

The Deerfield Police Department Annual Report 2024

Mission Statement

"We, the members of the Deerfield Police Department, are committed to excellence in law enforcement and are dedicated to the people, traditions and diversity of Deerfield. In order to protect life and property, prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime, we will provide service with understanding, response with compassion, performance with integrity and law enforcement with vision."

I am pleased to present to you the 2023 Deerfield Police Department Annual Report. The officers, supervisors, and staff continue to deliver a superior product to the residents of Deerfield.

Staffing

The Deerfield Police Department is comprised of the Chief of Police, three (3) full-time Police Sergeants, six (6) additional full-time Officers, ten (10) part-time Officers and one (1) Administrative Assistant. Officers are organized into three shifts with two officers per shift who are accessible to the public 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. On each shift, there is one officer assigned to the Old Deerfield area (District Two), and one officer assigned to South Deerfield (District One). This ensures that residents across town get equal response and patrol time.

The Police Department also employs a full-time administrative assistant who performs a variety of complex and highly confidential administrative and technical tasks, and general support to the police department, police chief and emergency management team. The Administrative Assistant is responsible for equipment acquisition, fleet maintenance, accounts receivable/payable, document review and assisting citizens in the lobby. This year, our Administrative Assistant, Deb Austin retired. We send Deb Austin well wishes on her retirement and thank her for the many dedicated years of service to the Town of Deerfield, and the police department.

With Deb's departure, we are pleased to have Cassandra Jerome join the Deerfield Police Department as the new Administrative Assistant. She brings with her ten years of knowledge and experience working at the Northwestern District Attorney's office as a Superior Court Paralegal and the Franklin County Office Supervisor. Her knowledge of the criminal justice system and day-to-day office operations will be a great asset to the police department. In her brief time here, she has streamlined processes to go paperless in some areas and assisted the Emergency Management Director with storm damage matters among other projects.

Officer James Fitzgerald moved from part-time to full-time within our agency. He has a passion for Health, Fitness, and Suicide Prevention. Officer Fitzgerald grew up in the Buffalo area of New York before moving to Deerfield eight years ago. He teaches Cultural Competency and Officer Wellness at the Crisis Intervention Training for Officers and works the overnight shift with the Department.

Our remaining part-time personnel completed the MPTC Bridge training academy which (along with their road experience and part-time certification) will keep them eligible to continue to maintain employment as a police officer under new legislation. In a normal year, there are three to four part-time appointments, however with the new POST police reform standards, that is no longer an option. We continue to navigate the challenges this creates within our agency with staffing shortages and difficulty finding new officers. In the past years, we have been known as a reputable training ground for part-time personnel who would become exceptional full-time officers for our agency and others. However, with new POST standards there are no longer academies to train part-time personnel.

This year, three of our former part-time officers (Habel, Husted, and Walker) joined the Massachusetts State Police. Officer Bator, a former full-time officer, accepted employment with the Department of Homeland Security Investigations. As these exceptional officers move forward in their new careers, they will be greatly missed, and we wish them the best. We continue to search to find new officers to help fill these vacancies.

The Regional Co-Response Program continues to expand. Currently Kaitlin Richotte-Rock serves the Deerfield Community as well as Greenfield and Montague Police through this program. Kaitlin is the Assistant Program Director for the Co-Response programs through Clinical and Support Options (CSO) and helps in overseeing both the Franklin and Hampshire County Co-Response teams. Kaitlin holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a double minor in Criminal Justice and Substance Use as well as a Master of Arts with a focus in Forensic Mental Health Counseling. Kaitlin is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor. She is an outstanding asset to our community.

In addition, Katherine Russell (LICSW) joined our co-response team this year. Katherine earned her Master's in Social Work at Savannah State University and holds her clinical license in South Carolina and Massachusetts. Katherine's previous clinical work with populations suffering from chronic mental illness, substance use disorders, and the incarcerated population has provided her the necessary experience to be an incredible asset in assisting police departments as they serve their community members in moments of crisis.

We are excited to see the Regional Co-Responder program grow through grant funding by The Department of Mental Health (DMH) jail diversion initiative. Sgt. Bartak has authored and oversees this grant which allows the department to offer officers 40-hour Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) and other mental health related training. These trainings allow officers to better understand and respond to people in a mental health crisis. This grant provides officers weekly opportunities to ride with the Co-Responder in the designated three communities to mental health emergencies. Follow-up services and options after a crisis are provided as well. We are proud to have been a part of the pilot Co-Responder program in Franklin County, which has now expanded to many other towns and police departments across Franklin County.

Our officers are also working with the Opioid Task Force CONNECT Program. This program connects people who have experienced or witnessed Opioid overdoses with free and confidential support programming with recovery coaches within 72-hours of an overdose. Statistics have shown the most successful time to get a person experiencing addiction into recovery is within 72 hours (about 3 days) of the overdose event. This program also includes a database that is statewide to identify high risk candidates who have overdosed in multiple jurisdictions and connect them with support services.

