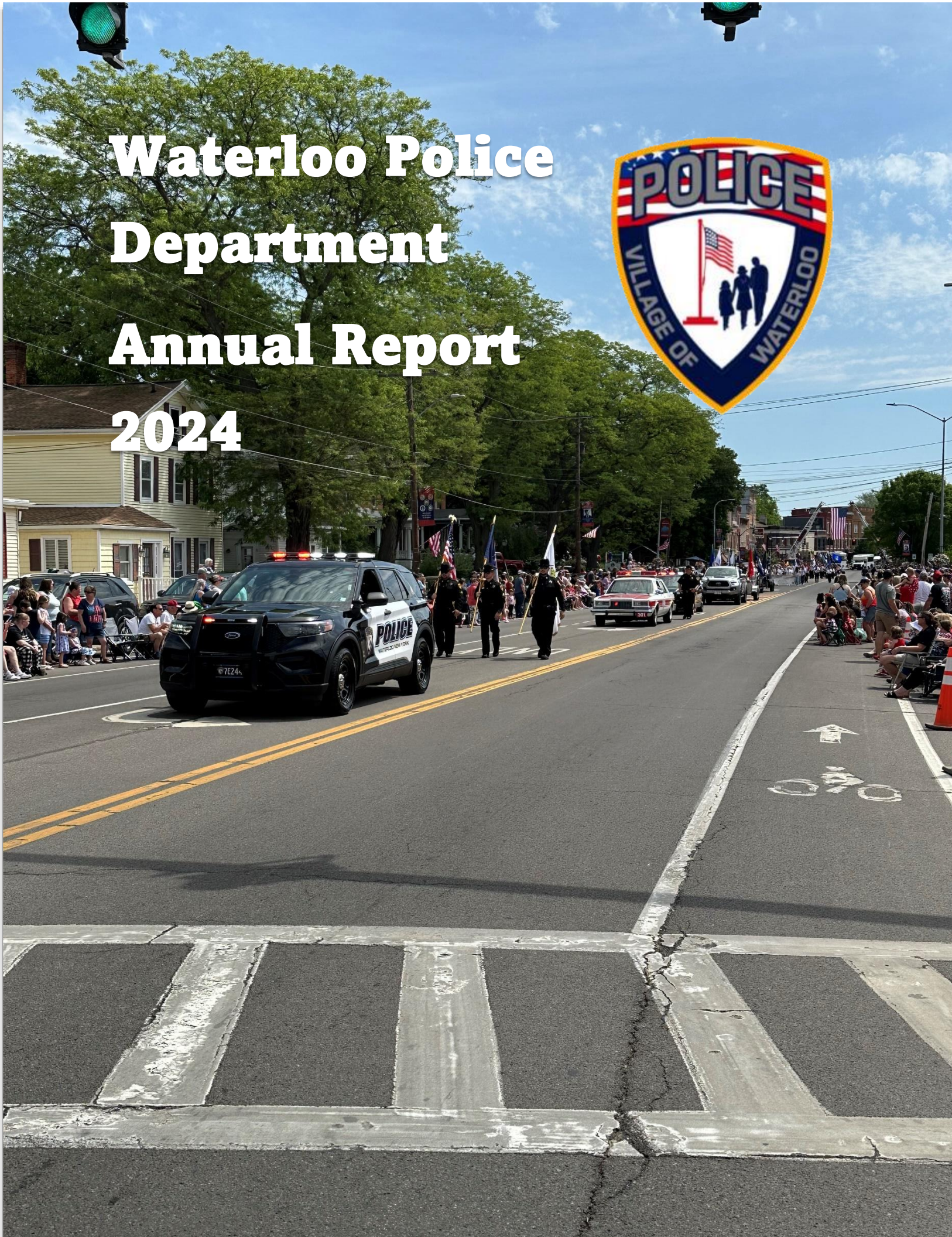


Waterloo Police Department Annual Report 2024

2024 Waterloo Police Department Staff

From left to right

First Row: Sgt. R. Scott Boyd JR, Sgt. Michael Felice, Chief James Chechak, Ptlm. Daniel Munn, Ptlm. Clarissa Robson

