



City of Bartow

**450 N Wilson Ave.
Bartow, FL 33830
CityofBartow.net**

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Laurie Hayes, Director of Communications

lhayes@cityofbartow.net

Office: 863.733.4642

Cell: 863.378.7929

**CITY OF BARTOW POLICE DEPARTMENT APPOINTS TWO DEPUTY
CHIEFS**

The two bring many years of experience to the agency

(Bartow, FL - January 6, 2026) The City of Bartow has selected two individuals to serve in the position of Deputy Chief of the Bartow Police Department. Kyle Dowdy, who most recently worked as a Deputy Chief for the Farmington Police Department in New Mexico and Darrell Wilson, who previously presided over the Bureau of Fire, Arson, and Explosives Investigations for the State of Florida's Department of Financial Service - Criminal Investigations Division as the Bureau Chief, have been chosen after an extensive recruitment effort by the City in partnership with Strategic Government Resources (SGR.) The pair will be sworn in at a 3pm ceremony at Bartow City Hall, 450 N. Wilson Ave., on Jan. 29.

The search attracted an impressive pool of 35 applicants from 15 states. Following an initial review, the Police Chief Search Committee identified a group of semifinalists who completed detailed questionnaires and pre-recorded video interviews. These candidates were interviewed by several panels, including those comprised of citizens, employees, external agencies (law enforcement partner agencies) as well as the City leadership committee.

The feedback provided by these panels identified Kyle Dowdy and Darrell Wilson as top candidates, prompting the idea of hiring both candidates to assist in continuing to move the department forward and expand community policing initiatives.

“I am very pleased with the interactive process that we used to select two very qualified leaders in Kyle and Darrell,” said Bartow City Manager Mike Herr. “They bring much needed leadership experience to our relatively young corps of sworn and non-sworn personnel who are hungry to be the best they can be to serve the citizens of Bartow. Kyle and Darrell are coming to us at a really good time.

“Chief Walker is assembling a team that will ensure that our Bartow Police Department is headed in the right direction. It’s a good time to be here in the County Seat.”

“I am extremely impressed with these two gentlemen, both as law enforcement officers and as great citizens,” added Bartow Chief of Police Stephen Walker. “Both have shown a genuine and deep commitment to the community and a desire to work with the community to improve the quality of life and reduce crime, and the fear of crime.

“Kyle and Darrell bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to our agency and will assist us in the mentoring of our officers and the future generations of officers who will serve this community,” Walker noted.

Kyle Dowdy

Kyle Dowdy began his law enforcement career in 2004 and most recently served as a Deputy Chief for the Farmington Police Department in New Mexico. He previously held positions in the Patrol Division, SWAT, Narcotics, Polygraph, Special Operations, Internal Affairs, Use of Force Review Board, Training, and Administration. He is a member of the state’s task force for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and is the liaison to the LGBTQ+ community and Intelligence Officer for Farmington PD.

Deputy Chief Dowdy graduated from Northwestern University’s School of Police Staff and Command and the FBI National Academy. He holds a Master of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice Administration from New Mexico State University, a Master of Arts Degree in Security Studies from the Naval Postgraduate, Graduate certificates in History from Western New Mexico University and Criminal Justice Education from the University of Virginia, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Marketing from New Mexico State University. He also teaches history as an adjunct professor at San Juan College and is a military veteran who led combat ground troops in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“I’m genuinely excited to be part of such a strong department,” Said Dowdy. “My focus is to simply support our officers, stay connected to our neighborhoods, and make sure we keep doing the right things the right way. When trust is strong, public safety follows.”

Deputy Chief Dowdy will oversee the Neighborhood Services Bureau, which includes the Uniformed Patrol Division, Neighborhood Liaison Unit, Tactical Team, Traffic Unit and Red-Light Camera Program, Reserve Officer Program, Honor Guard, and the K-9 Unit.

Darrell Wilson

Darrell Wilson began his career in law enforcement in 1993 and most recently served as the Bureau Chief over the Bureau of Fire, Arson, and Explosives Investigations for the State of Florida's Department of Financial Service - Criminal Investigations Division. Prior to working for the State of Florida, he worked for the Plant City Police Department from 1993 to 2009, during which time he worked in the Patrol Division, Investigative Division and the Support Services Division, including supervising the agency's 9-1-1 Center, Property and Evidence, Records, Extra Duty Management and Information Services as he was promoted through the ranks to Captain.

Deputy Chief Wilson holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Organizational Management and a Master of Science Degree in Management, both from Warner University, and is a graduate of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Senior Leadership Program, Class #11. Additionally, he currently is an Assessor for the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation.

Wilson was born and raised in Bartow and is excited to be returning to his hometown.

"I am deeply honored to step into the role of Deputy Police Chief," said Wilson. "My commitment will be for the safety and well-being of every resident in this city. I look forward to working alongside Chief Walker, the dedicated officers, and civilian support staff to help strengthen the bond between our department and the community we serve, ensuring that transparency and integrity remain at the heart of everything we do."

Deputy Chief Wilson will oversee the Support Services Bureau, which includes the Criminal Investigations Division, Emergency Communications Center, and Support Services Division, which is Records, Facilities, Crime Analyst/Crime Prevention, Recruiting/Training, Community Services, Quartermaster, and Body Worn Camera/In-Car Camera Program/Analyst.

Both men are currently in the process of completing prescreening requirements, as required by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission rules and Florida state statute. Their start date with the City of Bartow is set for January 26.

###