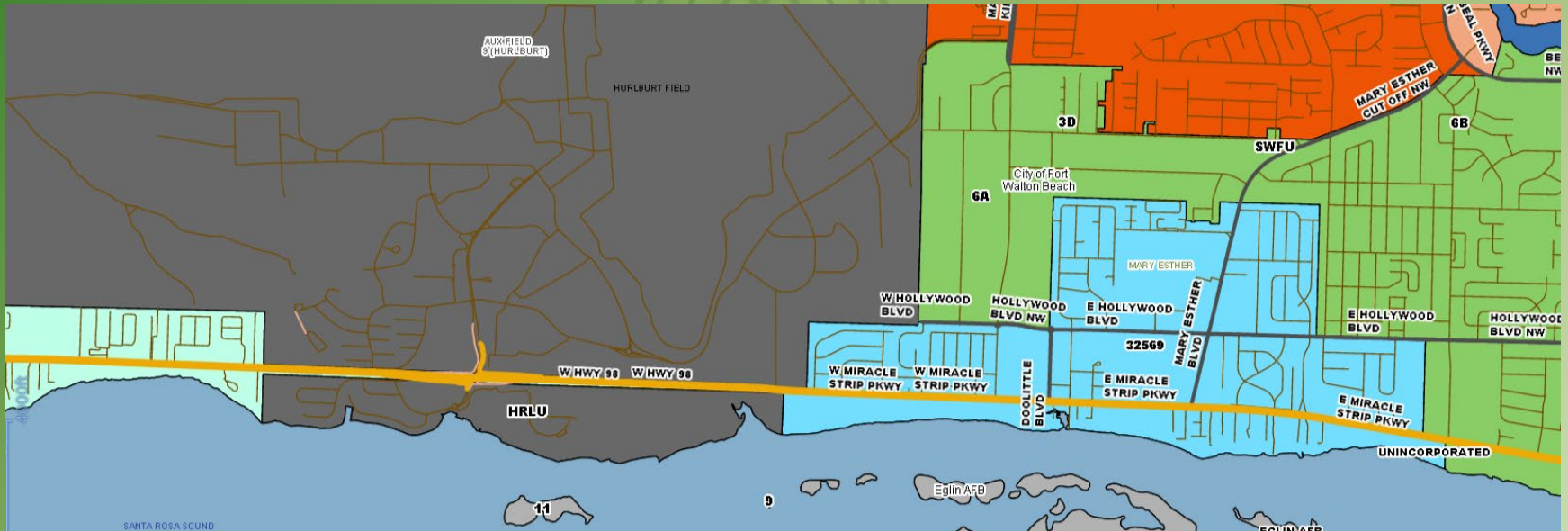
*The Mission of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office: "Ensuring fair and equal administration of the law, safeguarding civil liberties and preserving public safety; Doing so with professionalism and unity of purpose, while being good stewards of the public's trust".*