Second Row: Dept. Clerk Erica Donk, Ptlm. Toby Loucks, Ptlm. Jacob Webb, Ptlm. Scott Ferguson, Ptlm. Matthew Scaglione, Ptlm. Lee Marquart, SRO Rodney Kraft

Not Pictured: Ptlm. Robert Bucklin, Ptlm. Kevin Higgins

Message from the Chief

Dear Mayor Bennett,

On behalf of the dedicated members of the Waterloo Police Department I respectfully present the 2024 Annual Report to you and the Village Board of Trustees.

During 2024, through continued staffing shortages, our members were dedicated and worked professionally to meet the mission of the police department which is to enhance the quality of life in our community and provide a safe and peaceful environment for Village residents and visitors. Although the first seven months of the year we were not able to provide coverage between 3am and 7am, we were able to ensure adequate police coverage was provided by working with the Seneca County Sheriff's Office and New York State Police who provide coverage during those times. After the completion of academy training and 12 weeks of field training, our two new officers began working full-time in October 2024 and the department sits at full staff, although one full-time position remains encumbered by an officer on 207c.

In 2024 we were able to conduct many technology upgrades. A new Taser and Body Worn Camera program through Axon was implemented which enhances our officers' ability to protect themselves and the public, and provides better software for storing, redacting, and sharing body worn camera footage. The initial $20,000 for the Body Worn Camera contract was paid for with the Law Enforcement Technology Grant which was awarded in April 2024. Also purchased with the technology grant were new cellular internet modems for the patrol vehicles which upgraded them to 5G and replaced the existing modems which were beginning to fail. We also signed an agreement with the Monroe Crime Analysis Center that has opened a vast array of resources we have never had access to before.

The department continues to strive to increase the number of hours and the quality of training. Our department has five full-time officers with less than 5 years' experience, 3 of which have less than two years' experience. It is my belief that training can fill many gaps where our officers lack experience. Concentration has not only been on in-service training, but getting officers educated and certified to teach a wider range of training "in-house". In 2024 the department performed 188 more hours of training than 2023.

While there were many challenges throughout the year, the accomplishments made in 2024 by the department provides us a positive outlook for the year 2025. I want to thank every member of the police department for their dedication and sacrifices made throughout the year to ensure our continued success, it is truly an honor to lead this group of men and women. I would also like to thank you and the Village Board for your continued support of the police department.

Respectfully,

Incidents

The police department handled a total of 7,115 incidents in the year 2024 which is 1,611 more than the year prior. There has been an increase in general calls for service as well as incidents created by pro-active patrol by officers.