Equipment

The police department continues to replace one cruiser annually. This is due to the mileage driven, idle time, and wear and tear on an emergency vehicle. With two personnel on duty twenty-four hours a day, our annual mileage is around 140,000 miles. We continue to be conscious of our carbon footprint, and this year, we are excited to announce that our patrol fleet of vehicles are now all Hybrid. These Hybrid cars are proving to use about half the fuel as the fully gas-powered cruisers.

We have moved to using Electronic Citations, with in-car printers. In the past, we used handwritten carbon copy citations that required manual entry and mailing to the RMV. Electronic Citations are sent to the RMV at the time of issuance electronically and are printed out in the car, further lowering our carbon footprint.

We have upgraded our ballistic safety gear to include large and small ballistic shields, ballistic helmets, and officers have trained with both in various scenario-based training situations. Officers practiced quickly suiting up in safety gear and working on active-threat scenarios with live fire at the range.

Calls for Service

The Department is very active in responding to calls for service. Calls for service within this area are defined as requiring police action; this does not include mere directions, parties that come to our station to speak with officers, administrative duties such as LTC renewals, or questions. Officers also respond to all fire and ambulance calls. Officers are often first on scene and assist with rendering emergency medical aid and if needed, traffic control, and are authorized to drive the ambulance to a medical facility. The total number of assigned calls for service for the 2023 calendar year was 12,269. This is an average of 33.61 calls for service on the average day.

There were 132 arrests, 234 active investigations, 106 motor vehicle crashes, 1,125 motor vehicle stops, and 494 medical emergencies in 2023. Our officers also helped in responding to over 109 mental health related calls and worked diligently with Crisis Services to ensure that our residents received the best possible available care and follow-up treatments. With the new program, 6 people this year were diverted from being arrested and treatment options explored instead of criminal charges.

Our officers patrol all areas of the Town of Deerfield, watching for any unusual activity, while keeping all residents and visitors' safety in mind, making notifications to the utility companies as well as reporting any road hazards to the appropriate highway agency. We continue to have open communication with business owners and perform business checks daily. Officers continue to perform vacant house checks and provide target traffic enforcement in problem areas. We respond to areas of concern from citizen reports, and work to mitigate those problems through targeted enforcement.

A case investigated this year highlights the importance of proactive patrol work where officers can recognize normal, or more importantly, abnormal activity within the community. On October 28, 2023, Sgt. Bartak was on routine patrol and saw an unoccupied vehicle parked at a tree line in a suspicious manner at a business on Greenfield Road. She investigated the vehicle, which had the license plate obscured so she obtained the registration number from other means. Sgt. Bartak also checked the area surrounding and noted the suspicious car in a "call for service". The next day, Officer Puchalski and Officer Warger responded to a Breaking and Entering (B&E) report at another business on Greenfield Road which was close to the area where Sgt. Bartak noted the suspicious vehicle. Officer Puchalski reported up to \$50,000 worth of items were stolen from this business. With excellent collaboration and investigative work between Officer Puchalski and Task Force Officer (TFO) Timothy Boland, who is assigned to the Northwestern District Attorney's Anti-Crime Task Force, a suspect was identified, and a warrant was applied for and granted authorizing a search of their residence in South Hadley. Upon execution of the warrant, many items from the Deerfield B&E were recovered. Also recovered was an illegal firearm, narcotics, US currency, as well as items from other B&Es in neighboring communities. The suspect was arrested. Due to the all-around excellent police work, the defendant accepted a guilty plea in Superior Court for a sentence of 5 to 7 years in State Prison.

As technology continues to advance, people with nefarious intentions continue to advance their methods of criminality. Our officers continue to receive training to combat these crimes and use the same technology to solve them. On May 5, 2023, a Greenfield Road business suffered a theft when a suspect broke into and entered the premises in middle of the night. Thinking of creative ways to solve this crime, TFO Boland obtained a search warrant for data related to cellular devices, which led TFO Boland to a suspect who was also a person of interest in a slew of similar crimes in Western Massachusetts and Connecticut. This person is currently awaiting trial for the multiple B&E's they committed, including the crime in Deerfield.

Our officers work diligently to solve fraud, crimes against property, as well as against persons, but due to the sensitive nature of some of these crimes, we cannot include them in this report to protect the privacy of the victims. Last year alone, the Deerfield Police Department investigated 234 incidents and had 132 arrests.

Officers on road patrol perform law enforcement patrol activities including, but not limited to, arresting violators of the law, checking on property and persons, conducting security checks of buildings, and dwellings, investigating traffic crashes, and enforcing traffic offenses, such as Operating Under the Influence (OUI) investigations. Aside from road patrol, these officers also assist with criminal investigations, including searching for missing persons, runaways, and wanted persons. Activity is documented in reports, logs, and calls for service as officers are responsible for presenting testimony and evidence in court. The Police Department daily logs are available on the Deerfield website <https://www.deerfieldma.us/> under the Police Department page "Police Logs". This allows the residents to view the day-to-day activities, as well as research events that may have transpired in your area.