# Contracted Area of Responsibility Mary Esther – Zone 21



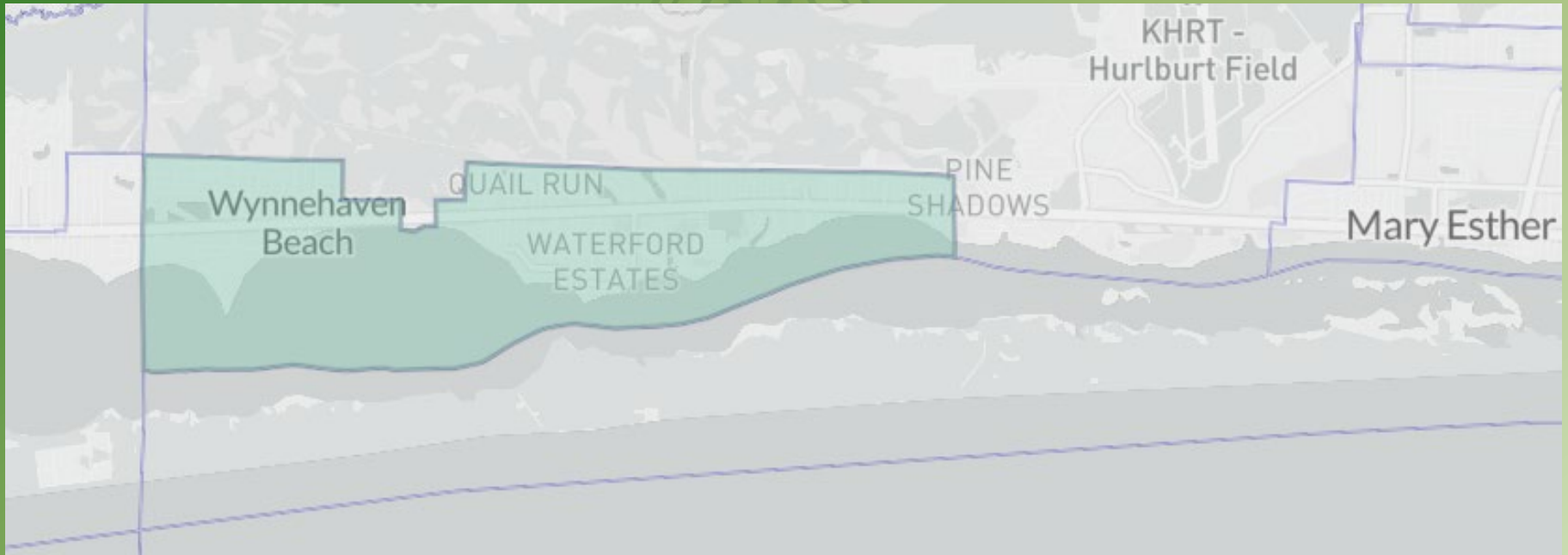
Population: 4024 2.1 sq. miles

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# Zone 23



Population: 8002    2.5 sq. miles

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# Mary Esther Contracted Positions

The current Mary Esther Contract funds the following positions:

- 2 Patrol Units

*Services Provided at no additional cost to city*

- District Captain
- Patrol Supervisors
- Crossing Guards
- Traffic control support for Veteran's Day Parade
- Monthly reports

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# City of Mary Esther

Service Population: 4,024

Calls for Service: 5,695 (2024)

2 Full-time positions

Budget: \$321,061

Average of \$56 per call

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# Calls for Service

The following calls for service were generated within the city limits of Mary Esther:

