



# Webster Police Department

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Michael D. Shaw  
Chief of Police

*Community Committed*

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Deputy Chief

## Annual Report of the Police Department Calendar Year 2025

When I received the Town Clerk reminder about this year's Annual Report, I was reminded how quickly time flies! 2025 presented us with some unique challenges, most notably in our staffing. 2025, like most other years, was full of challenges and situations that seemed unique to Webster. As always, the men and women rose to the occasion and performed admirably in whatever capacity they were called upon. Whether it be enforcing laws, participating in community engagement events, or proactively patrolling the town, the community can rest assured that they are being served by a force that has their interests at heart.

In January, we held an entrance exam, which 7 people took. From that, six took and passed our physical examination. After backgrounds and a panel interview, we hired Katrina Mrzyglod. Katrina was an intern with us while she was an undergraduate student at Nichols. She started the Boylston Academy in June and is expected to graduate on January 29, 2026.

We also swore in Officer Nicholas Trinque in January. Officer Trinque graduated from the academy the previous year, in December, and had completed his field training. Over the past year, he has exceeded our expectations and fits right in with our mission and philosophy.

In February, we promoted Gordon Wentworth to Deputy Chief, a position that had been vacant for over one year. He was promoted from his previous rank of Lieutenant, which we did not immediately fill. The reason for this was to give our sergeants more experience as frontline supervisors. Four of our five sergeants had less than five years of experience, and my thought was that the more time they had in those roles, the better it would serve them when they promoted to higher ranks. Front-line supervisors are the backbone of any law enforcement agency, and the time spent there is beneficial to their development as command staff officers.

This move was a long time coming, and Deputy Chief Wentworth transitioned seamlessly. He has been an asset not only to the Department but to me. We have purposefully not filled the vacant role in the Command Staff, and his partnership during that time has been invaluable. He embodies what it means to be a leader, and we are lucky to have him.

On a few occasions, we saw the fruits of the body-worn camera program come to fruition. We used footage to show officers doing good deeds, as well as from calls that had taken on a life of their own on social media. In March, two of our officers were seriously injured by two pit bulls while executing a search warrant at Mr. Exotix on East Main Street. Fortunately, they eventually returned to work, and the store has remained closed ever since. This event is another example of the risks and unfortunate outcomes our officers face daily.

One of the good calls our officers responded to, also in March, was when Officer Melissa Bak diverted from a call for service to assist a woman in labor. Officer Bak ended up delivering the baby moments before Webster EMS arrived to take over care. This was a fantastic

*From the shores of  
Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg*

experience, and Officer Bak performed superbly, as did our colleagues from Webster EMS and Dispatchers from the South Worcester County Communication Center. Worcester District Attorney Joe Early would later recognize all of them as recipients of a TEAM Award, which highlights incidents in which multiple public safety agencies work together to achieve a positive outcome. We were grateful that mom and baby were both doing well!

In May, we accepted a donation from Curaleaf, which was used to purchase a Narcotics Detection canine, subsequently named OJ, in honor of Detective Cynthia Johnson. Detective Johnson passed away after a valiant, multi-year battle with ovarian cancer. Officer Jon Brooks was selected as OJ's handler and has been working with her.

In May, we assisted Animal Control Officer Desiree Rousin in renovating her shelter. Several other volunteers and I put a fresh coat of paint on the walls. Thanks to the FELS Foundation, which allowed us to replace the kennels and refinish the floor. I want to thank Desiree for her never-ending efforts for our Animal Control program. The town truly is fortunate to have someone with such a high level of dedication, and I, for one, am thankful for all that you do. Thank you.

In June, after finalizing our budget, we made the difficult decision to cancel our Junior Police Academy, which is one of our longest-running Community Engagement programs. We also made the difficult decision to cut our longest-running summer Community Engagement program, Hoops for Hope, from three nights a week to two. These decisions did not come lightly, as we pride ourselves on our connection to our community, we were severely short-staffed this year and had to make some difficult decisions to conserve our workforce.

We also had an anomaly this past year that likely will not be repeated: eight of our officers becoming parents, either for the first time or again. This included all of our female officers! In addition to some other vacancies, our staffing was challenged over the summer months and into the fall. I am proud to say the officers rose to the challenge and did an outstanding job despite the strains of the job. I am hopeful that we can remedy our staffing issue in the near future.

In July, we said goodbye to Webster Fire Chief Brian Hickey after over 40 years of service to the Town of Webster. I want to take a moment to say that it has been an honor to work alongside you these past 29 years. I wish you nothing but the best in retirement, and hope to run into you either at Raglan Road or another sunny, warm place in Florida!

I don't think we could write an annual report without mentioning everyone's favorite water monitor, Goose! What started as a lost pet became a media sensation and was a nice distraction from the busy summer we had. When all hope was lost, we had a sighting, and he was captured in a genuine team effort involving Webster Animal Control Officer Desiree Rousin, Massachusetts Environmental Police, and Rainforest Reptile Shows. Goose has been visiting Webster since his capture, now has a friend, Maverick, and is doing quite well.

