



# **Town of Webster Police Department**

**"Improving the Quality of Life"**

**Chief Timothy J. Bent**

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## **REPORT OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

It was another interesting and busy year for the Webster Police Department. With a bleak financial forecast from the State and Town, we felt the need to develop another source of funding to assist our various community programs. A campaign was launched seeking assistance with our community policing projects. As usual, business owners and community members were generous. With this in mind, several programs were kicked off. The *Hoops for Hope* program began the summer. This program ran on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings from 11P.M. to 1A.M. The main concept of the program is to break down barriers that exist between youth and the police. It was an opportunity for all involved parties to interact and bond. The program provided teenagers with a safe environment in which to hang out and play basketball together and with police officers. The program was held at the AJ Sitkowski school gymnasium at no cost to the teens. Officers were funded from the Community Policing Grant, and the Reserve Officers donated their time for security. Although the program got off to a slow start, by the end of the summer it had exceeded our expectations. We also held three dances during the course of the summer as the gym was transformed into *Club Web*. Complete with a disc jockey, popcorn, pizza and soda, the venue was quite successful as it entertained teenagers fourteen years of age and older, again at no cost to the teens. We then began our first *Junior Police Academy*. The program was developed and instructed by Webster Police Officers. Thirteen teenagers, interested in law enforcement, took part in the program. The week long academy provided the youth with an inside look at law enforcement on a local level. Complete with courses on law, patrol procedures, drill and ceremony as well as physical fitness, the program was a huge success. The youth were also provided the opportunity to participate in the police ride-along program. These programs could not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our Police Officers, EMS, Parks, Highway, Fire, and Rescue Departments. The Town of Webster truly does have dedicated and underrated employees.

Another public assistance campaign was created to fill the department's need for a police dog. Again, the community was up for the task. A police canine account was created. Operational needs for the animal are funded from that account. The animal itself was purchased with funding from the Federal Drug Seizure Account. At the writing of this report, the canine program is still being developed. A heartfelt thank you to our business owners, citizens, and various Town Departments who contributed to this worthwhile and much needed program. We will continue to accept donations to fund this program.

As we began to assess our programs, we came to the realization that we could not rely exclusively on the generosity of the public. Hence, championship wrestling at the Town Hall was reborn. We contracted with East Coast Championship Wrestling and brought wrestling entertainment to Webster once a month. All proceeds the police department receives through sponsorships and concessions go directly to the police department's community policing programs. If any business is interested in becoming a

sponsor in the future, please contact us. Full-time Police Officers, Reserve Police Officers, and Fire Department personnel volunteer their time for the wrestling events.

The Town hired Michael Lee as a full-time Patrolman. Mike progressed through the ranks of the department as a Reserve Officer, Permanent Intermittent Officer, to full-time Patrolman. As the Town is experiencing financial constraints, Officer Lee's first-year salary and benefits are funded from the Federal Drug Seizure Account. This account funds several projects and is from a Federal Task Force from which a Webster Police Officer is assigned. This account has purchased major equipment, a police dog, funded overtime for the new regional task force, and an officer's first-year salary. We also welcomed part-time Dispatchers Sarah Santimaw and Michael McGee.

This year also observed the completion of the much anticipated regional task force, a year in the planning. Named the South Worcester County Drug and Counter Crime Task Force, it combines the five Towns of Webster, Dudley, Oxford, Charlton and Southbridge to aid in the investigation of criminal and narcotics cases. The towns will also be assisted by State Police Detectives and Federal Agents. With the assistance of our local legislators, the task force received an Edward J. Byrne Memorial Grant in the amount of \$50,350.00 to assist with investigations and equipment. The task force also received assistance from the office of District Attorney Joseph Early Jr. As the criminal enterprise knows no boundaries, we will share our knowledge and combine our efforts to combat crime.

Several narcotic search warrants were conducted throughout the course of the year. This was accomplished through the combined efforts of the task force and search warrants conducted by our police department, led by Sergeant Keefe and Detective Hoover. The Webster Police conducted investigations and search warrants with the State Police and the DEA as well. It was a successful year as we made good progress in combating the distribution and trafficking of illegal substances in our area.

Statistically, the Town recorded a decrease in crimes against the person. These are crimes such as aggravated assaults, simple assaults, and robberies. We also observed a slight decrease in crimes against property such as breaking and enterings and other larcenies. Weapons law violations recorded a dramatic increase. Motor vehicle thefts recorded a substantial increase. The department made a total of 737 in custody arrests, requested 1,136 criminal complaint summonses, and logged a total of 21,861 incidents.

In the coming year we will restart a police station building committee. With the support of our Town we hope make progress in the realization of a new police station. Enough said.

As always, thank you to the men and women of the Webster Police Department, sworn and non-sworn personnel. When things are going well, management seems to take so much for granted. Your dedication and commitment does not go unnoticed. A special thank you to my executive assistant, Nancy Consolie, for all that you do.

The Chief's office received three written complaints regarding police conduct during the course of the year. One resulted in an internal investigation with a "not sustained" finding. Two citizen complaints resulted in "unfounded" and "not sustained" findings. 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

