



Waterford Police Department Waterford, Connecticut



Annual Report - Fiscal Year 2024/2025

“To protect and serve the public, prevent crime, and provide professional law enforcement services to our community.”

-Waterford Police Department Mission Statement-

INTRODUCTION

The Waterford Police Department is a 52-member community oriented police agency with many of the current Waterford Police Officers living and paying taxes in the Town of Waterford. The department provides exceptional service to the town and works closely with other town departments to keep our community safe and engage residents in various outreach efforts.

During Fiscal Year 2024/2025, under the guidance and direction of the Board of Police Commissioners and Chief Marc Balestracci, the Waterford Police Department continued to fulfill its motto, *“In the Community Interest.”*



Town of Waterford Board of Police Commissioners

The Board of Police Commissioners is comprised of members (L to R) First Selectperson Robert Brule, Christopher Gamble, Mark Gelinas, Thomas “Tony” Sheridan and James Dimmock.



The Waterford Police Commission is a civilian oversight board, empowered under Connecticut state statutes and Town of Waterford ordinances. Connecticut State Statute 7-276 details the authority of the Police Commission, which has four members that are appointed by the town's Representative Town Meeting and the final member being the Town's First Selectperson.

The members of the Police Commission are all volunteers, with the exception of the First Selectperson, and make the final decisions regarding hiring, promotions, demotions and certain civilian complaints.



**Chief of Police
Marc Balestracci**

Chief Marc Balestracci, who was placed in charge of the department in October of 2021 by the Board of Police Commissioners, works daily with the Administrative Team to review the department's budget status, obtain updates from department division leaders, assign tasks as appropriate and review the quality of work being delivered to the community.

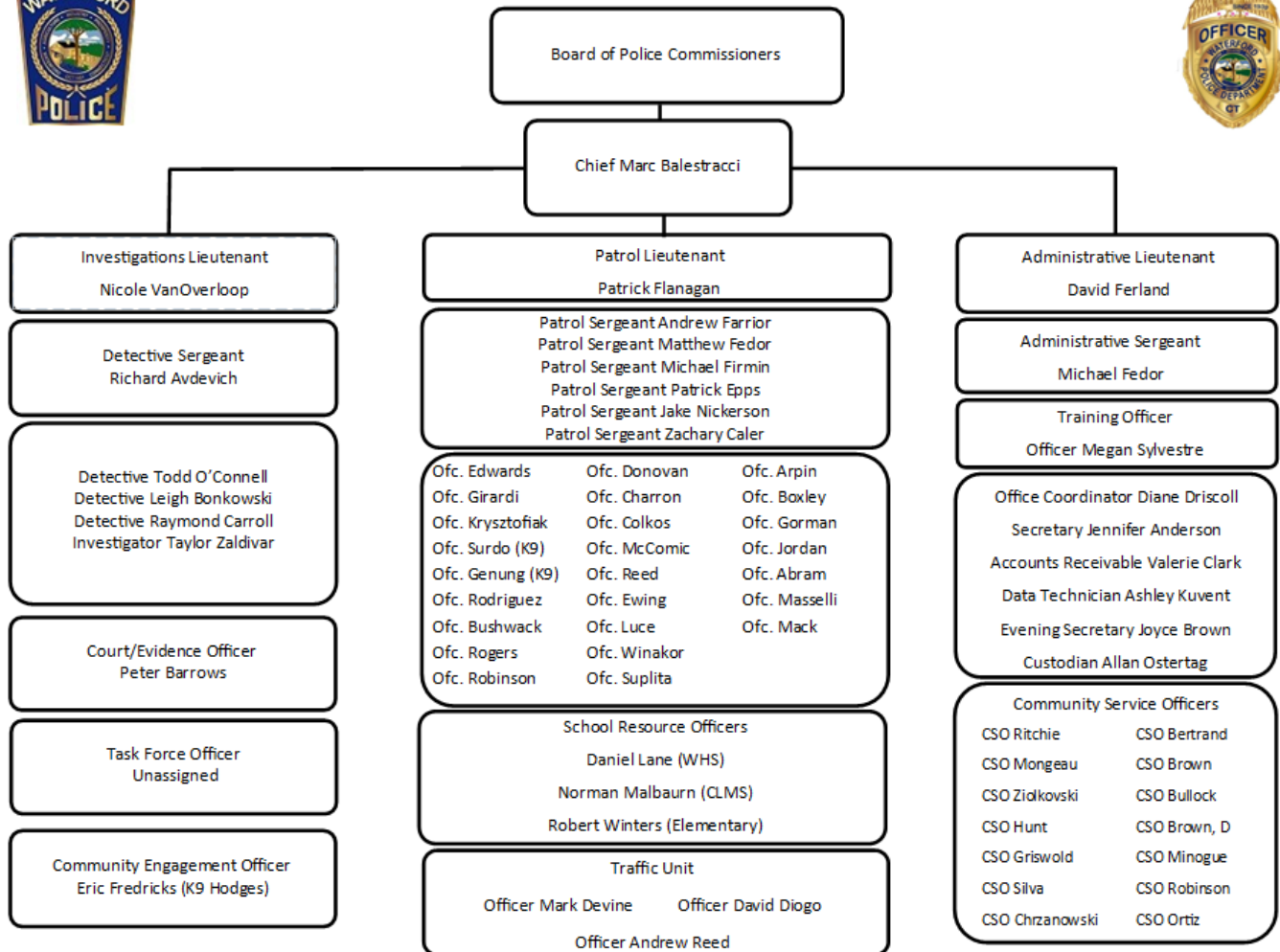
In FY 2024-2025, the Administrative Team consisted of Investigative Services Lieutenant Nicole VanOverloop, Patrol Services Lieutenant Patrick Flanagan, Administrative Services Lieutenant David Ferland, Administrative Sergeant Michael Fedor, Training Officer Megan Sylvestre, Office Coordinator Diane Driscoll and Jeffrey Robillard from the town's IT Services department.

Formal Administrative Team meetings are held every Monday morning and larger staff meetings held quarterly with all Lieutenants, Sergeants and assigned personnel to discuss department needs, personnel and equipment, morale considerations, training efforts, budget parameters, scheduling, building and vehicle concerns and special assignments. Effective communication remains a priority and these regularly scheduled meetings assist in that effort.

As Chief Balestracci's focus continues to be in the areas of community engagement, officer development, recruitment and employee wellness, these areas are discussed and considered routinely at all levels of our agency.



Waterford Police Department Personnel & Structure





2024/2025 Fiscal Year Prominent Events

- On July 1, 2024, newly hired officers Connor Abram and Nicolette Maselli were sworn in
- On July 2, 2024, members of the WPD, along with our regional crash investigation team, responded to a serious motor vehicle accident on Old Colchester Road, closing the road for several hours.
- On July 5, 2024, officers responded to an alert of a vehicle wanted in connection with over 20 thefts in the region. After a traffic stop and foot chase, several arrests were made solving cases throughout the region
- On July 8, 2024, Officer Julie Jordan was sworn in after transferring from the Plainfield Police Department
- On July 20, 2024, WPD hosted a newly licensed/permitted drivers traffic stop practice event at WHS
- On August 5, 2024, Community Engagement Officer Fredricks, along with three newly hired officers, Boxley, Abram and Maselli assisted Groton Town PD with National Night Out. From hire to retire, we focus on community engagement
- On August 10, 2024, WPD managed traffic and safety, as well as participated in, the Waterford Day Parade
- On August 15, 2024, WPD participated with Youth and Family Services at Shop with a Cop at Wal-Mart
- In August, our Investigative Services unit went to 43 businesses in town to educate and check for financial card skimmers at points of payment
- On August 28, 2024, we began the school year with three full-time School Resource Officers. They are teamed with two full-time Armed School Security Officers employed by the Board of Education.
- On September 10, 2024, WPD hosted Coffee with a Cop at the Waterford Community Center
- On September 13, 2024, WPD participated in the State Law Enforcement Recruitment Fair in Meriden, CT
- On September 14, 2024, a large group of ATVs and dirt bikes illegally traveled through roadways all over eastern CT. While in Waterford, officers were able to arrest two participants and seize both ATVs.
- On September 14, 2024, Officers Donovan, Winakor and Gorman recorded our a new Community Outreach Video
- On September 26, 2024, WPD hosted Tip-A-Cop at Longhorn's Steakhouse to raise funding for CT Special Olympics
- On October 1, 2024, the Investigative Services Unit conducted a search warrant on Clark Lane, resulting in two arrests and the seizure of illegal drugs and US currency.
- On October 4, 2024, Sgt. Zachary Caler and Officer Stephen Rogers were recognized by MADD for their efforts to combat impaired driving
- On October 5, 2024, WPD participated in the CT Gun Safe Giveaway giving free gun safes to residents
- On October 6, 2024, WPD participated in the annual Safe Futures Walk at the newly renovated Holm Jr. park
- In October, WPD teamed up with Senior Services for a traffic safety and aging presentation at a Lunch and Learn
- In October, WPD participated in the annual PD vs FD softball game (this was not a good year for the PD), the Harvest Fest event at the beach and the Waterford High School Job Fair
- Throughout the month of November, WPD partnered with WYFS, NL Homeless and Hospitality Center and CT DOT to safely relocate and house those in homeless encampments in town, before the winter temps set in
- On November 7, 2024, the entire PD received refresher training from Hartford Healthcare representative Christine Johnson on interacting with people who have special needs, with a focus on Dementia and Alzheimer's



