



Webster Police Department

357 Main Street, Webster, MA 01570
Phone: 508-943-1212 • Fax: 508-943-7979
www.websterpolice.com



Timothy J. Bent
Chief of Police

Deputy Chief Rodney L. Budrow
Lieutenant Michael D. Shaw

Community Committed

REPORT OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

As I write this year's report, I can't help but feel it begins like a Charles Dickens novel: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." The Webster Police Department is resilient and continues to make great strides in our profession. We feel that we are trusted and have the overall support of our community. Unfortunately, throughout the country Law Enforcement continues to be immensely criticized. Mistrust and violence against the police in general is on the rise. This year, like last year, a call for service placed our officers in a deadly force situation. Two (2) Webster Police Officers were fired upon, one (1) officer returned fire, killing the suspect in the process. As stated, situations like this have become all too common in our country. What is shocking is the fact that this transpired in our Town – the Town of Webster – the Town that we call home.

On another sad note, opioid drug use continues to plague our country, and Webster, like every other community, is no exception. Opioid overdoses, including overdose-related deaths, rose to an alarming rate. As such, in recent years the prescription drug commonly referred to as Narcan (Naloxone) has become a household name. Narcan blocks the effects of opioids and reverses the overdose. Webster Emergency Medical Services has been administering this drug for opioid-related overdoses for many years. As a result, countless lives have been saved. While many entities throughout the state work to address this calamity, we are busy in Webster as well. We have been researching the Gloucester Angel Program to address drug addiction and how it is generally viewed by the police and society. The Police Department, Emergency Medical Services, Selectmen's Office, and Harrington Hospital have begun research on addressing our issues of addiction locally. With an emphasis on mental health and recovery, we will strive to offer help to those within our jurisdiction.

At the writing of this report, we have resided in the new police station for fifteen (15) months. I cannot begin to articulate what this has meant to our overall production and the way we deliver police services. Our new station enables us to provide state of the art services, from evidence processing to enhanced communications. All of this equates to an added professionalism and a police department of which the citizens of Webster can be proud. Our new building also enhances the majority of our community outreach programs. With the "Fels Family Foundation Community Room" we can now house the "Junior Police Academy" for our youth and the "Webster Police Toy Drive" for children in need. We cannot thank you, the Webster community, enough for your support and vision in making this a reality. What a difference a modern facility makes.

It was quite a year for retirements, with four (4) officers and one (1) dispatcher deciding it was time to depart. It began in October with the retirement of Officer Donald Southall. In December Deputy Chief Rodney Budrow, Officers Leonard Gevry and Bryan Bates, and Dispatcher James Fersenheim all finished their careers. I am unable to recall this many retirements all at once. On behalf of a grateful community we wish these public servants health and happiness, and we thank them for their many years of dedicated service. Although we had to say goodbye to some, this year we were pleased to make a promotion and add a new member to our team as well. Officer Toby Wheeler was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. The Town hired Officer Spencer Donovan as a full-time Patrolman. On a sad note, retired Officer Harold J. Sellig passed away in February, and retired Officer John J. Kapitulik Jr. passed away in September. Thank you, Harold and Kappy.

From the shores of
Lake Chagoggagogmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg



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Due to increased demands with our department, Lieutenant Michael Shaw has resigned as the Central Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council SWAT Commander. Lieutenant Shaw has served in that capacity for the past five (5) years, and has served on SWAT for seventeen (17) years. Thank you, Lieutenant.

On September 29th Officer Joshua Collins was awarded the George Hanna Medal of Valor for a mutual aid incident involving a subject with a firearm. Officer Collins was forced to shoot the subject as he pointed a firearm at several police officers. Twelve (12) Police Officers throughout the state were honored at a ceremony held at the State House. This was the first time a Webster Police Officer has been honored with this prestigious award. We are proud of you, Officer Collins.

On December 12th the Webster Police Department participated in its first Gun Buy Back Program. The event was extremely successful, as we took in a total of fifty two (52) various firearms. Thank you to all who participated. The end result is that fifty two (52) unwanted firearms are out of people's homes, and therefore, off the street.

Our Patrol Division was busy this year responding to 22,128 calls for service. Our officers investigated 434 motor vehicle accidents. These statistics increased slightly from the previous year. As a department we logged 591 in custody arrests and summoned 528 people to court, a slight decrease from the previous year. Crimes against the Person (Assaults) noted a slight increase, while Crimes against Property remained fairly consistent.

I would like to thank each member of the Webster Police Department, full and part-time, for your continued dedication to the community we serve. As the world around us continues to change, the one thing that remains consistent is your professional attitudes and demeanor. The Town is fortunate to have you, and I for one couldn't be prouder to serve with you.

The Police Department logged seven (7) complaints against officers during the course of the year. There were no Internal Investigations opened. Citizen complaints regarding police department personnel may be directed to the shift supervisor who, in turn, will either investigate the complaint or forward the same to the Chief's office for further investigation.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy J. Bent
Chief of Police

From the shores of
Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg