



# Webster Police Department

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Chief of Police

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## *Community Committed*

### **Report of the Police Department**

It wasn't until I sat down to write this report that I realized how quickly the past year had passed. 2024 certainly was not without its challenges, and I am proud to say that the men and women of the Webster Police Department met those challenges and exceeded any and all expectations. Policing in Webster can be very challenging; as we've seen in the past, it isn't for everybody. I take great pride in our officers here, who serve their community in many ways that our residents can be proud of.

At the beginning of the year, we introduced Webster Comfort K9 Murphy, the result of a collaboration with the Webster Public Schools. Through the generous support of the Fels Foundation, we could fully fund the purchase of Murphy and a specially equipped cruiser that the School Resource Officer can utilize to perform his duties with Murphy. Murphy has been used successfully throughout the year for services not only at the school but also for the residents of the Town. Our partnership with all of the schools in town is one of the many relationships we have with our community partners that we are proud of. It truly fits into our mission statement that we are, in fact, "Community Committed."

In March, we welcomed Officer Shane Murray to the Webster Police Department. Officer Murray filled the vacancy when Officer Jacek Ochocki resigned the previous year. This hiring resulted from a lengthy process that started with a test, followed by a physical fitness test, background investigation, and interview. Officer Murray came to us from the Woonsocket, Rhode Island Police Department, and his experience makes him a great fit here in Webster. Since Officer Murray had a previous full-time academy, he did not have to attend one in Massachusetts, which allowed us to get him on the road after his 12-week Field Training Program. This saved us thousands of dollars and months of training, as a full-time academy is about 6 months long.

In March, we implemented our body-worn camera Program. We received approximately \$100,000 in state and federal funds to implement this program last year. Sergeants Robert Larochelle and Derek Mroczek oversee the program. They were instrumental in developing the policy and orchestrating the training, and I am grateful to them for their help. I would not have been able to do this without them. The cameras have proven to be an asset for the officers and are an excellent means by which to share with the community what the men and women of the Webster Police Department deal with on a regular basis.

In April, Officers Jacob Zablocki and Sean Ebbeling resigned from their positions with the Webster Police Department to begin employment with the Massachusetts State Police. Given these two vacancies, we were able to hire two individuals from the list we had from our previous test and subsequent process.

We appointed Officer Bryan Blomgren in June to fill one of these vacancies. Officer Blomgren was a Reserve Police Officer with us before being hired full-time by the Southbridge Police Department, where he worked for two years before coming to us. He was also full-time

From the shores of  
*Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg*

academy trained, so he, too, could get on the road after his Field Training instead of attending an academy.

We also hired Nicholas Trinque, who attended the Boylston Police Academy, which began in June. Officer Trinque graduated in December and is currently in his Field Training Program. Although he came to us without law enforcement experience, he has demonstrated a positive attitude and is eager to learn. Undoubtedly, he will be an asset to our Department and town.

At the last fall town meeting, we partnered with the Fire Department to put docks in for Public Safety boats for use on the lake. Three dock spaces and fencing were erected to keep the public out, and the boats were put in the water in late spring. This made launching the Police boat much more straightforward, eliminating the dependency on having a slip available at Lakeview Marina, where we have stored our boat for the last several years. We are grateful for all of their help and support over the past several years, and we look forward to continuing to work with them in the future for our Marine Patrol needs.

This year, we took a very aggressive approach towards patrolling the lake. We focused not just on our enforcement efforts on the water but also utilized patrol officers to enforce violations on land, mainly at the Lakeside Beach Boat Ramp and Memorial Beach. Our total calls for last year were 218, up from 122 the previous year. This year, we did not assign an officer to Marine Patrol like the prior year. We did issue 16 civil citations this year, as opposed to one in 2023. Overall, I would say that our patrols had a noticeable positive impact, which we will continue for the boating season in 2025.

In August, Officer Joseph Fitzpatrick left us to take a position with the Drug Enforcement Agency. We were fortunate enough to fill this vacancy with Sean Ebbeling, who returned to us after initially leaving to attend the Massachusetts State Police Academy. We are lucky and thankful to have Officer Ebbeling back with us, as he is already familiar with our department and community and hasn't missed a beat since coming back.

Throughout the past year or so, we became aware of and involved with an eight-year-old boy who had been diagnosed with brain cancer. His name was AJ, and he was known and loved by many; we were honored to participate in several community events to show our support for him. Sadly, AJ lost his battle in June and left us way too soon. For such a young boy, he taught us many life lessons and touched many lives. For that, we are thankful and will always be #73AJ Strong.

We rebranded our National Night Out Event this summer, calling it Summer Send Off, as we held it towards the end of August. In addition to all of our community partners and social service agencies that attend, we opened it up to the businesses in town to provide them an opportunity to let people know what they were all about and showcase their services. With rides and food, it was a resounding success. We also had our annual summer basketball program and Junior Police Academy, our longest-running community engagement programs. We did have to reduce our basketball program from three nights to only two due to staffing shortage. I am hopeful next year, we can go back to having it three nights a week.

We did get a little starstruck during the Summer Olympics (as did the rest of the country) when we watched Stephen Nedoroscik destroy the pommel horse and lift the United States men's gymnastics team to the bronze medal. This was extra special for us here, as Stephen is the son of John and Cheryl Nedoroscik. John is a retired Webster Police Officer, and it was fun watching him and Cheryl cheer on Stephen and the rest of the team on national television.

In the fall, using monies seized from those who distribute narcotics, we purchased two drone units for the Webster Police Department. Sergeant Larochelle and Officers David Brooks and Alex Johnson oversee the unit. They also participate in a regional drone team through the Central Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council.

Sadly, in the fall, K9 Lee developed a kidney illness and passed away with Officer Aaron Suss by his side and numerous officers there to support and pay respect to Officer Suss and Lee. Officer Suss has indicated he would like to continue the program and will do so in the spring.

It was also decided that the Webster Police Department would acquire and train a K9 specializing in Narcotics Detection. Through generous donations from Webster EMS and JV Mechanical, we selected a K9 for this, and training will begin in January. After a lengthy and competitive selection process, Officer Jon Brooks was selected and has been preparing for his new role. Once training is completed, we will make a formal announcement.

Deputy Chief Tobby Wheeler retired in December. We wish him well in his future endeavors and thank him for his years of service to the Town of Webster and the Webster Police Department.

Our Community Outreach Advocate, Jen Genduso, had another busy year, helping over 280 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 aid. Jen does not just help the officers here at the police department; she works with several other town departments and is part of many groups that focus as many of our paths cross to accomplish the same mission. Webster is lucky to have her as an advocate, and we have been the envy of many towns around us.

Our calls for service were down last year to 20,981, compared to 22,958 the year before. We also saw fewer physical arrests (387) and people summoned for crimes (479). Eight hundred twenty citations were issued, and 351 motor vehicle crashes occurred.

Four external complaints were filed against Webster Police Officers in 2024. One was exonerated, and three were not sustained.

It's hard to believe I am entering my seventh year as Chief of Police. While the time has passed quickly, much work still needs to be done. I look forward to 2025 seeing what it has in store for us. I am confident that no matter what, the men and women of the Webster Police Department will be ready for it.

Respectfully,

Michael Shaw  
Chief of Police

TOWN OF WEBSTER ANNUAL CRIME REPORT 2024

OFFENSE TYPE	2023	2024
Murder and Manslaughter	0	0
Kidnapping/Abduction	4	1
Forcible Rape	2	7
Statutory Rape	0	10
Forcible Fondling	4	13
Robbery	6	3
Aggravated Assault	105	116
Simple Assault	318	267
Intimidation	68	40
Arson	3	2
Burglary/Breaking and Entering	42	28
Pocket-Picket	1	3
Purse-Snatching	2	2

Shoplifting	19	27
Theft from Building	33	18
Theft from Motor Vehicle	12	20

All Other Larceny	96	74
Motor Vehicle Theft	25	19
Counterfeiting/Forgery	9	6
False Pretenses/Swindling	44	22
Credit Card/Automatic Teller	3	6
Impersonation	42	39
Identity Theft	1	2
Embezzlement	1	1
Stolen Property Offenses	9	3
Destruction/Vandalism/Damage	128	133
Drug/Narcotic Violations	104	65
Pornography/Obscene Material	8	0
Prostitution/Assisting Promoting Prost.	0	0
Weapons Law Violations	41	38
Animal Cruelty	1	20
Bad Checks	0	0
Disorderly Person	140	101
Driving Under The Influence	59	34
Drunkenness	0	2

Family Offenses, Non-Violent	0	1
Runaway/Missing Person	0	0
Liquor Law Violations	19	9
Trespass of Real Property	28	17
All Other Offenses	251	187
Traffic, Town By Law Offenses	1219	652
Total Number of Calls	22,958	20,981
Total Number People Arrested	511	387
Total Number of People Summoned in For Various Offenses	769	479
Total Number of Citations Issued	1686	820
Total Number of Traffic Accidents	353	351