- On November 13, 2024, Officers Surdo and Krysztofiak were awarded Meritorious Service Awards for their actions when responding to a call for service with a suicidal man
- On November 15, 2024, Officer Elizabeth Boxley graduated the Police Academy
- On November 25, 2024, Channel 3 News interviewed Sgt. Epps in response to our Retail Theft Initiative effort to reduce shoplifting in Waterford
- On December 6, 2024, WPD participated in the Light The Night tree lighting event at Holm Jr. park
- On December 8, 2024, WPD hosted a Stuff-A-Cruiser event at Waterford Wal-Mart
- On December 9, 2024, Great Neck School students came to the PD to get a tour and help decorate our tree
- On December 9, 2024, Lt. Ferland, Investigator Zaldivar, Officer Bushwack and Officer Reed were presented Chief's Awards for their work in assisting another department through an employee suicide debrief
- On December 29, 2024, WPD responded to an armed robbery at a gas station in the Quaker Hill section of Town
- In January, Officer Zachary Bushwack was named the 2024 WPD Officer of the Year
- On January 10, 2025, WPD responded to an armed bank robbery on Boston Post Road. Patrol, Investigative Services, our Wellness Team and our Chaplain Unit responded to the scene to investigate and assist staff
- On January 18, 2025, WPD hosted an Open House event to engage the community and recruit new members
- In January, Officer Eric Fredricks was awarded Humanitarian of the Year by the Waterford Lions Club
- On February 9, 2025, WPD responded to Wal-Mart for fraudulent returns. The call resulted in three Pennsylvania residents being arrested and \$5,400 in counterfeit currency seized. Cases in other locations were solved as a result
- On February 20, 2025, Officers Conner Abram and Nicolette Maselli graduated the police academy
- On March 2, 2025, a large scale disturbance occurred at a youth basketball game at the middle school. Three Middletown residents were arrested as a result of the incident where two people were injured.
- On March 13, 2025, WPD received Tier III State Accreditation. The highest level, which reviews policy and practices of the department, was reached well before State law requirements
- On March 24, 2025, newly hired officer Tyrone Mack was sworn in
- On March 26, 2025, Investigative Services served a search warrant on Sound View Drive. As a result of that service, two residents were arrested and illegal drugs and packaging materials were seized
- In April, the WPD participated in a national podcast to bring attention to the Kyle Seidel murder case
- In April, WPD hosted a police bicycle training course to certify more WPD officers on our bikes
- In May, Officer First Class Robert Edwards and Officer First Class Gil Maffeo retired after 26 and 25 years of service to our community
- On June 4, 2025, WPD members participated in the Special Olympics Torch Run
- In June, Joyce Brown retired as the Evening Shift Secretary after 28 years of service to the town

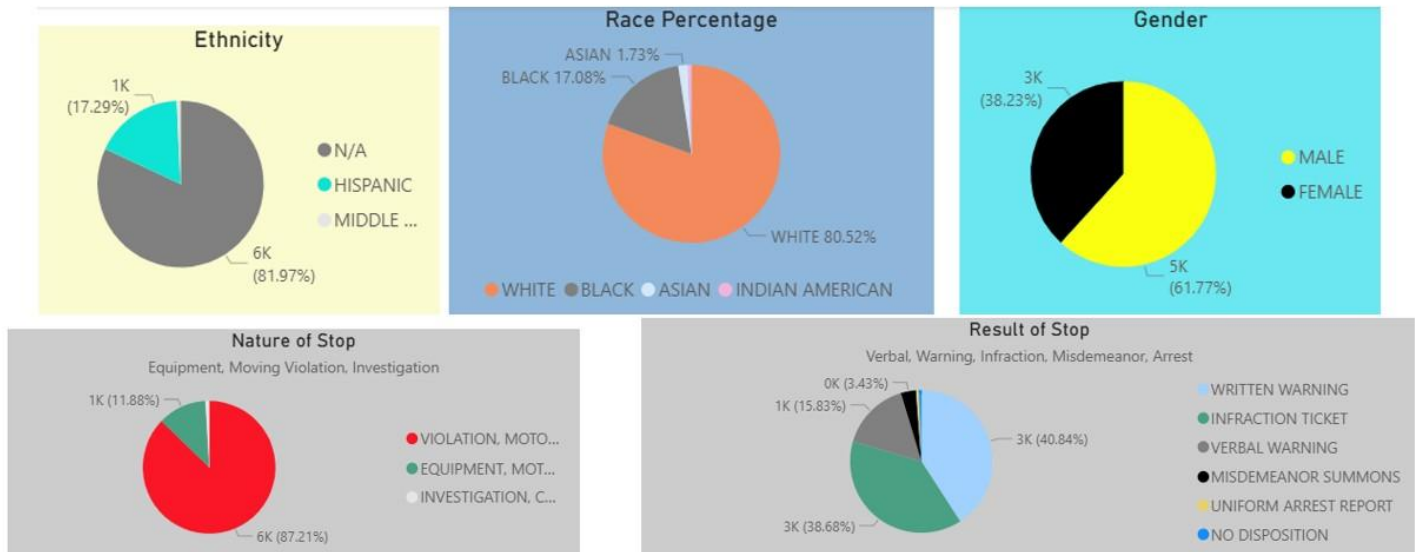




Waterford Police call types, use of force*, and car stop data

Category	Number	Change from previous fiscal year
Arrests	959	+16%
Calls For Service	30,959	+8%
Case Numbers	1,598	-18%
Motor Vehicle Stops	7,327	+30%
EDP/Welfare Checks	487	-9%
Larceny/Shoplifting	519	+27%
Domestic Violence	151	+32%
Assault	7	-66%
Drug Overdose	7	-36%
Impaired Driving	48	-7%
Missing Person	28	-76%
School Checks	814	-30%
Motor Vehicle Crashes	686	-8%
Walk-in Complaints	510	-8%
Alarms	840	-17%
Residence Checks	1,839	+15%
Suspicious Person/Vehicle	779	+1%
Stolen Cars	18	+28%

Motor Vehicle Stop Statistics





Waterford Police Department Use of Force – (multiple types of force can be used in one incident)

Total UOF Incident	Verbal commands	Takedown	Control Hands	Firearm Display	Pointed Firearm	Taser Laser Only	Taser Usage	K9	Pepper Spray	Strike	Restraint Chair	Baton
38	28	17	15	7	7	3	3	1	0	1	0	0

Waterford Police Department Use of Force by gender/race

	Black	Hispanic	White	Totals
Female	1	2	7	10
Male	2	4	15	21

**some incidents involved multiple uses of force on same subject*

**Most uses of force by an officer require the completion of a State of Connecticut/ Police Officers Standards and Training-C Use of Force report, in addition to a narrative report from every officer involved. All uses of force are first reviewed by the on-duty supervisor for their determination if the use of force was justified and within policy. The report is then forwarded to a Use of Force committee, which consists of Use of Force instructors, Supervisors and select officers who are certified and/or knowledgeable in the various methods of force, including firearms, defensive tactics, and less lethal force options. The Use of Force committee reviews the Use of Force and all associated reports, videos and additional evidence, making a determination of whether or not the use of force was within policy and if it is required to be sent to the State. The Use of Force incident is then forwarded to a Lieutenant for review to determine if it was justified. Any use of force that is deemed not justified and/or not within policy is forwarded to the Chief of Police for review. The Chief of Police receives all notifications for use of force incidents immediately upon entry into our computer systems and can review any of them at any time.*

PATROL SERVICES



**Patrol Lieutenant
Patrick Flanagan**

The Patrol Division, which is led by Lt. Patrick Flanagan, is the largest and most visible component of the Waterford Police Department, often serving as the first impression of the agency during interactions with members of the community. Patrol provides service to approximately 20,000 residents in addition to the numerous business owners, employees and visitors that enjoy what our town has to offer on a daily basis. Patrol coordinates and implements community policing initiatives and enforcement activities in the Town of Waterford in accordance with our mission “to protect and serve the public, prevent crime, and provide professional law enforcement services to our community.”