2021: 7,396

2022: 6,172

2023: 5,897

2024: 5,695

*Four-year average: 6,290*

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# Comparison

## City of Niceville

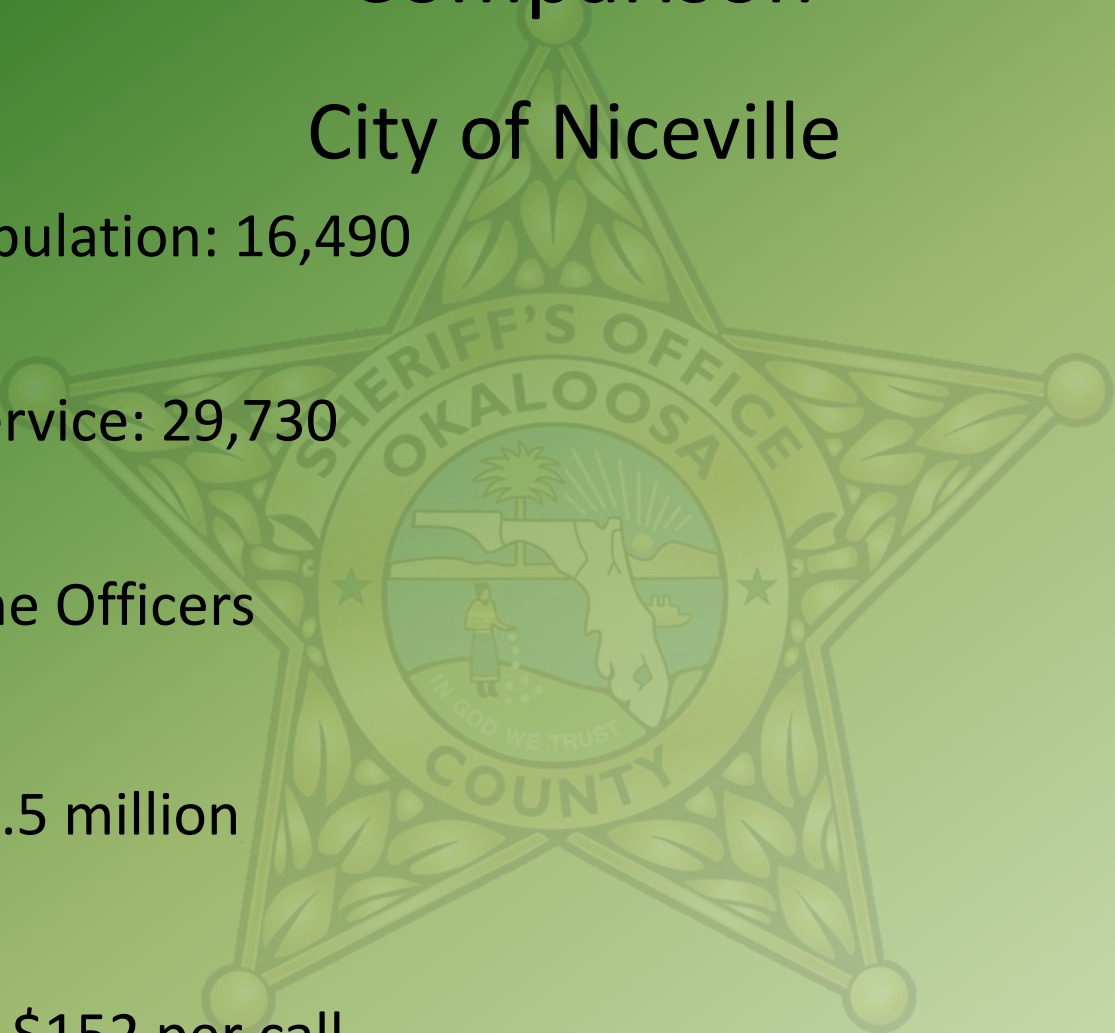
Service Population: 16,490

Calls for Service: 29,730

32 Full-Time Officers

Budget: \$4.5 million

Average of \$152 per call

The seal of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office is a five-pointed star with a decorative border of leaves. Inside the star is a circular emblem containing a landscape with a palm tree, a sun, and a person. The text "SHERIFF'S OFFICE" is at the top, "OKALOOSA" is in the middle, and "COUNTY" is at the bottom. The phrase "IN GOD WE TRUST" is written in a small arc at the bottom of the inner circle.