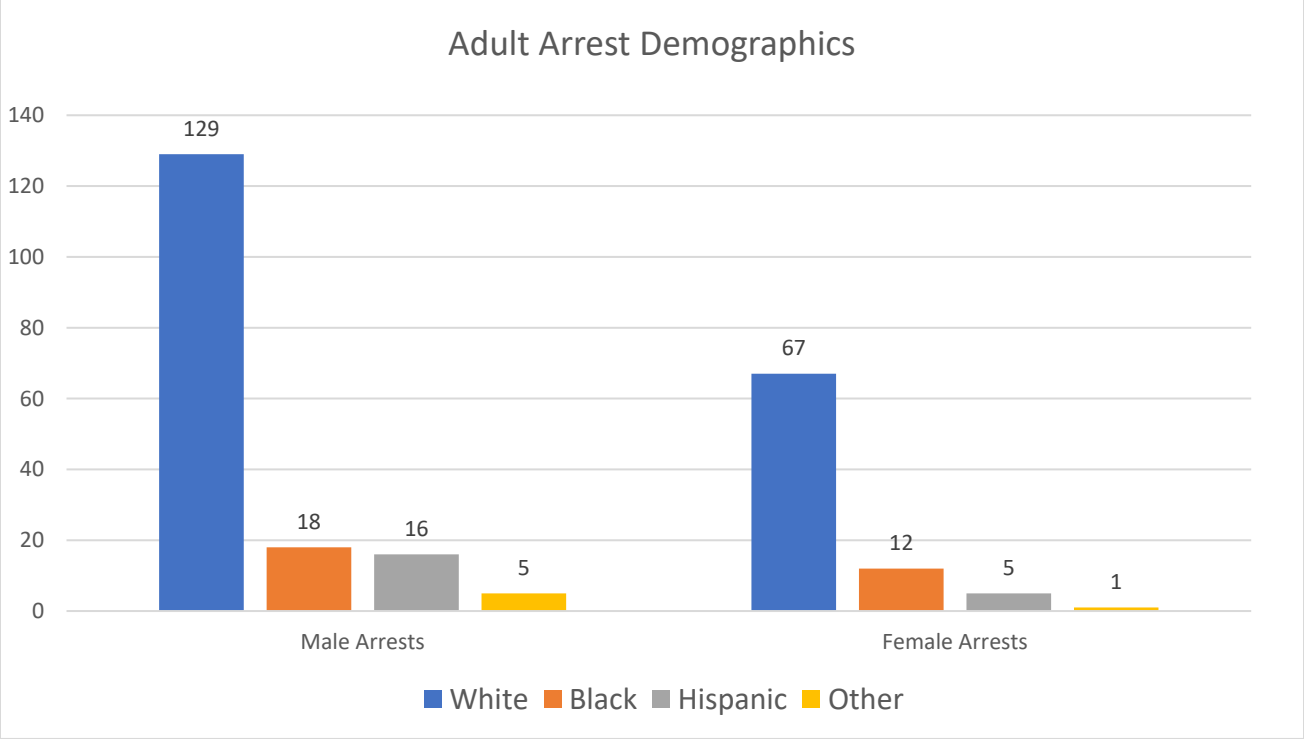
2024	2023	2022
Total Incidents 7,115	Total Incidents 5,504	Total Incidents 6,752
Calls for Service 3,953	Calls for Service 3,503	Calls for Service 3,821
Traffic Stops 1,570	Traffic Stops 1,163	Traffic Stops 1,094
Property Checks 1,359	Property Checks 640	Property Checks 1,598
Special Details 233	Special Details 198	Special Details 239
Arrests 275	Arrests 202	Arrests 216
Traffic Tickets 586	Traffic Tickets 374	Traffic Tickets 484