The Patrol Division is comprised of one (1) Lieutenant, six (6) Sergeants and twenty-eight (28) Patrol Officers. Patrol services are organized into three (3) shifts: Midnight, Day and Evening, with a varying number of officers assigned to each shift based on the time of year, level of activity and budgetary guidelines. Each shift has two (2) Sergeants assigned with differing days off to ensure consistent supervision at all times. The town is delineated into three (3) separate patrol zones to ensure adequate coverage for all areas of town. Zones A and C consist primarily of residential neighborhoods, small commercial developments, parks, beaches and schools. Zone B houses the town’s largest retail developments and a youth facility with high call volume.

During the 2024/2025 fiscal year, the police department handled 30,959 calls for service, representing an 8.97 increase over the previous year. Patrol services deals with a wide variety of calls, ranging from criminal investigations and civil disputes to assisting people who need various services such as medical, psychological, housing assistance and/or financial assistance.

This fiscal year the department installed two new stationary LPR (license plate reader) “FLOCK” cameras in town (to supplement the existing two cameras) which assisted the Patrol Division with numerous investigations to include stolen car recoveries, the location of missing persons and the location of wanted felons.



Several of the patrol vehicles are also equipped with LPR cameras which are capable of scanning license plates while in motion or in a stationary position. These patrol vehicles are often utilized at DUI check points and also while on routine patrol.

In addition to these duties, officers perform security checks of businesses and residences as well as town buildings/properties, conduct security walk-throughs of the public schools and one private school, locate wanted persons and enforce traffic offenses including impaired driving investigations. They also assist the public with other non-criminal situations such as missing persons, juvenile runaways and have the ability to deploy Naloxone to combat opiate related overdoses and deaths.

The Town of Waterford has numerous wooded areas and is also a shoreline community with various bodies of water. The department must use specialized equipment to navigate these various topographies. The presence of a large number of retail establishments along with a nuclear power facility, a racetrack, two interstate highways, a railway system, a town beach and State parks combine to keep Waterford Police officers busy throughout their shifts. All of these areas are patrolled with 20 marked and unmarked patrol vehicles equipped with Mobile Data Computers (MDCs), 4 All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), 1 regional marine patrol boat, 1 jet ski, 5 bicycles, 1 drone (flown by certified drone pilots), and a mobile command vehicle. Years ago, the department obtained a Humvee type vehicle through the military surplus program, which it uses for community events and storm responses. Patrol services continues to outfit its patrol vehicles with a “black and white” color scheme to reflect a more traditional police service while capturing the essence of community policing.

Patrol services works cooperatively with other law enforcement agencies, governmental agencies and non-profit groups including Senior Services, Emergency Management, Waterford Youth and Family Services, Recreation and Parks, the Department of Children and Families, the Homeless Hospitality Center, and Safe Futures (which provides domestic violence wrap-around services). These types of partnerships as well as continued joint regional teams (such as the SECT regional marine patrol and Southeastern Emergency Response Team) have allowed reduced individual department costs through the sharing of resources.

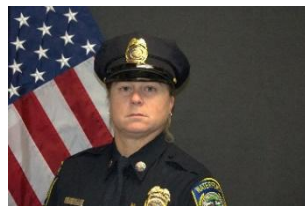
MARINE PATROL



**Sergeant
Michael Firmin**

The Waterford Police Department Marine Division continues to partner with the East Lyme Police Department to operate a regional marine patrol vessel. Both towns share responsibility with staffing, maintenance and fuel costs. The Southeast Regional Marine Patrol vessel patrols the navigable waters of both communities to include the Niantic River, Niantic Bay, Long Island Sound, Fishers Island Sound and the Thames River.

The Southeast Regional Marine Patrol is available for service calls year-round and is staffed by each department separately with a Captain and Crewmember on various weekdays, weekends and holidays from late May thru September.



**Detective
Leigh Bonkowski**

Sergeant Michael Firmin and Detective Leigh Bonkowski share the responsibility of ongoing vessel and engine maintenance and repair.

During the 2024/2025 fiscal year:

A capital improvement project for electronics upgrades, interior decking, decal replacement and bottom paint maintenance was approved by both towns.



Boat Captains Lieutenant Flanagan, Sergeant Farrior, Sergeant Firmin, Detective Bonkowski and Detective Carroll attended a Raymarine Electronics training course held at Stonington PD.

Maritime security was provided for the East Lyme Day Fireworks, the Niantic Bay Triathlon, and the Maritime Heritage Festival. Patrols of the Millstone Nuclear Power Station and its security zone continue to be checked during underway patrols.

Notable assists include responses to; a fleeing domestic suspect in the Thames Rivers, multi-day search efforts following a fatal boating accident in the Connecticut River, support to the Stonington Police Department for a boat parade in the Mystic River and an overturned kayaker near Two Tree Channel.

Speed and wake violations are addressed when observed in the Niantic River and complaints forwarded through the Waterford Harbormaster are investigated.

Officers educate kayakers regarding the importance of labeling their kayaks to prevent unnecessarily search and rescue responses and provided "If Found Stickers."

Officer McComie attended a CT Safe Boating course to obtain his boating certificate.

Sergeant Firmin and Detective Bonkowski held classroom and underway training for crewmembers Detective O'Connell, Officer Rogers, Officer Devine, Officer Donovan, Officer McComie, Officer Reed, and Officer Gorman.

The Waterford Police Department continues to be the host site of monthly meetings for the New London Marine Group Region 4, which is attended by Sergeant Firmin and Detective Bonkowski. Their focus is upon the preparedness and collaboration of multiple private, local, state and federal agencies for the safety and security of the maritime environment in the areas of Long Island Sound and the Port of New London. The group obtained its own portable radios that are used on the state radio system for better communication between members during the groups' activations.

K9 UNIT



**K9 Officer
Nicholas Genung**

The 2024/2025 fiscal year was once again a successful year for the Waterford Police Department's K9 Unit. K9 Ozzy (a five -Year-old Belgian Malinois) and Officer Nicholas Genung, are a dual purpose team trained in patrol work and narcotics detection. Throughout the 2024/2025 fiscal year, K9 Ozzy and Officer Nicholas Genung have tracked and located individuals including criminal suspects, emotionally disturbed persons and missing persons. They have also had several narcotics finds resulting in arrests (not only in the Town of Waterford, but also for surrounding agencies on mutual aid requests).



On August 1, 2024, the Violent Crimes Task Force (VCTF) requested a K9 to search the wood line alongside RTE 184 in Groton, CT after an individual they were attempting to take into custody threw items into the woods while they pursued him on foot. The VCTF investigators advised they observed a glass pipe used for smoking “crack” cocaine just prior to the wood line where the suspect threw the rest of the items. K9 Ozzy was deployed in the area and pulled down the embankment. K9 Ozzy focused on one small section of bushes and Officer Genung observed a small green plastic container, which he immediately recognized as a container used to store powdered narcotics in the leaves underneath a bush that tested positive for the presence of cocaine. The individual was taken into custody on an arrest warrant and narcotics charges.

On February 24, 2025, Officer Rogers stopped a vehicle for a speeding violation on RTE 32 and observed a cut corner of a plastic bag by the operator's foot which Officer Rogers recognized to be consistent with drug packaging material. Officer Rogers then requested Officer Genung respond to the scene with K9 Ozzy. K9 Ozzy was deployed for an open air sniff and showed alert behavior on the open driver's window by trying to climb in while pointing his head down toward the door pockets. A subsequent hand search yielded a large crack cocaine rock in the driver's door pocket, several crack pipes, and numerous flakes of “crack” cocaine throughout the vehicle. As a result of the search, all three (3) occupants were arrested on drug charges.



**K9 Officer
Nicolas Surdo**

K9 Tico (a three-year old Belgian Malinois) and Officer Nicolas Surdo are also a dual purpose team trained in both narcotics detection and patrol work, which includes building searches, area searches, evidence recovery, tracking and criminal apprehension. Throughout the 2024/2025 fiscal year, K9 Tico and Officer Nicolas Surdo have conducted numerous motor vehicle narcotic searches, tracking of both violent and non-violent subjects and building searches. K9 Tico and Officer Surdo have also responded to neighboring agencies for mutual aid requests.