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# Comparison

## Valparaiso

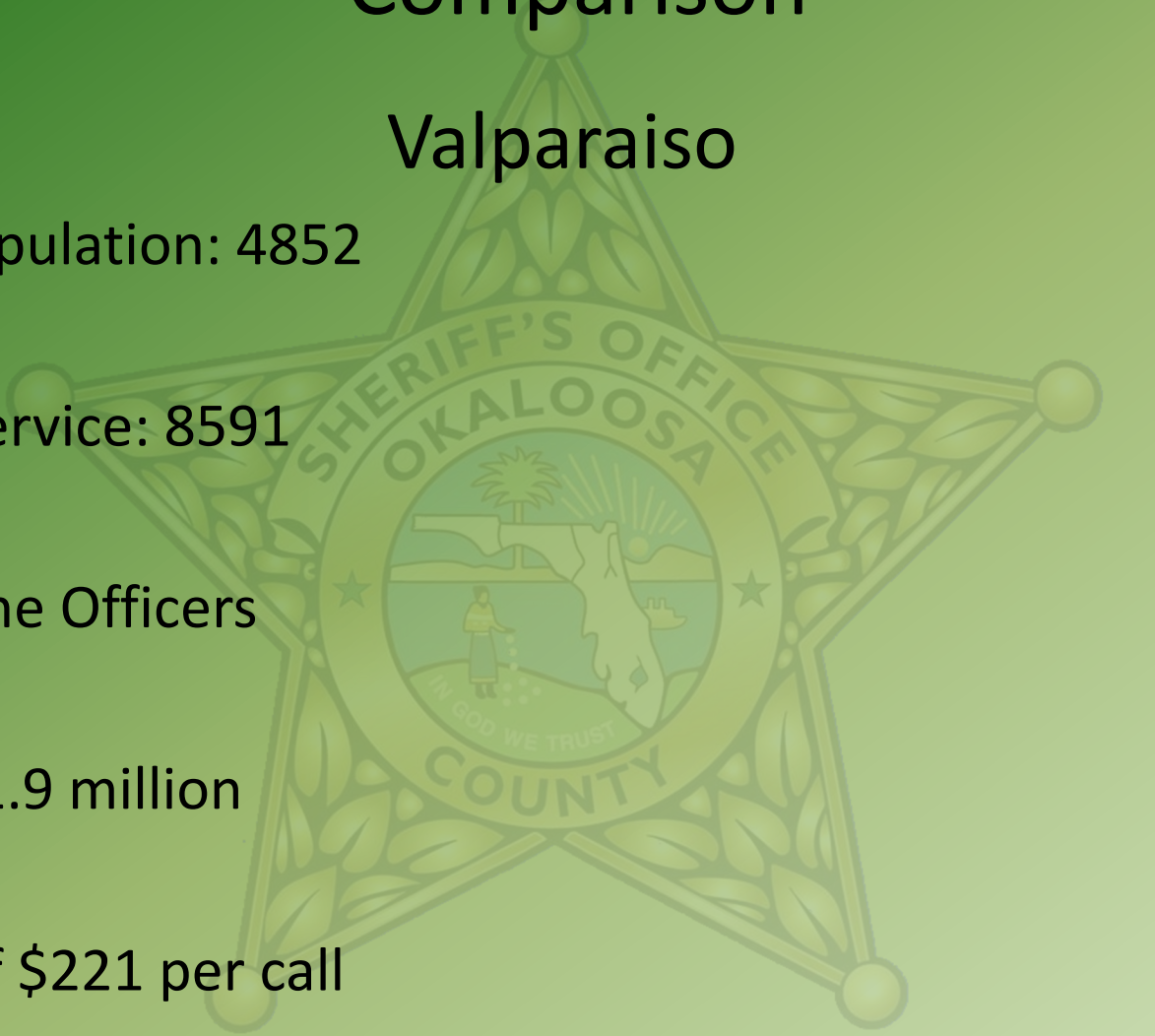
Service Population: 4852

Calls for Service: 8591

14 Full-Time Officers

Budget: \$1.9 million

