



Webster Police Department

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Chief of Police

Deputy Chief Tobby M. Wheeler
Lieutenant Gordon D. Wentworth, Jr.

It is hard to believe a year has passed since I wrote this report for 2022. As I began my sixth year as the Chief of Police, it dawned on me that I was in the twilight of my career. Like many others before, this past year was full of change and growth, both locally and nationally. It did not pass by without its challenges, but, like many other times, the men and women of the Webster Police Department rose to the challenges presented to them. They delivered a superior product to their community.

In February, we saw the return of Officer Joshua Collins, who was cleared to return to work after almost a nine-year absence due to an injury he sustained at work. Due to his extended absence from police work, it was ultimately decided that he would need to attend a full-time police academy, which he began at Lynnfield in June and graduated on January 4th. His tenacity and efforts to return are among the finest I have seen in my 28-year career. I am proud of him and beyond grateful to have him working with us.

We saw Webster Police K9 Bandit retire in January. Sadly, shortly after, he was diagnosed with cancer and was laid to rest by his handler, Officer Suss. Almost all of the Webster Police Department was on hand to pay their respects as K9 Bandit on his final call. I want to thank all of the staff at the Webster Animal Hospital for their kindness and compassion during this most difficult time. I would also like to thank the community for their outpouring of support for Officer Suss, Bandit, and the Webster Police Department during this difficult time.

Once Officer Suss was ready, he indicated he wanted to take on another Police K9 partner, and K9 Lee, a Belgian Malinois, was purchased thanks to a generous donation from JV Mechanical. They have been a fantastic neighbor and supporter of ours, as have many businesses and citizens in town. He completed his training and began working on June 6th.

We made our first promotion since leaving civil service. Several officers participated in an assessment center by Public Safety Consultants. Candidates had to go through various scenarios based on situations they might encounter as patrol supervisors here in Webster. All of the officers did well, with Derek Mroczek topping the list. He assumed his duties as Sergeant on July 11th. I am pleased to say that our candidates performed very well; any of them could have filled this role and performed well. I am, however, confident that Officer Mroczek is the best candidate for the position, and his performance thus far reinforces that. I can also say that the future leadership of the Webster Police Department is promising, to say the least.

Officers rotate shifts three times a year, and for the “summer” shift bid, which begins in May, we posted for an officer to be assigned to the Marine Patrol full-time. Officer Joseph Stephens accepted this assignment, which started in mid-May and went on until early September. He was patrolling the lake on days when the weather allowed it, which, unfortunately, this year was a lot less than the previous year. We still maintained a presence on the weekends when he was not working.

Marine Patrol Officers responded to 122 total calls for service. Seventy verbal warnings were given, as education always emphasized; however, 27 voyages were terminated. One

From the shores of
Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg

citation was issued, and 16 boaters were assisted in some way. There was one arrest. I am pleased to report that there were zero boat crashes this year.

Officer Jacek Ochocki resigned to join his family's construction business. This created a vacancy, which prompted us to give an entrance exam in September. Almost 30 prospective employees sat for the test, and all passed. A physical fitness test was then administered using the same standards required to enter a Recruit Police Academy. Fourteen individuals passed and were given applications and subject to a background investigation. We are currently scheduling interviews for seven candidates, several of whom already have a full-time academy. From what I have been told, they are all viable candidates, and I think we will be fortunate with whomever we hire. The hiring process is lengthy, but it is necessary to provide the department and the town with the best possible employee.

In the fall, we received approximately \$100,000 in grants from the state and federal governments. Most of this money will be utilized to implement our Body Worn Camera program and provide us with new portable Radios for our officers. The Body Worn Camera Grants allowed us to purchase the equipment, and some of the federal money assisted us in obtaining cloud storage. This will enable us to eliminate the need to replace rack servers as storage space becomes filled. Our cruiser camera system will begin being replaced in the next fiscal year. The system we will replace them with will be compatible with our body cameras, which further justifies the need for a cloud storage system. Any portion of the storage not covered by the grant for this fiscal year will be covered out of our drug asset forfeiture fund.

At the Fall Town Meeting, we partnered with the Webster Fire Department to have monies set aside for secure docks at Memorial Beach. Since my career, we have relied on either Lakeview Marina or residents from Treasure Island to provide dock space for both the Police and Fire boats. Obviously, this could create a conflict at some point, and putting both boats at Memorial Beach allows responders quick access. There will be three slips, a shed for water rescue equipment, a fence, and a camera system for security. Personnel at the South Worcester County Communication Center could monitor the camera system and provide a layer of security for Memorial Beach.

In March, the Webster Police assumed the supervision of Animal Control, as the Board of Health had previously overseen it. In Massachusetts, many Animal Control Officers fall under the purview of the Police Department, so it seemed like a good time to transition it from the Board of Health, as the Previous Animal Control Officer resigned. Lieutenant Gordon Wentworth will be overseeing this unit.

It was also decided that this would be a full-time position. While we began our search and transitioned from the Board of Health to the Police Department, Oxford Animal Control Officers Kelly Flynn, and Ed Hart provided services to the Town of Webster. They were invaluable during this time and were critical in filling our position with our current Animal Control Officer, Desiree Rousin. Desiree began full-time with us in September and has wasted no time. She has done a phenomenal job in the short time she has been here, and I anticipate she will continue to make our Animal Control program a model for the surrounding communities. I

must say that I cannot thank the Town of Oxford, the Oxford Police Department, and the Oxford Animal Control Officers for all of their hard work in ensuring the needs of our community were met during this transition phase.

Our Community Outreach Advocate, Jen Genduso, had another busy year, helping over 250 people connect with services. Services people were connected to included housing, substance abuse, mental health, elder assistance, and domestic violence. Those were the main categories; however, people were also assisted with signing up for MassHealth, education, and financial assistance. Jen does not just help the police department; she works with several other town departments, as many of our paths cross to accomplish the same mission. When Jen is able to, she also rides with the officers and answers calls for service, so long as her safety is jeopardized. Webster is lucky to have its own advocate, and we have been the envy of many towns around us.

Our Community Engagement program was strong this year. We had numerous successful events, from newer events like our Duck Off, to our longest-running program, National Night Out. We have always prided ourselves on our community involvement, and the devotion of our officers to this philosophy is evident.

Last year, we saw the highest year for calls for service, with 22,958. This is almost 1,000 more than last year. We physically arrested 511 people and summoned another 769. 1,683 citations were issued, and there were 353 motor vehicle crashes.

Six external complaints were filed against Webster Police Officers in 2023. One was sustained, two were exonerated, and three were unfounded.

As I enter my sixth year as the Chief of Police, I want to thank the men and women of the Police Department and the citizens of Webster. We have a very unique town with unique challenges. With that being said, I can think of no other place I would rather work. Thank you all for your support and hard work.

Respectfully,

Michal Shaw
Chief of Police

TOWN OF WEBSTER ANNUAL CRIME REPORT 2023

OFFENSE TYPE	2022	2023
Murder and Manslaughter	1	0
Kidnapping/Abduction	7	4
Forcible Rape	17	2
Statutory Rape	0	0
Forcible Fondling	5	4
Robbery	6	6
Aggravated Assault	121	105
Simple Assault	284	318
Intimidation	33	68
Arson	5	3
Burglary/Breaking and Entering	49	42
Pocket-Picket	2	1
Purse-Snatching	0	2
Shoplifting	34	19
Theft from Building	30	33

Theft from Motor Vehicle	45	12
All Other Larceny	134	96
Motor Vehicle Theft	24	25
Counterfeiting/Forgery	16	9
False Pretenses/Swindling	60	44
Credit Card/Automatic Teller	10	3
Impersonation	27	42
Identity Theft	2	1
Embezzlement	0	1
Stolen Property Offenses	6	9
Destruction/Vandalism/Damage	128	128
Drug/Narcotic Violations	106	104
Pornography/Obscene Material	7	8
Prostitution/Assisting Promoting Prost.	0	0
Weapons Law Violations	54	41
Animal Cruelty	1	1
Bad Checks	0	0

Disorderly Person	113	140
Driving Under The Influence	66	59
Drunkenness	15	0
Family Offenses, Non-Violent	1	0
Runaway/Missing Person	0	0
Liquor Law Violations	27	19
Trespass of Real Property	23	28
All Other Offenses	227	251
Traffic, Town By Law Offenses	1353	1219
Total Number of Calls	21,993	22,958
Total Number People Arrested	514	511
Total Number of People Summoned in For Various Offenses	818	769
Total Number of Citations Issued	1610	1686
Total Number of Traffic Accidents	382	353