On November 12, 2024, Officer Surdo was on patrol and located a suspicious vehicle parked in the side lot near the wood line of the Regal Cinemas. Upon speaking with the occupants, it was determined the female had an arrest warrant and was subsequently arrested. The male occupant was removed from the vehicle and K9 Tico was deployed for an open air sniff of the exterior of the vehicle. K9 Tico showed alert behavior underneath the right passenger side door area in a pile of leaves. A subsequent search by hand revealed a glass smoking pipe known to be used to smoke narcotics. A hand search was conducted of the interior of the vehicle rendering no measureable amounts of narcotics, but two more glass smoking pipes were located. The female was searched at the police department, she was found to be in possession of "crack" cocaine and was charged accordingly.

On June 11, 2025 Officer Surdo responded to Scotch Cap Road in the area of Broad View Court to assist Officer Reed on a motor vehicle stop. During the stop, bottles of Methadone were observed in plain view and upon further discussion with an occupant, Officer Barrows located a white, rock like substance, believed to be “crack” cocaine. K9 Tico was deployed for an open air sniff of the exterior of the vehicle. K9 Tico showed alert behavior on the front left (driver's) side of the vehicle. K9 Tico was placed inside the vehicle where he exhibited similar behavior under the front left driver's seat. A subsequent hand search was conducted where approximately 155 grams of “crack” cocaine and powdered cocaine was located under the front right passenger seat. The two (2) occupants of the vehicle were taken into custody on drug charges.

The K9 units continue to provide support to Patrol Services and Investigative Services and were used in a variety of capacities throughout the fiscal year. These uses include various searches for missing persons/suspects, locating stolen items, article searches, conducting narcotics searches and apprehending wanted suspects.



The K9 units also provide a high level of officer safety by searching buildings and areas where criminals posing a high risk of danger may be hiding.

In order to keep up on their required training and skills, both teams (Officer Nicolas Surdo/K9 Tico and Officer Nicholas Genung/K9 Ozzy) train twice a month (16 hours) with the southeastern Connecticut regional K9 group which consists of teams from several local police departments. The teams benefit from working with the regional group as they are able to train at numerous facilities and locations, exposing the K9's to a variety of environmental situations.

Both K9 teams are certified by NAPWDA and CPWDA in patrol and narcotics (Dual Purpose Police K9's) and maintain these certifications with annual recertification tests.

The K9 teams continued their annual routine by attending Waterford High School's criminal justice class for a two-part demonstration (one part is a practical demonstration and the other part is done in the classroom). They also participate in the Waterford Police Department Citizen's Police Academy. The teams also take part in the Camp Harkness Fall Festival, the Town of Waterford Harvest Festival, and the Youth Promise education program sponsored by the Waterford Youth and Family Services Bureau. This event, which is highly anticipated by the students at our elementary schools, is also a highlight for the K9 officers as they enjoy interacting with our youth and showcasing the talents of our dogs.

K9 Usages:

Narcotics Searches: 33

Person Tracks: 11

Article/Evidence Recovery: 7

Area Searches: 7

Building Searches: 2

Emergency Response Team
Deployments: 0

Community Service Events: 15

Bites: 0

Total Usages: 75





SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS



**School Resource
Officer Daniel Lane**



**School Resource
Officer Norman
Malbaurn**



**School Resource
Officer Robert
Winters**



Youth Division Complaints: 42

School Events: 45

School Drills: 45

Home Visits: 19

Youth Arrests: 4

The School Resource Officers (SRO) are present in the school system all year with an officer assigned full time to the Waterford High School (SRO Norman Malbaurn), The Clark Lane Middle School (SRO Dan Lane) and the three Elementary Schools, Great Neck, Oswegatchie and Quaker Hill (SRO Robert Winters). Additionally, Armed Security Officers Richard Morgan and Mike Masucci are assigned to the Elementary Schools. The three School Resource Officers also cover the Town of Waterford's magnet school (The Friendship School) and the Waterford Country School.

One of their main goals is to enhance school and student life by building positive relationships with the students and staff. They will attempt to attend, on duty and off duty, after school functions and events. This would include, but is not limited to, home and away sporting events, school club events, band concerts, drama productions and open houses.

The SROs are responsible for school-based investigations, coordinating school based education programs (i.e. Youth Promise, Freshman Seminars and Health Class Seminars), and community outreach. They are responsible for working in cooperation with Waterford's Juvenile Review Board and reviewing all juvenile arrests that may not have to enter the juvenile court system. They also coordinate with the Department of Children and Families as well as Waterford Youth and Family Services, which allows the SROs to develop and deliver mentoring programs and diversionary options for all youthful offenders.

The officers address school security concerns to include the coordination and monitoring of lockdown drills, fire drills, shelter-in-place planning and evacuation drills. They have attended and presented at several school safety workshops and symposiums. They also assist in annual school vulnerability assessments to strengthen school safety and work cooperatively with the school system to implement any necessary changes.

All juvenile cases that the Waterford Police Department investigates are forwarded to the three SROs for review. Once the review is complete, these officers process the case reports for their final destination, to include juvenile court, diversionary programs and the records division for retention.

During the summer months, when school is not in session, these officers return to the Patrol Division, but remain in contact with many students, families and Board of Education staff.



TRAFFIC UNIT



**Traffic Officer
Mark Devine**



**Traffic Officer
David Diogo**



**Traffic Officer
Andrew Reed**

The Waterford Police Department's Traffic Unit plays a vital role in ensuring public safety through traffic enforcement, education, and collaboration with town departments. The unit consists of three officers: Officer Mark Devine, Officer David Diogo, and Officer Andrew Reed. Officer Diogo joined the unit in August 2024, followed by Officer Reed in December 2024, adding valuable support to the team.

Enforcement Activity: Between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, the Traffic Unit conducted a total of 3,533 traffic stops, accounting for over 48% of all stops made by the department during that period. Enforcement priorities are determined based on citizen complaints, feedback from fellow officers and speed data collected through traffic monitoring devices, including speed feedback signs. This data-driven approach allows officers to focus efforts on areas of greatest concern and impact.

Traffic Management & Operational Duties: Beyond enforcement, the unit manages a wide range of traffic-related responsibilities in the Town of Waterford, including reviewing and issuing highway use permits, addressing line-of-sight and other roadway safety concerns, processing sign change requests, conducting speed limit reviews and collecting and analyzing speed data.

The unit works in close partnership with other town entities, including the Department of Public Works, Zoning Enforcement and other municipal departments, to resolve infrastructure and regulatory concerns.

Community Engagement & Safety Initiatives: The Traffic Unit continues to be active in community outreach and non-enforcement activities. Highlights from the past year include successfully securing a speed limit reduction on Rope Ferry Road, from 35 mph to 30 mph between Route 1 and North Road, delivering traffic safety presentations to students at Waterford High School, participating in senior

services programming, WPD Citizens Police Academy and deploying traffic message boards in key areas to promote safety and awareness of traffic laws.



Speed Feedback Technology: Over the past year, the unit deployed three battery-powered and two solar-powered speed feedback signs throughout the town. These devices have been critical tools in both enforcement strategy and public education. Additionally, the unit recently acquired two more speed feedback signs—at no cost—from UConn's T2 (Technology Transfer) Center, enhancing the unit's data collection and traffic-calming capabilities.

Conclusion: The Traffic Services Unit continues to serve as a cornerstone of the Waterford Police Department's efforts to promote road safety, educate the public, and respond to community concerns. With a blend of proactive enforcement, strategic technology use, and community involvement, the unit remains committed to improving the quality of life for all who live, work, and travel in Waterford.



INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES



**Investigations
Lieutenant
Nicole VanOverloop**

In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Investigative Service Division was comprised of three (3) Detectives, an Investigator and a Secretary. The Court/Evidence Officer as well as the Community Engagement Officer, along with K9 Hodges, also report to the Investigative Services Division.

The Division is supervised by Lieutenant Nicole VanOverloop and Detective Sergeant Richard Avdevich.

The Investigative Services Division is responsible for investigating major criminal incidents within the Town of Waterford, along with state and national cases that have ties back to Waterford. The Division routinely works with other agencies to investigate cases that have crossed jurisdictional boundaries. The Division conducts necessary background checks for pistol permit applications as well as conducts weapons compliance investigations on persons prohibited from possessing firearms, and performs address compliance checks on sexual offenders and persons on the Deadly Weapons Offender Registry.

Investigative Services also conducts background investigations for any person or organization that conducts door-to-door sales of goods or services within the Town's borders. Once vetted, those who have passed the process are issued permits to show residents that these vendors are within compliance of the Town Ordinance.