For two years, Detective Bruce Hamm has been assigned to the FBI Task Force out of Worcester. Due to this partnership, a renewed interest was taken in the missing person case of Andrew Amato, who has been missing for 47 years. They even offered a \$25,000 reward for information leading to an arrest or Andy's location. Anyone with any information can call Detective Bruce Hamm at 508-943-1212 ext. 1250.

Over the summer, we contracted with a private firm, Municipal Resources Incorporated, to conduct a staffing study. This was paid for with funds from a private donation to the department. Over several months, after analyzing much data, we received the study, and honestly, I was not surprised by the results. Their conclusion, which I wholeheartedly agree with, stated that we need an additional eight patrol officers. We currently have 33 full-time officers. We have no more part-time officers, as the Police Reform Act, passed in 2020, made it impossible to maintain our part-time reserve officers. I have asked for two additional officers for the past three years, but unfortunately, the town has not had the funds to fund them.

One point this report noted was that, among the 18 cities and towns it used for comparison, Webster had the second-highest clearance rate for crime while also having one of the highest crime rates. This is a testament to the men and women of the Webster Police Department and the outstanding work they do every day. My fear is that, if we do not increase our current staffing levels, we won't be able to sustain that level of work product, and the community will suffer the consequences.

Despite our staffing shortage, we did still host several community engagement events throughout the year. We held our basketball program on Thursday and Friday nights, as well as our Summer Send Off in August. In the fall, we had our seventh Webster PD Car Show, which was by far our most successful.

We continued our partnership with Our Bright Future and delivered over 50 turkeys to residents of Webster. In addition, we conducted our winter coat drive and our annual toy drive, which served over 100 families.

Our Drone Unit was especially active this year, responding to 74 missions overall, with over 60 here in town. Our Drone Unit is a part of the Central Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council Drone Unit. They respond to requests from member agencies seeking drone assistance for incidents such as searches, crime scene analysis, accident reconstruction, and other events.

Our Marine Patrol conducted patrols on the weekends. We did not have an officer assigned directly to the boat as we had initially hoped, due to a manpower shortage. At one point in the summer, I decided not to force officers to work an unfilled marine patrol shift, as we were down 12 positions for various reasons. Even with the challenges we faced, our Marine Unit handled 118 calls on the lake and conducted 90 stops. 85 verbal warnings were issued as we focus on educating boaters versus issuing tickets. However, 20 voyages were terminated, four citations were issued, and one arrest was made. We did have an algae bloom toward the end of

the summer that lasted approximately 2 weeks, which affected our overall statistics, as did the weather early in the season.

The Webster Police Department conducted seven internal investigations, either stemming from public complaints or initiated internally. Out of those, one was sustained, four were exonerated, one is still pending, and one was a verbal counseling.

In my nearly 30 years with the Webster Police Department, I have never been prouder of the work our officers do. Webster is a unique place to work, and it presents challenges that many other departments do not face. Yet our officers continually think outside the box and develop creative solutions to complex problems. The town is lucky to have them, and I am grateful for them.

Respectfully,

Michael Shaw  
Chief of Police

#### **TOWN OF WEBSTER ANNUAL CRIME REPORT 2025**

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OFFENSE TYPE	2024	2025
Murder and Manslaughter	0	0
Kidnapping/Abduction	1	2
Forcible Rape	7	16
Forcible Sodomy	0	6
Sexual Assault with an Object	0	1
Statutory Rape	10	14
Forcible Fondling	13	7

Robbery	3	2
Aggravated Assault	116	84
Simple Assault	267	251
Intimidation	40	38
Arson	2	2
Extortion / Blackmail	0	1
Burglary/Breaking and Entering	28	20
Pocket-Picket	3	1
Purse-Snatching	2	1
Shoplifting	27	26
Theft from Building	18	14
Theft from Motor Vehicle	20	12
All Other Larceny	74	54
Motor Vehicle Theft	19	27
Counterfeiting/Forgery	6	41
False Pretenses/Swindling	22	32
Credit Card/Automatic Teller	6	1
Impersonation	39	28

Identity Theft	2	0
Embezzlement	1	6
Stolen Property Offenses	3	10
Destruction/Vandalism/Damage	133	99
Drug/Narcotic Violations	65	73
Incest	0	1
Pornography/Obscene Material	0	3
Prostitution/Assisting Promoting Prost.	0	1
Weapons Law Violations	38	40
Animal Cruelty	20	15
Bad Checks	0	0
Disorderly Person	101	65
Driving Under The Influence	34	27
Drunkenness	2	1
Family Offenses, Non-Violent	1	0
Runaway/Missing Person	0	2
Liquor Law Violations	9	8

Trespass of Real Property	17	22
All Other Offenses	187	244
Traffic, Town By Law Offenses	652	682
Total Number of Calls	20,981	21,545
Total Number People Arrested	387	364
Total Number of People Summoned in For Various Offenses	479	509
Total Number of Citations Issued	820	654
Total Number of Traffic Accidents	351	389