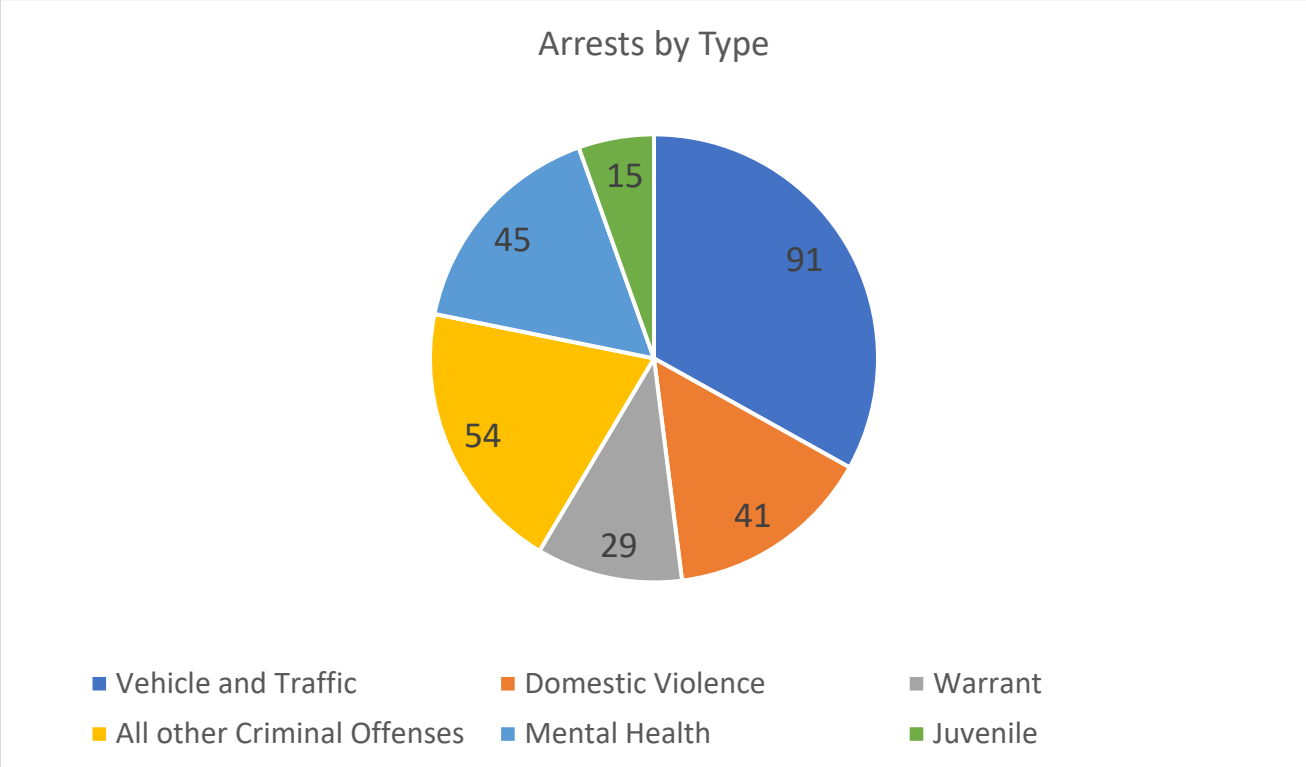
Incidents by Type

# of Incidents	Incident Type	# of Incidents	Incident Type
173	Alarms – Burglary/Medical/Fire	28	Local Law Violation
127	Animal Complaints	98	Lockout – Vehicle/Residential
12	Assist Child Protective Services	38	Neighbor Problem
90	Assist Citizen	73	Noise Complaint
307	Assist Other Law Enforcement Agency	91	Mental Health
6	Assault	8	Missing Person
9	Burglary	118	Welfare Check
15	Child Abuse/Neglect	687	Medical/Assist Ambulance
67	Civil Matter	1,359	Property Checks
18	Criminal Contempt	99	Property Lost/Found
46	Criminal Mischief	15	Open Door – Business/Residential
8	Death Investigation	48	Trespassing
68	Disorderly Conduct/Dispute	15	Sex Offense
109	Domestic Incident	59	Sex Offender Contact
17	Drug Complaint	211	Suspicious Incident/Person/Vehicle
233	Details – Special Detail	281	Vehicle and Traffic Complaint
50	Fire/Assist Fire Department	22	Vehicle – Driving While Intoxicated
89	FOIL Request	91	Motor Vehicle Accident
22	Fraud/Forgery/Bad Check	23	Vehicle Repossession
119	Harassment/Aggravated Harassment	5	Stolen Vehicle/Unauthorized Use
137	Information/Documentation Only	34	Warrant (court issued)
162	Juvenile Problem	5	Weapons/Safe keeping
103	Larceny	1,570	Traffic Stop

*Note: This is a list of the most notable incidents handled. This is not a complete list of all incidents that occurred.