The Investigative Services Division investigated multiple crimes during the fiscal year. These crimes included complaints of frequent drug activity from neighbors coming from residences. In one case, Division members received information of drug activity coming from a residence. After a month's long investigation, Investigative Services conducted a search warrant on the residence. As a result of the search warrant, illegal drugs as well as money and related materials were seized. A male resident of the home was arrested for distributing and possessing the illegal drugs along with a female companion. The male was evicted by the state from the residence the next day. The Investigative Service Division also conducted numerous sexual assault investigations. Three of the sexual assault investigations resulted in arrests with charges of Sexual Assault in the 2nd Degree, Risk of Injury to a Minor as well as Importing Child Pornography. Other cases of interest involved Investigative Services members solving a retail burglary after DNA in the form of blood was left at the scene, later receiving a positive identifications using rapid DNA and our Flock camera system.

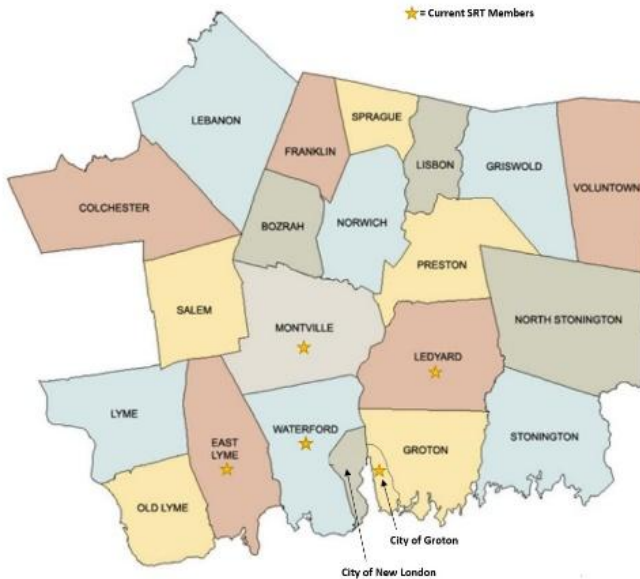
Additionally the Investigative Services had the opportunity to work with a national podcast entitled "The Deck" on a cold case homicide from 2012. The episode aired in March 2025.

Case Numbers Assigned to Investigative Services:	247
Arrests:	14
Burglaries (Residential and Commercial):	7
Search Warrants:	17
Unattended Death Investigations:	14
Sexual Assaults:	14
Pistol Permits / Background Checks:	160
Robberies:	2
Drug Investigations:	8
Weapons Compliance:	9



The Investigative Services Division is also responsible for completing and submitting annual reports to State and Federal agencies for statistical purposes and related to criminal procedure. These reports include sexual assault investigations, use of Ex-parte Orders for internet and cellular records, overdose related deaths and federal asset forfeiture accountability.

Southeastern Emergency Response Team (SERT):



During this fiscal year the Special Response Team (SRT) was changed to the Southeastern Emergency Response Team (SERT). The Waterford Police Department continued to advance the teams abilities with the purchase of additional gas masks and filters. Additionally the Law Enforcement Council awarded \$4000 to the team for ballistic shields. The SERT Team continues to have an MOU with the Ledyard, Montville, East Lyme and Groton City Police Departments. Waterford's team consists of six (6) members with an additional three (3) highly trained negotiators. The team trains together monthly and has added additional training hours per month. Leadership within the SERT changed during the 2024-2025 fiscal year with some members stepping down

and others taking over the leadership roles. The Police Chiefs of the departments continue to meet on a regular basis for the benefit of the team. The SERT responds to calls such as high-risk warrants, barricaded subjects, instances needing large perimeters and any other events deemed appropriate.

COURT / EVIDENCE



**Court/Evidence
Officer
Peter Barrows**

As Officer First Class Gilbert Maffeo retired in June after 25 years of service, Officer Peter Barrows was assigned as the new WPD Court and Evidence Officer. For the past six years, Officer Maffeo built an excellent rapport and partnership between the court, forensic lab and firearms units and Officer Barrows strives to not only keep, but continue to improve on these relationships. Since the transition, Investigator Zaldivar has been assigned as the new Assistant Court and Evidence Officer.

At the end of last fiscal year, the WPD transitioned to a new records management system in NexGen. Due to this change, in April of this year the WPD became the first department working with GA10 to submit all court paperwork electronically as we work towards a true "paperless system". This has obviously been a big systematic change with the courts state-wide and the WPD was chosen by GA10 due to our track record in being considered as the "standard" in how police departments and the courthouses should work with each other. The WPD will continue to work closely with not only GA10, but also with NexGen and the Connecticut Information Sharing System (CISS) as we aim to fully commit to a paperless system in 2026.



Since taking over, Officer Barrows has primarily focused on auditing each evidentiary storage compartment while re-organizing and labeling the evidence processing and storage rooms. Officer Barrows also has created and posted guidelines on preferred practices on how each piece of evidence should be packaged, labeled and stored.

During this fiscal year, five hundred eleven (511) items were taken into evidence while three hundred seventy seven (377) items were properly disposed of. A big focus this past year was placed on clearing the impound lot of vehicles that could either be returned to their owners or turned over to the Examiner of Seized Property. After collaborating with both GA10 and the Examiner of Seized Property, six (6)

vehicles were able to be cleared from the lot. Throughout the year, eleven (11) trips were made to the lab, two (2) drugs burns were completed and three (3) firearms disposals were completed during the last year.

ADMINISTRATION



**Administrative
Lieutenant
David Ferland**

The Administrative Services section of the Police Department is led by Lieutenant David Ferland and assisted by Administrative Sergeant Michael Fedor. Administrative Services encompasses the Records, Policy, Scheduling, Community Service Officers, Chaplains, Grants and Training functions of the Waterford Police Department.

Records Department:

The Waterford Police Department Records Division is tasked with maintaining all records for the Police Department, along with numerous requests for services, which are listed below. They are often the first point of contact for those entering the police department and provide service with empathy, efficiency and integrity, to align with the standards the police department diligently upholds. The Waterford Police Department Records Division is staffed by, Joyce Brown, Valerie Clark and Ashley Kuvent. Joyce Brown retired in June 2025 after 28 years of dedicated service to the Town of Waterford. A process began to hire her replacement but the nearly 3 decades of dedicated service and institutional knowledge will be missed.

Highlights:

The implementation of electronic ticketing and motor vehicle accident entries with our new Report Management System (Nexgen) has almost eliminated the need for records personnel to enter that data. The reduction of this responsibility has been quickly replaced with significant increases in other responsibilities, such as redaction of Body Camera footage.

Records personnel attend periodic training to stay current with FOIA laws applicable to law enforcement, as well as best practices for report management.

Records personnel have dedicated a significant amount of time updating, correcting, modifying and “cleaning up” data in our Records Management System (RMS). These efforts provide officers with the best and most accurate information when conducting investigations and completing reports.



On multiple occasions, records personnel have identified individuals having active arrest warrants requesting documents, coordinating with officers to have the subjects taken into custody. They frequently take the extra steps verifying information that may otherwise go unidentified with no interaction with sworn officers.

Several significant FOIA requests from the media and civilians were received which required thorough research to ensure accuracy. With the increase in prevalence of body cameras, requests for footage has greatly increased. The time-consuming process of reviewing and redacting audio and video in compliance with FOIA laws has significantly influenced the workload of our Records staff. State laws only allow for minimum, if any charges, for requests. FOIA requests increased by 38% from the previous fiscal year.

As the court system continues to work towards adjudicating the backlog of cases, which was significantly impacted during the pandemic, the Records Division has incurred a significant increase in the amount of case erasures and court abstracts. These tasks increased year over year by 25% and 58% respectively.

The Records Department was responsible for the following transactions in fiscal year 2024/2025:

Freedom of Information Act Requests/ Including Insurance Requests	1,942
DOC/Court/DCF requests	220
Patrons assisted at lobby window	1,873
Warrant Data Entry	412
Background Checks	84
Abstracts from Court	4687
Protective Order Entries	360
Phone Calls from Public	2,170
Case Erasures	3,538
Court Requests	171
Police Tasking	856

Department Policies and Procedures: The Waterford Police Department gained Tier 3 Accreditation in March 2025, which completes the initial State accreditation requirement, in compliance with the police accountability law. This project was completed by Sergeant Michael Fedor, in his role as the Administrative Sergeant. The policies and procedures of the department are continually reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with changes in the law, model State policies and practices consistent with the ever-changing role of law enforcement. The 2025 calendar year brought the beginning of required biennial review and updating of all department policies.

Schedule: The schedules of all 52 police officers, 5 full-time clerical staff, 14 CSOs and the custodian are the responsibility of the Administrative Services Division. This task involves not only ensuring the proper coverage of patrol, but also the coordination of trainings, overtime, personal time off, as well as coverage and representation at community events.