Average of \$221 per call

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# Comparison

## Indialantic, Florida

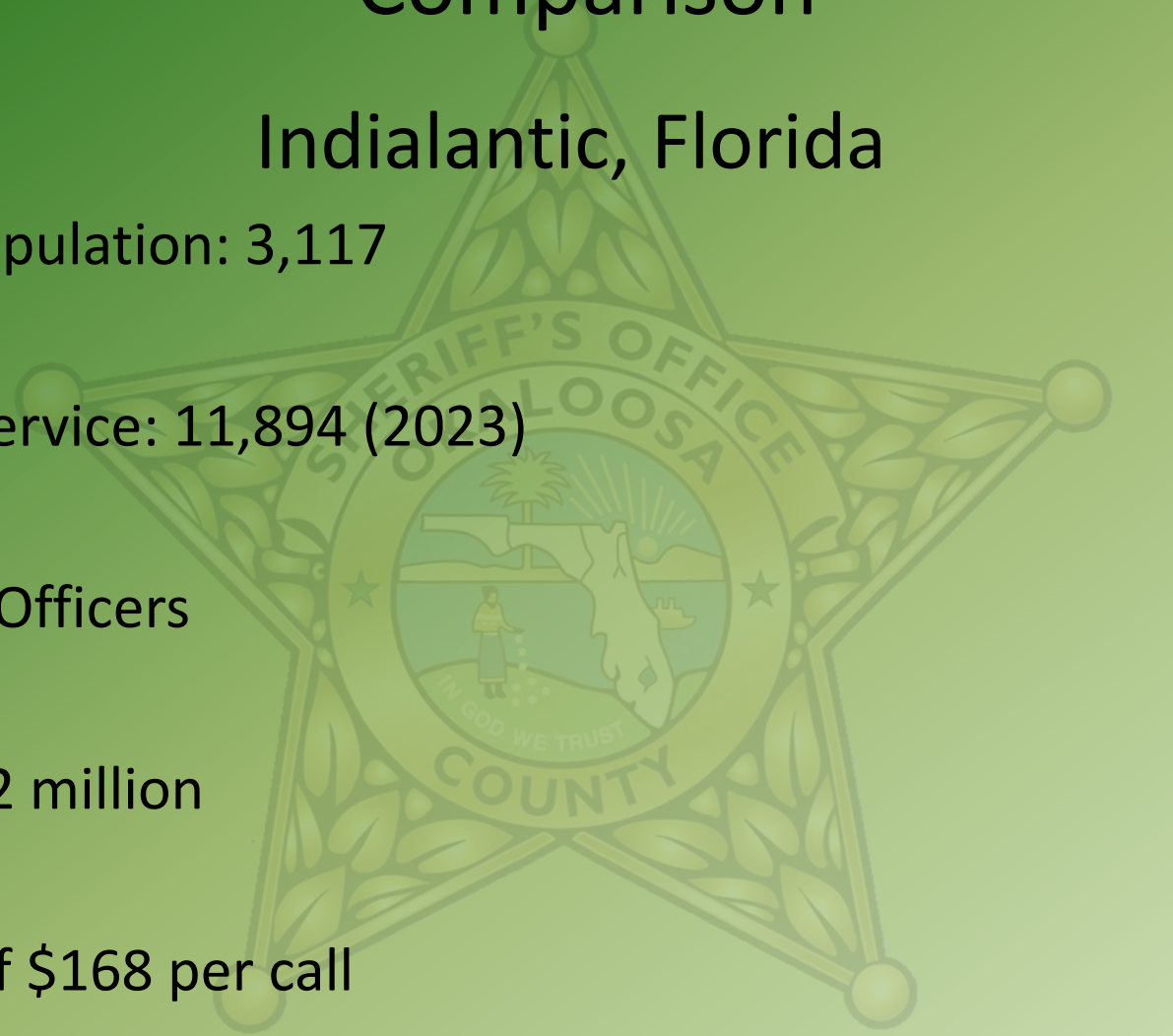
Service Population: 3,117

Calls for Service: 11,894 (2023)

12 Sworn Officers

Budget: \$2 million

Average of \$168 per call

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# Comparison

## Bunnell, Florida

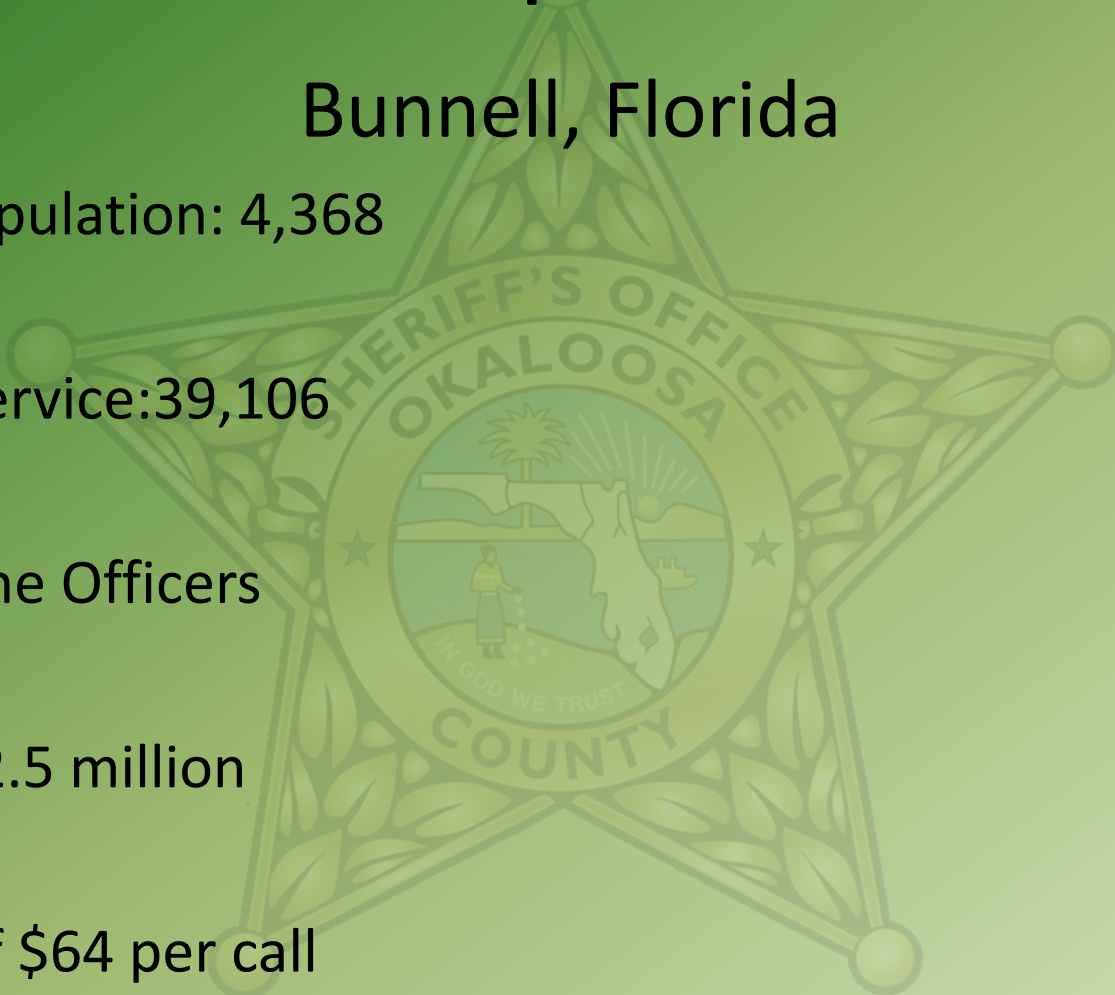
Service Population: 4,368

Calls for Service: 39,106

14 Full-Time Officers

Budget: \$2.5 million

Average of \$64 per call

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# District Supervision

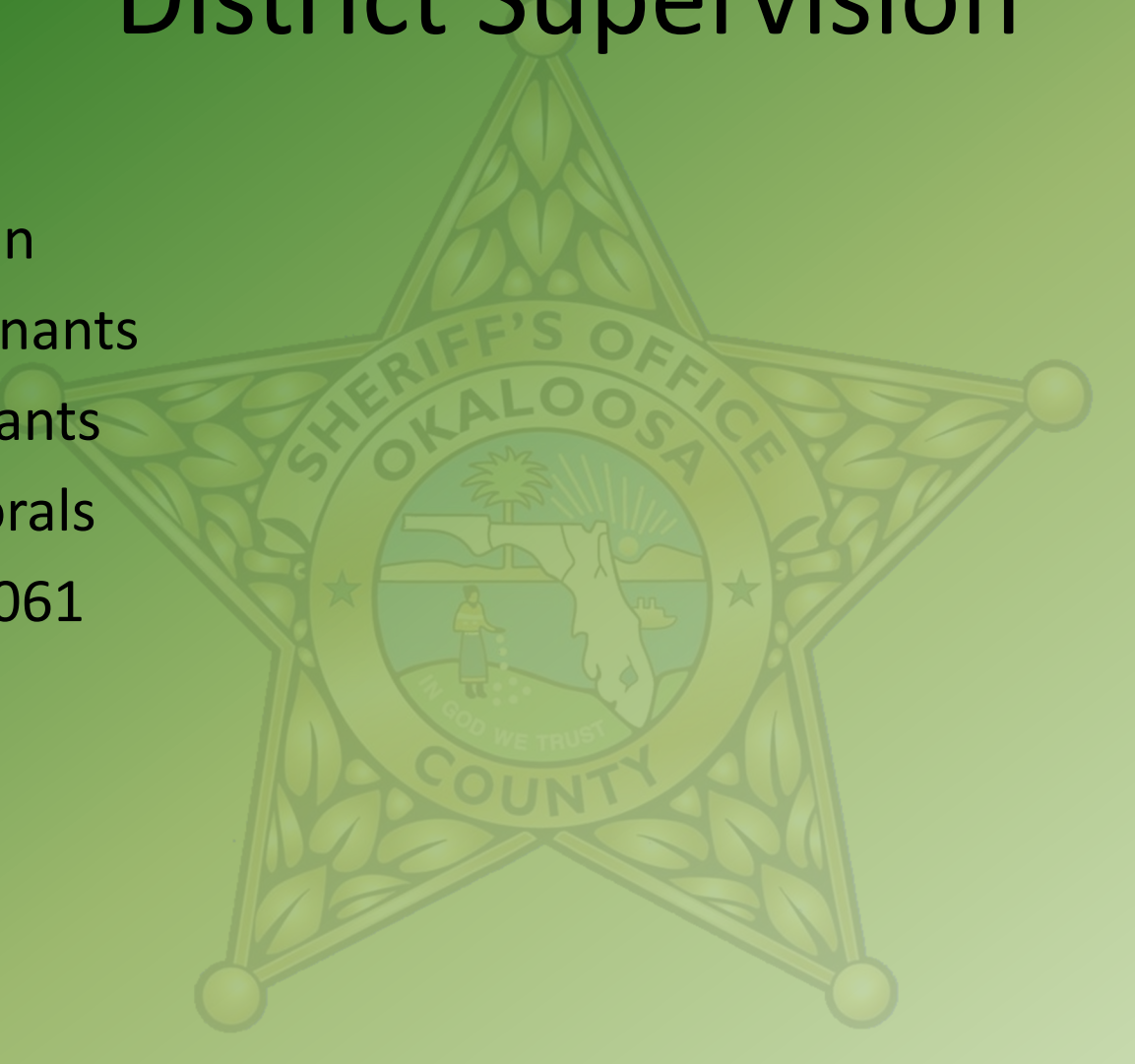
One Captain

Two Lieutenants

Four Sergeants

Four Corporals

Cost \$321,061

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**CITY HALL**  
**MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA**  
**2026**

**MAYOR**  
**CHRIS STEIN**

**CITY COUNCIL**

**SUSAN COXWELL**  
**LARRY CARTER**  
**RICHARD LAWSON**  
**BERNIE ODER**  
**APRIL SUTTON**

**FORMER COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**K.C. WOODS**  
**JAN LIPSCOMB**