Arrests

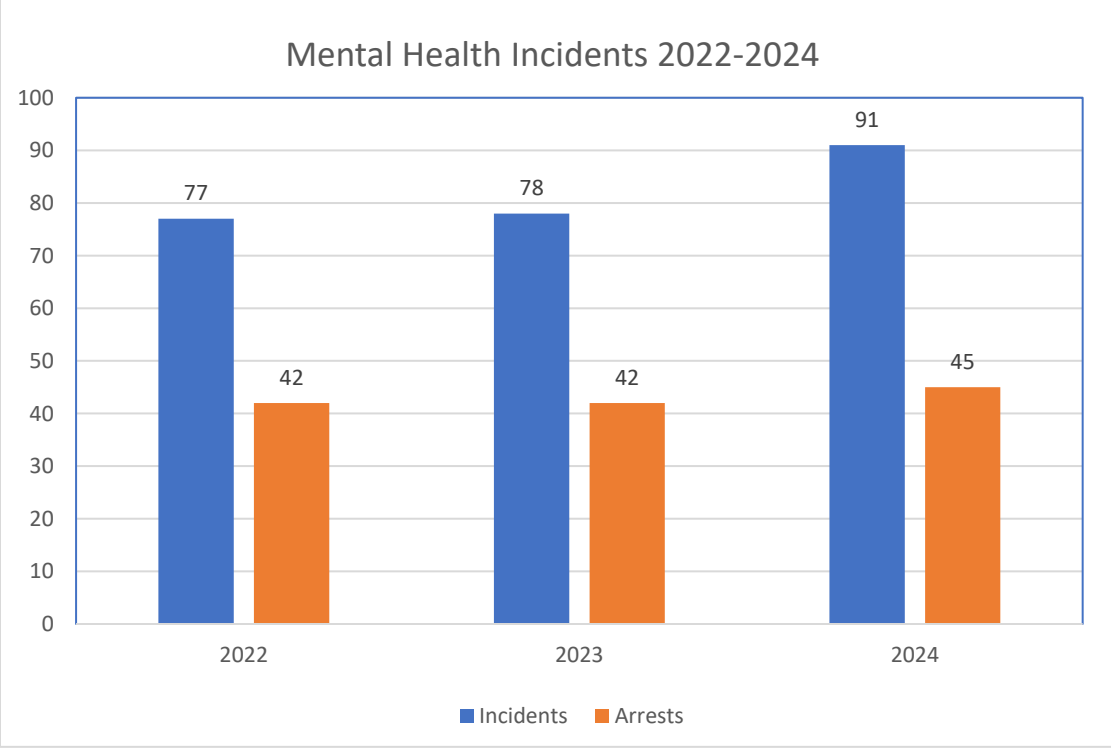

Adult Arrest Demographics
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
129
18
16
5
67
12
5
1
Male Arrests
Female Arrests
White
Black
Hispanic
Other


Arrests by Type
91
41
29
54
45
15
Vehicle and Traffic
Domestic Violence
Warrant
All other Criminal Offenses
Mental Health
Juvenile

Mental Health Incidents

In 2024 the department handled 91 incidents that were specific to metal health and mental health is a factor in many other incidents handled. A total of 45 mental health arrests were performed in 2024 (38 adult, 7 juvenile). Last year the department handled 78 mental health specific incidents and performed 42 mental health arrests.

Mental health related interactions with law enforcement continue to increase. The department has established a close working relationship with the Crisis Response Team which is part of Seneca County Community Counseling. Often the Crisis Response Team will come directly to the scene to assist an individual in crisis, which can prevent our officers from having to take someone into custody. The department also continued to maintain an iPad through Telemed Services which allows immediate access to a mental health provider via Zoom and can prevent an individual from being taken to the hospital involuntarily. Unfortunately, many mental health arrests result in the use of force and the availability of the Crisis Response Team and Telemed Services has reduced the number of involuntary mental health arrests and likely uses of force for the department.



Use of Force Data

In the year 2023 officers used physical force on 16 incidents. In 11 of these incidents soft hand/joint manipulation techniques were the highest force used. In 4 of these incidents a Taser was drawn from the holster, turned on displaying the red laser, and the subject complied without the Taser probes being deployed. In 1 incident a Taser was deployed and was effective in gaining control of the subject.

Three subjects reported injuries from use of force. Two had abrasions and one was from a Taser probe deployment.