CHAPLAIN PROGRAM



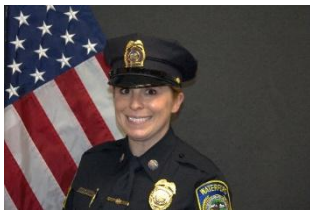
The Chaplain program is a non-denominational program consisting of four volunteers that are rooted in our community and rotate through one week on-call periods. They meet monthly at the police department, with our Administrative Sergeant serving as a liaison, to determine their on-call schedule, discuss services they have provided and work towards developing additional ways they can assist the department and the community.

The Chaplains undertake various tasks to assist our agency and the community during times of illness, injury, or death, with a primary function of assisting officers in the delivery of death notifications. Additionally, they provide funeral, wedding and other services and often maintain relationships with community members they assist during a time of need. The Chaplains continue to be a resource for members of the department through individual conversations and guidance, as well as a consistent presence in support of officer wellness initiatives.

Chaplain Tyrus Rock was brought on this year to fill the vacancy created by a chaplain's retirement last year. Along with our other Chaplains; Joe Parise, Chuck Tyree and Benjamin Sheldon, they can be frequently seen assisting the agency at community events such as the Tip-A-Cop, Wal-Mart Food, Toy, and Clothing Drive, Harvest Fest and Shop-With-A-Cop, providing holiday presents for families in need. They have organized breakfast and cookouts for officers as they continue to strive to support officer wellness initiatives.

Recognizing the continued value that the Chaplains provide, the department is able to provide them with an office at the department. This has allowed them to hold office hours to increase their presence around department members and to meet with individuals in a more private setting within the building.

TRAINING



**Training Officer
Megan Sylvestre**

Training for the Waterford Police Department is overseen by Lieutenant Ferland and is managed by Officer Megan Sylvestre. The training department is a vital part of the daily operations of the police department. Training begins at the start of an officer's career and plays a major role to the end of that career. The Training Officer is responsible for recruitment, the selection process, initial academy training and a 400-hour Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP), in addition to in-service training and recertification for every officer.

Recruitment:

The Waterford Police Department continues to recruit only those who meet the standards set forth by the Law Enforcement Council (LEC), the Police Officers and Standards Training Council (POSTC) and the Waterford Police Department. The Waterford Police Department continues its efforts in recruitment by participating in outreach programs to include visiting collegiate institutions, attending the LEC testing dates to educate potential applicants about our agency and draw their interest to Waterford, hosting PATH programs, Internship programs and the CSO program.



Efforts to expand the department's reach in recruiting this past year included holding an open house for interested applicants as well as making various social media posts about hiring.

The Waterford Police Department also instituted a mentor program for new hire applicants. In this program, current officers reach out to applicants to help them through the hiring process by answering any questions they may have.

New Hires:

Officer Julie Jordan was hired as a lateral/certified police officer after serving several years with the Plainfield Police Department in Connecticut. Her current certification allowed for an abbreviated field training process and an expedited timeframe to have her working patrol on her own.

Officer Connor Abram and Officer Nicolette Maselli were hired as Officers and attended the third session of the Eastern Regional Police Academy held by Law Enforcement Council of Connecticut, of which the department is a member. This allowed Officer Abram and Officer Maselli to receive their training locally and learn from active police officers from the region, including several Waterford Police Officers.

Officer Tyrone Mack was hired as a new Officer and attended the 386th session of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council Connecticut Police Academy. This is a residential academy located in Meriden, Connecticut and most of their training is instructed mostly by the academy staff who are retired police officers from various police departments. There are also other police officers and civilians who are experts in their fields that instruct some of the classes.



Continuing Training:

Training remains at the forefront of the Waterford Police Department and is critical for any successful agency. Our department believes that through training, in service or collegiate, officers will be better prepared to meet the needs of the community and have the knowledge and the resources available to them to assist in their decision-making at calls for service.

Officers are still required to attend mandatory trainings annually as well as tri-annually to meet POSTC standards to maintain their police officer certification. The Waterford Police Department has always met and exceeded these standards. The Waterford Police Department encourages officers to seek higher education and had two officers attending college to obtain degrees this fiscal year.

Officers continue to attend specialized trainings throughout Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Alabama. Some of the most notable trainings officers attended this year were the FBI New England Regional Command College, Basic Interview and Interrogation, Connecticut Peer Support Training, Field Training Officer School, Crisis Intervention Training, Basic Crime Scene Procedure, Regional Criminal Investigation School, and the Use of Force Summit.



In-house trainings have been of the utmost importance and having certified instructors is critical to being able to host our own trainings and ensuring the agency is equipped with the right tools for the job. Scenario based training, putting officers in real-life scenarios that induce stress reactions, decision making, de-escalation and working together as a team will ensure the officers are well trained and the community receives a high level of service. Notable in-house trainings instructed by our own officers were Body Worn Camera training, Police Mountain Bicycle Certification training, Use of Force Reporting Guidelines, Advanced Driving Under the Influence (DUI), Method of Instruction, Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE).

The department also does monthly roll call trainings. These trainings are no more than one hour that are taught by various officers in the agency on various policies and tools that we have at our disposal. Some of the topics discussed in this year's roll call trainings were law enforcement and citizens with special needs, crime scene refresher, police canine and perimeters, railway safety, and a department of children and family (DCF) refresher just to name a few.

As we continue to respond to numerous calls for service regarding emotionally disturbed persons and those in crisis, the Waterford Police Department has made it a priority to have all officers attend Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). CIT is a five-day course where officers gain knowledge and resources on how to respond to these calls for service. All but three certified officers in the agency are CIT certified, and those three will attend the training once it's offered again in the fall.

The Waterford Police Department has continued to send officers to Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE), which is a requirement for all new officers certified after January 2022. This class requires a prerequisite, which is an advanced DUI course or Standardized Field Sobriety Testing course. The police department has one (1) ARIDE/DRE instructor and three (3) DUI instructors, allowing us to host the training at no cost. All certified officers, including those not required, have either successfully completed the course or are scheduled to take the course in the fall.

TECHNOLOGY / COMMUNICATIONS



The Waterford Police Department improved their Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS or Drone) unit with the generous donation of a "Teal 2" drone provided by the Dominion Millstone Nuclear Power Plant. The drone, which complies with upcoming legislation requiring drones to be made in the United States of America, is state of the art with top tier functionality including stabilization, GPS tracking, the ability to create automated flight plans, and the latest in thermal imaging technology. The drone consists of a small, light-weight "quad-copter" style aircraft which is affixed with a high-quality camera which includes FLIR – or thermal imaging.

The drone comes with a "Teal Air Control" or (TAC), a remote control system which runs on an Android smart tablet. This tablet is affixed with GPS containing "offline" maps of the majority of New London County and Long Island Sound. This allows drone operators to pre-program automated flights at specific altitudes to gather photographs or video of specific buildings, landmarks, or areas of concern (ie: missing person).



Currently, the drone unit falls under the supervision of Lt. David Ferland and is managed by Sergeant Zachary Caler. Current drone operators, who are required to be federally licensed and certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), include the two supervisors as well as Sergeant Jake Nickerson, Investigator Taylor Zaldivar, and K9 Officer Nicholas Surdo. For fiscal year 2025-2026, approval has been granted to train two new drone operators to add to the program. This allows for a quicker response in emergencies, as more officers will be available to fly the drone.

Lastly, a new “call type” in the NEXGEN CAD system “Drone Activation” has been created to track the use of the drone. The drone can be activated for a variety of uses at the discretion of the Shift Supervisor, including missing persons, apprehension of subjects in wooded or confined areas, aerial photographs for creating operations plans, street takeovers/unruly gatherings, etc... Over the past year, this drone and the older “Yuneec” drone have been deployed for several emergencies and for practice/training flights including:

- Assisting with locating a missing swimmer in distress on the Niantic River
- Photographs of the Fargo Road Radio Tower
- Photographs of the Eugene O’Neil theater building’s renovated roof
- Photographs of the Old Cohanzie School Building
- Photographs of the Boston Post Road/Willetts Ave Ext. intersection for an “Ops” plan for New London Fireworks

In May 2025, the department began digital sharing of arrest paperwork and information with the GA-10 courthouse in New London. This process through the State of Connecticut Criminal Information Sharing System (CISS) allows most information to be sent electronically, eliminating the need for an officer to drive to the court every day. Our department was selected to test the process as the first department with this courthouse, with the transition being relatively soon. Not only does the process save time for our officers, but it also ensures more accurate and timely transfer of information by reducing manual data entry.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERGEANT



**Administrative
Sergeant
Michael Fedor**

The Waterford Police Department Administrative Sergeant manages grants, the Community Service Officer program, State required department accreditation, mental health and drug screenings mandated for police officers by the law on police accountability, oversees the department’s Use of Force Committee and is the program coordinator of our Neighborhood Watch program. Sergeant Michael Fedor is the department’s Administrative Sergeant.