Fleet

The police department continues to maintain 6 patrol vehicles. Since receiving the 5 new Ford Explorers in 2023 the fleet has had very few mechanical issues and there were no times that the new vehicles had to be taken out of service. The one existing vehicle owned by the police department and not part of the Enterprise program is assigned to the School Resource officer. The SRO vehicle had a total of 72 days that it was taken out of service for maintenance however we were able to schedule maintenance when the SRO was not working in the school and the vehicle was not needed for daily patrol. This vehicle is a 2016 Ford Explorer and its condition is starting to deteriorate to a point where maintenance cost may exceed what the cost of leasing a replacement would be.

Yearly totals for the fleet:

- 73,705 miles driven.
- 6,326.1 gallons of fuel consumed.
    - Estimated cost of $20,559.83 at $3.25 per gallon.
- $1,283.62 spent on tires, fluids, etc.

Staffing

In January 2024 the department hired Toby Loucks and Daniel Munn as police officer recruits. The recruits attended the Finger Lakes Law Enforcement Academy Basic Course for Police Officers that began on February 12th, 2024. After over 1,200 hours of training in the Academy they graduated on September 4th, 2024. The new officers completed the department's Supervised Field Training Program and were hired full-time on November 11th, 2024.

Also on November 11th, 2024, Ptlm Scott Boyd was promoted to the rank of Sergeant, bringing the number of supervisors to two out of the 3 positions the department has.

Traditionally the department had a staff of part-time employees to rely on to fill open shifts caused by vacation time, sick time, or training. Due to many different factors such as officers not wanting to continue working road patrol after retirement, the abundance of full-time positions open in other agencies, and the lack of people interest in pursuing law enforcement careers, there is no longer a pool of candidates that are interested in part time employment. This issue has been made worse by the position being taken up by an officer on 207c for over five years. In July 2024 the department moved to a 12-hour schedule that permits more flexibility when there is not an available officer to fill an open shift. The Waterloo Police Association was also in favor of the new schedule which allows more days off for officers who are working longer shifts.

The contract with the Waterloo Central School District was renewed over the summer and Rod Kraft continues to work as the district's School Resource Officer. An agreement was also made that the WCSD will reimburse the department for additional coverage added for sporting events when SRO Kraft is not at the school.

Training

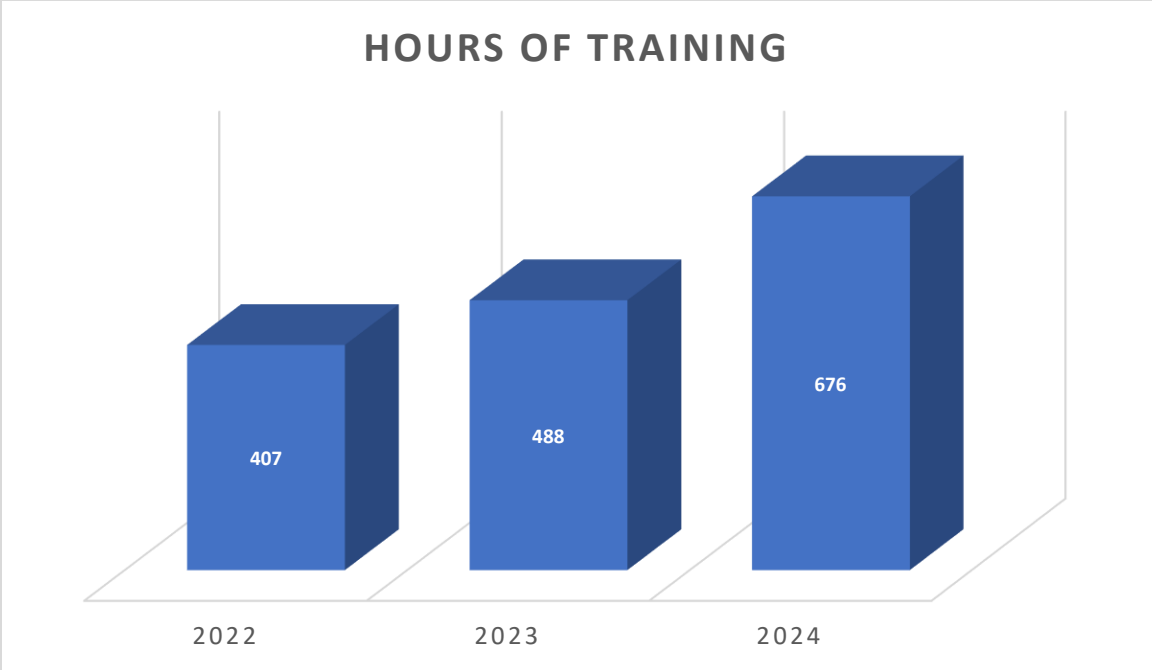
Training has been a principal focus for the department. With equipment upgrades, turn over of officers, and ever-changing laws in New York it is essential that officers keep up to date on training. In addition to the two officers that completed the 1,200-hour police academy and 480 hours of field training, the department completed 676.75 hours of training.