During fiscal year 2024/2025, the Waterford Police Department applied for and received State and Federal grant money. Money was either provided when a grant was approved or reimbursed at the end of the grant. The grants were used to enhance our presence on town roads and to address motor vehicle violations such as DUI, cellphone use and speeding. Grant funding also supported the department’s efforts in providing training to officers, paying for not only classroom training but travel expenses. During fiscal year 2024/2025 the following grants were awarded to the police department:

Grant	Spent/Reimbursed
Drug Recognition Expert	\$14,719
DUI	\$19,394
Distracted Driving	\$13,382
Auto Theft and Violence	\$35,000



COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICERS



CSO
Raphael Bertrand

The need for Community Service Officers (CSOs) was first realized in 1991, when the police department moved into its new and current building, which for the first time was separate from the dispatch center. This meant that there would be instances when the building was left unattended. In the past, if a member of the public came to the police facility, they were met with, at a minimum, a dispatcher. The migration to the new building removed this ability and required a sworn officer to be stationed in the building to meet with the public or monitor a prisoner that was being held for court. From this predicament, the CSO program was born.

The CSO program has evolved from several CSOs covering night and weekend shifts, to a full complement of 17 CSOs covering three shifts per day, seven days per week. This program has a dual purpose; first and foremost, to provide a more cost effective intermediary between the public and services needed and the ability to monitor arrested persons. Secondly, to provide an environment to evaluate potential candidates for the position of police officer. The role of CSO has been a stepping stone leading into the law enforcement field. Since its inception, many CSOs have been hired as fulltime Waterford Police Officers, with most achieving rank in supervisory roles or assignment in specialized units. Many other CSOs have been hired by other local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.



The part-time CSOs are non-sworn personnel with no arrest authority. The CSOs complete a 24-hour in-house training course in various skills such as prisoner control, fingerprinting, processing of prisoners, paperwork, Records Management System (RMS) familiarization as well as an eight to ten shift field training process. They are also required to complete a State mandated training on the use of the COLLECT/NCIC computer systems. The CSOs are required to be knowledgeable in officer safety, defensive tactics, data entry, booking procedures and first aid.

The duties of a CSO are many and varied, but their primary job functions include greeting residents and other members of the public, directing them to the appropriate services or personnel, searching, fingerprinting, photographing, caring for prisoners and building security. The CSOs also assist records personnel with clerical duties and are tasked with various assignments by supervisors and officers during their shifts. Additionally, CSOs conduct monthly follow-ups on all of the agency's active hardcopy and re-arrest warrants. These efforts have resulted in many warrants being served or vacated and has led to the discovery of information which has significantly benefited various cases.

A CSO in the building allows the officers and shift supervisors to remain on the road and available for calls for service. This uses a lower cost employee to monitor prisoners and greet the public who enter the police building, while keeping the more trained officers available to respond to emergencies.

For the time period covering Fiscal Year 2024/2025:

Shifts filled	827	Employment Prints	215	Peddler Prints	12
Misc Prints	32	Pistol Permit Prints	129	Adult Arrests	292
Juvenile Arrests	2	Prisoner Meals Served	112	Fire Arms Transfers	425
Warrant Follow Ups	2634	Pistol Permits Issued	61	Walk-in Complaints	373



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH



In Fiscal Year 2024/2025 the Waterford Police Department Neighborhood Watch Program continued to grow, adding several new neighborhoods in the last year. The current list of actively participating neighborhoods are as follows:

Pleasure Beach, North RD, Myrock Ave., Roxwood Rd., Windy Ridge, Clement St., Lamphere Rd., Trumbull Rd., Rope Ferry Condos and Totoket Rd.

The Neighborhood Watch members maintained a consistent level of communication via email and coordinators were encouraged to speak with their residents in their area to get input on what is happening and how we, working as a team, can work to address issues. Topics that are regularly discussed are: Noise complaints, trespassing, burglaries, car breaks, narcotics, identity theft, traffic and speeding.

Through email notifications, we have been able to reach large groups of people in specific neighborhoods to aid in criminal investigations shortly after an incident occurs. Not only does this potentially provide officers with crucial investigatory leads, but provides greater transparency into the actions of the police department. We have found that those who attend the neighborhood watch meetings, just want to know what is going on in their area and how they can help.

WPD Community Engagement Officer, Eric Fredricks and Hodges regularly attend our meetings to share information on upcoming events.

PEER SUPPORT / WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Waterford Police Department's Peer Support and Wellness Program continues to be a critical internal resource focused on the emotional, physical, and mental well-being of department personnel. The program provides confidential support, guidance, and connection to services for all staff, whether they are facing personal challenges or simply looking for wellness advice.

As of this reporting period, the Peer Support Team includes the following officers:

- Officer Eric Fredricks
- Officer Zachary Bushwack
- Officer Peter Barrows
- Officer Mark Devine

Officer Gil Maffeo, who was a long-standing contributor to the program, officially retired during the year and is no longer an active member of the team. His contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

Program Highlights & Wellness Initiatives:

Officer Eric Fredricks has continued to take an active leadership role in coordinating wellness efforts for the department. His initiatives during the past year include:

- Promoting and sharing information on first responder wellness events throughout the region
- Organizing meals and wellness gatherings involving department Chaplains and officers
- Providing drinks and healthy snacks to shift personnel to support stamina and morale
- Facilitating team-building events



In addition, Officer Fredricks ensures that new officers are introduced to the Peer Support Team early in their careers. These meetings allow for open discussion on key areas such as:

- Personal wellness strategies
- Physical and mental health awareness
- Financial health
- Navigating the unique challenges of work-life balance in law enforcement

Confidential Peer Support:

Confidentiality remains the foundation of the Peer Support Program. Members of the team strive to be approachable and proactive, offering a safe space for personnel to talk, share, and receive support. Team members are trained to:

- Recognize when support is needed
- Approach colleagues with care and discretion
- Stay informed of available internal and external services

Most importantly, they are willing to listen without judgment and to assist any and all personnel in need.

Goals for the Coming Year:

Looking ahead, the Peer Support and Wellness Program will focus on:

- Improving communication around wellness initiatives and available resources
- Increasing department-wide awareness of Peer Support team members
- Promoting holistic wellness, including financial planning, physical fitness and mental health

The program remains committed to fostering a supportive and resilient work environment where every member of the department feels seen, heard, and supported.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



**Community
Engagement Officer
Eric Fredricks**

The men and women of the Waterford Police Department contribute a significant amount of their time in support of many charitable community events. This year they collaborated with numerous town departments, local non-profit organizations and other community based groups.

As community outreach has become a priority of our department, we have assigned Officer Eric Fredricks as our full-time Community Engagement Officer. Officer Fredricks, along with his certified comfort dog Hodges, coordinate many opportunities for members of our community to positively interact with Waterford police officers. This assignment, in partnership with Puppies Behind Bars, provides a trained Comfort Dog to our agency at no cost and has delivered incredible results.

Community Engagement events and programs are supervised by Lieutenant Nicole VanOverloop and are coordinated by Community Engagement Officer Eric Fredricks. The men and women of the Waterford Police Department contribute much of their time, including their own personal time, in support of many community activities. This year they partnered with Youth and Senior Services, Waterford Public Schools, Waterford Rotary, Camp Dash, Neighborhood Watch and other town agencies and local community organizations.

Some of these events are as follows – Community Clean-up, Coffee with a Cop, Stuff-a-Cruiser, Tip-A-Cop, Shop with a First Responder, Torch Run, Harvest Festival Bike Helmet Giveaway, Camp Harkness Fall Fest, National Night Out, Torch Run, Penguin Plunge, and Traffic Stop Practice for Newly Licensed Drivers.



Numerous community and volunteer efforts that Waterford Officers participated in are shown on the following pages. Due to the success of our Mock Traffic Stop Event, the Connecticut Chief's Association is adopting our event's model to become a statewide program.

A few of the programs we offer are: Advance Services Program, Domestic Violence Victim Follow-ups, Youth Promise, Traffic Stop Safety Classes with Rae's Driving School, Social Media Safety Classes Senior Lunch & Learns, SRO Rides to School and Crime Prevention Classes to seniors and youths. The Waterford Police Citizen's Academy is a highlighted program with our agency. It is an 11-week program with interactive classes for community members to learn more about our agency. The classes include a Patrol Ride Along, Life at the Police Academy, Range Day, Taser Demo, K-9 Demo, and Skills Day.