Instructor certifications obtained: Chief Chechak, Sgt Felice and Ptlm Webb were certified to instruct the Taser 10 Course. Sgt Felice was certified to instruct impact munitions and OC Spray. Sgt Boyd completed the Instructor Development Course and is certified to teach general police topics. Chief Chechak became a Breath Test Operator Instructor.

Firearms: Accounted for a total of 112 hours of training. 2024 is the first year that training was conducted with pistol and rifle mounted flashlights, and the first year that firing was done in the dark. Four officers completed an 8-hour patrol rifle operator course.

Online training: Online training platforms were utilized to conduct full department trainings such as Sexual Harassment, Bloodborne pathogen safety, and Procedural Justice training.

Other notable trainings: Ptlm Robson became a Child Safety Seat Technician, Sgt Boyd completed the Course in Police Supervision, SRO Kraft attended a school threat assessment/management training, Ptlm Webb attended the Field Training Officer Course, Ptlm Robson attended the Crime Scene Photography Course



Community Engagement

The department had the privilege to participate in many community-related events in 2024. In addition to being present at the events the department partnered with the National Child Safety Council to raise money for materials to hand out to children to promote safety home and school, combat bullying and drug use, and materials to educate parents on things such as gun safety.

Some of the events where our members provided security, traffic control, or participated are:

- Two National Drug Take Back Days where unused and expired medications are taken in for safe disposal.
- The 25th Celebrate Commemorate events for Memorial Day.
- Seneca Cayuga Community Action Program's "Cereal for Summer" where our officers collected over 300 boxes of cereal to be donated to families in need.
- Seneca County National Night Out, held at Lott Farms.
- Several Parades including Little League Baseball, Home coming, Halloween, and Veteran's Day.

Bicycle Rodeo at Lafayette School

April 2024 Solar Eclipse at the Waterloo Library

Goals from 2024

1. Prioritize training to replace Evidence Technician, Firearms Instructor, and Taser Instructor. Officers trained in these fields have retired or left for another agency over the past few years.

Goal partially obtained. Chief Chechak, Sgt. Felice, and Ptlm. Webb were certified as Taser 10 Instructors. Ptlm. Robson completed the Crime Scene Photography Course which is a pre-requisite to the Evidence Technician Course.

2. Find new ways to streamline report writing to allow our officers to spend more time actively patrolling instead of behind a computer.

Goal obtained by eliminating manual logging of Criminal History Inquiries and using audits automatically recorded electronically and modifying requirements for Medical Complaint reporting by eliminating the need for a narrative unless the officers respond to the medical complaint.

3. Establish a program to educate elderly members of the community about identity theft and fraud. There has been an increase in scam phone calls and emails victimizing elderly citizens who can lose large amounts of money if they fall for a scam.

Goal not obtained but is in progress. Materials were obtained by a federal program called “Money Smart” and instructor training is being sought.

Goals for 2025

1. Continue to work towards the 2024 goal of having an officer trained as a Firearms Instructor and an officer trained as an evidence technician.

2. Improve use of social media and the Department Website to better engage with the community.

3. Increase traffic safety and awareness by using the newly obtained RADAR trailer/message board and through better utilization of traffic grants such as Police Traffic Safety grant and Stop-DWI.