Our officers also help raise money for charitable causes, including raising \$7,351 for the Connecticut Special Olympics, \$850 for Waterford Youth & Family Services, and \$2,750 for Waterford Police Community Engagement Events. The Waterford Police participated in collecting toys and clothing for Waterford families in need (Stuff A Cruiser), pet supplies for the CT Humane Society (Quaker Hill School Fundraiser), and toiletries for Waterford Senior Living Facilities (Senior Services Suds & Smiles). Due to Officer Fredricks and the Waterford Police's fundraising efforts for the CT Special Olympics, Officer Fredricks was selected to attend the National Torch Run Conference. He attended classes regarding new ways to fundraise, participated in the LETR International 5K, and interacted with officers and athletes from around the world.

The Community Engagement Officer also assists with recruitment. Officer Fredricks visited multiple colleges and high schools to talk about the process of becoming a Waterford Police Officer. The agency hosted 3 interns (two Central Connecticut State University students and one Waterford High School student). Waterford Police held a Recruitment Open House and Officer Fredricks attended multiple job fairs to speak about our agency. Some examples of those are the POST Academy Recruitment Fair, Waterford High School Job Fair, Ledyard Middle School Career Day, and Mock Interviews at Mitchell College.



Officer wellness is a focus of the Community Engagement Officer and Facility K-9 Hodges as well. We encourage our officers to focus on self-care and home life balance as it will benefit them and our community. Officers are offered a variety of physical fitness recreational opportunities, which include, basketball, jiu-jitsu and softball. Some programs also include community engagement by adding the participation of Waterford students and other citizens. Some examples of these programs are Waterford Country School Basketball Game, Police vs. Fire Softball Game, Raymour & Flanigan Bingo Fundraiser, Police Officer Day at Mystic Aquarium, Heroes Day at the CT Science Center, Student Visits during Police Week,

Police Chaplain Wellness Events, and Peer Support Wellness Days.





Hodges, a Facility K-9 with years of training, helps our agency improve officer wellness efforts, victim support and community engagement. Hodges has been deployed to comfort victims and their family members after traumatic incidents on many occasions. Some examples are students that are in emotional distress, juvenile victims who are testifying at court, and victims/witnesses of violent crime incidents. Hodges has interacted with officers and other first responders to strengthen their wellbeing.

Some examples of this are attending debriefs, funerals, and fundraisers for fallen first responders. He also engages with the community at numerous events such as K-9 Demos, Read to Hodges, Senior Living Visits, Police Department Tours, Wellness Fairs, and visits to various other organizations and community establishments.

Due to the success of the program, Officer Fredricks and K-9 Hodges have been requested to be part of multiple noteworthy presentations- SMILE Conference, Justice Clearing House Training, CT Youth Services Association Summit, Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Day, WFSB Channel 3 News Amazing K-9 Duos, CABLE Training Classes and WSHU Public Radio Interview.

Officer Fredricks and K-9 Hodges were recognized for their efforts with the community engagement by being named the Waterford Lion's Club Humanitarian of the Year. The Waterford Police Department received a Community Policing Award from the New England Association of Chiefs of Police as well due to our efforts in community policing.

Sergeant Firmin speaking with senior residents at Coffee with a Cop. Waterford Senior Services hosted us at the Community Center while Starbucks and Flander's Bakeshop providing refreshments



The Waterford Police Citizen's Academy 2025 Class on their last night of the 11-week program. The group consisted of Waterford residents and college students interested in a law enforcement career



Waterford Police Officers competing against Waterford Country School Staff and Students in their annual basketball game. Waterford Police won, but everyone had fun



Waterford Police interacting with a participant at the Mock Traffic Stop Event for newly licensed drivers. Four local police departments, the CT Chief's Association, and MADD partnered with us for the event

Officer Robinson partnered a Camp Dash camper at Back to School Shop with a First Responder. 10 campers were selected to buy back to school supplies at Walmart



Traffic Officer Devine and Officer Fredricks held a Safe Driving Presentation for seniors. Hartford Healthcare Center for Healthy Aging joined us for the presentation



Waterford Police Officers before they start their leg of the Torch Run. This event raises awareness for the CT Special Olympics



Officer Fredricks attending the National Torch Run Conference. CT Special Olympics Staff, CT Athletes, and Officers from various police departments in CT went as well

Waterford Police and Waterford Walmart participating in Stuff a Cruiser event. 12 large boxes of donations and \$850 in gift cards were collected



Sgt. Caler showing community members our police cruisers at the Waterford Police Open House. Police department tours were given to a public and a K-9 Demo was held

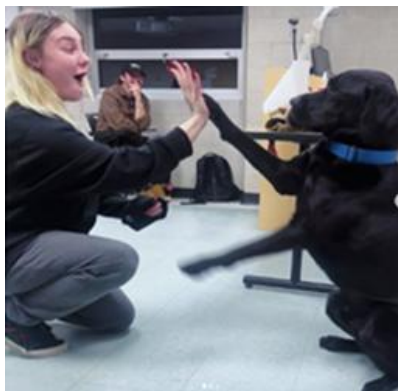


Officer Fredricks with Waterford Senior & Youth Services delivering collected toiletries donations. Donations were delivered to every Senior Living Facility in Waterford



Officer Fredricks and School Resource Officer Winters bringing a lucky student to school. The student won the prize at a Great Neck School PTA Fundraiser

Waterford Officers serving meals to seniors at St. Patrick's Day Luncheon. Our officers help serve meals and interact with seniors at multiple luncheons during the year



K-9 Hodges showing off his commands at Eastern CT University. Officer Fredricks and Hodges spoke to multiple classes about how to become a Waterford Police Officer



LOOKING FORWARD

The Waterford Police Department continues with several major efforts as it transitions from last fiscal year and into the 2025-2026 year.

In May of 2023, the Board of Police Commissioners approved the request from Chief Balestracci to increase the size of the department, from 49 sworn officers to 52. The Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Representative Town Meeting all approved the request as well, allowing our department to realize the benefits this fiscal year. One of those benefits was the creation of a three-member traffic unit, which has been able to better respond to resident complaints as well as having a greater impact on traffic safety in Waterford. This unit will continue to be an area of focus moving forward as traffic concerns continue with general operator behaviors, but also with continued development in town. The other benefit was adding a third School Resource Officer in our schools. School safety continues to be our highest priority and we continue to work closely with the Waterford Board of Education to adjust and improve school safety at all levels.

Although almost every police department in the State of Connecticut, and in the United States, is facing major challenges in recruiting, we will continue to maintain high standards as we look to fill current and anticipated vacancies in coming months. We have adjusted our processes to remain competitive, but have not lowered our standards. Recruitment has been, and will continue to be, one of our biggest challenges in the near future.

The department continues to work with Waterford Emergency Management to transition to the State of Connecticut radio system. The timing of a potential move to the State system is critical as Waterford's current system is reaching end-of-life in most areas.

We continue to request and make upgrades within our building, which is now approximately 35 years old. In the next fiscal year request, we will request funding for a much needed locker room renovation project. This project will not only update areas directly impacting the employees of the Waterford Police Department, but will also expand the female locker room in size, as we are quickly reaching capacity for female employees. This project will double our capacity for female employees and allow this facility to be used for the foreseeable future.

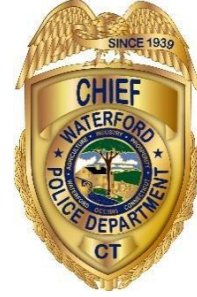
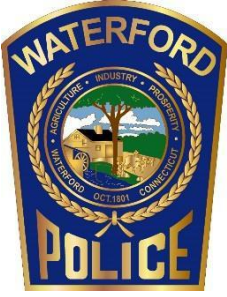


RETIREMENTS

Officer First Class Robert Edwards and Officer First Class Gil Maffeo



Congratulations to both Officer First Class Robert Edwards, Officer First Class Gil Maffeo and Evening Shift Secretary Joyce Brown (not pictured) on their retirements from the Waterford Police Department. Your contributions to our department, the town and the region, were significant and your impact will endure.



CONCLUSION

The Waterford Police Department is focused on providing the best level of service we can for those who live, work and visit our town. We hold our motto of “In the Community Interest” to heart and truly believe in the community outreach and partnership methods of policing. We hope you have found this annual report informative. If you have any questions, they may be directed to Police Chief Marc Balestracci at mbalestracci@waterfordct.org.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Balestracci".

Marc Balestracci, Chief of Police

Board of Police Commissioners

Commissioner James Dimmock, Chairman
Commissioner Mark Gelinis, Vice-Chairman
Commissioner Thomas Sheridan, Secretary
Commissioner Christopher Gamble
Commissioner Robert Brule, First Selectperson