Major Events

Unprecedented weather events caused much destruction around the town and proved to be a challenge for not only our Emergency Management Director but for all members of the police department. The first major weather event on July 10 caused flooding, culverts capacity being surpassed, and roads washed out. Stillwater Bridge was closed by MassDOT until inspection teams were able to get divers in the water and confirm the pillars were structurally sound.

Eleven days later, on July 21, a more devastating rainstorm hit the already stressed drainage system and over 5.5 inches of rain fell in just under one hour, and heavy rain continued for several more hours. Deerfield saw damage from this weather event which will go down in Deerfield history much like the flood of 1938. Major infrastructure damage was discovered on Pine Nook Road, Keets Road, Greenfield Road, Conway Road, Mathews Road, Wapping Road, County Road, Hoosac Road, Hawks Road, Stillwater Road, Upper, and Lower Roads.

Emergency personnel from all agencies including all available Deerfield Police Officers were out in the elements checking road safety, maintaining closures and detours, and assisting citizens. During the height of the storm, Deerfield Fire Department Assistant Chief Ben Clark was helping assess damage reported on Lower Road to report back to the DPW and Police. While checking Lower Road, he saw the vehicle travelling in front of him disappear when the road collapsed into rapidly rushing water headed towards the Deerfield River. Assistant Chief Clark selflessly rushed down the embankment to the vehicle which was submerged in water and rescued the driver. We are so thankful for Assistant Chief Clark's heroic actions that day and are honored to work beside some incredible first responder agencies in town.

Crews worked around the clock to get roads stabilized enough to open back up to the public. I cannot thank all the members of the Deerfield Police Department and Administrative Staff enough for rushing in during the emergency to help, as well as the days, weeks, and months that followed during the recovery efforts. There is no denying that storms are now more severe than in generations past. Efforts to replace infrastructure to accommodate new weather patterns are on-going.

Deerfield Celebrated its 350th anniversary this year, and there were many festivities. The weather was not as excited to celebrate as our citizens were, however, and we experienced heavy rain during the 350th celebration parade. That did not stop our officers, parade floats, or citizens from enjoying the event!

Throughout 2023, the Deerfield Police Department continued to have an officer assigned to the Northwestern District Attorney's Anti-Crime Task Force (NDATF) on a full-time basis however, due to staffing shortages our task force officer has been covering shifts as well.

The investigations, arrests, and search warrant executions conducted by NDATF personnel in 2023 resulted in multiple felony arrests, seizures of trafficking weight quantities of narcotics, seizures of large amounts of US Currency, seizures of stolen property, as well as the seizures of illegal firearms and ammunition.

During the course of 2023, investigators with the NDATAF initiated 76 cases, conducted 93 controlled purchases of narcotics, and seized narcotics on an additional 93 occasions, resulting in 89 arrests in our area. The NDATAF also applied for, and were granted, 108 search warrants. As a result, arrests and search warrant executions made by the NDATAF produced the following (approximate) seizures:

- MDMA/Ecstasy- approximately 20 grams
- Cocaine/Crack cocaine- approximately 4.692 kilograms
- Heroin/Fentanyl- approximately 10,384 bags/dosage units & 12.5 grams
- Counterfeit/prescription pills- over 200 pills
- Firearms- 15
- Vehicles seized- 3
- Stolen vehicles recovered- 1
- US Currency seized- \$135,655.40

Of the cases, arrests, and seizures conducted/made by the NDATAF during 2023, a notable amount involved residents or frequent visitors of the Town of Deerfield. These investigators continue to work diligently and conduct thorough investigations to keep illegal and dangerous narcotics out of our town.

In addition to the NDATAF, the Northwestern District Attorney's Office and Deerfield Police Department have joined with the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force. The NWDA received a grant to focus on more training in Human Trafficking and child exploitation crimes. This task force aims to keep children safe online and more effectively investigate and bring perpetrators to justice. Officer Marissa Smith works with this task force and has received specialized training in this subject and internet crimes. Officer Smith along with team members investigated and charged perpetrators of multiple ICAC crimes this year.

Training

December 31, 2020, Governor Charles Baker signed the Criminal Justice Reform Act into law. We continue to navigate the changes to our and other small agencies with the elimination of the part-time police academy - thereby eliminating the vast majority of part-time personnel in the State. In addition, there have been modifications of Use of Force Standards, as well as many additional requirements for Police Officer certification. These changes will have a large financial impact on most communities under ten thousand, and more especially Deerfield's size and smaller. Many of the small towns' police departments (population 500-3,000) will cease to exist.

This year, members of our department attended specialized training in:

Crisis Intervention including the CIT conference to learn advanced de-escalation methods and programs that are available through the mental health system.

Co-Responder Conference in Spokane Washington through our CIT Grant to learn more about what other Co-Response programs in the country are doing as well as other tools and skills to improve our co-response.

Cyber Crimes Conference to learn about ever-changing technology and how it is being used in criminal activity as well as how to use technology in investigations to solve and prove crimes.

All officers participated in hands-on scenario based Active Shooter Training at Frontier High School led by the Massachusetts State Police STOP team in which officers participated in live fire sim-munition (blank) scenarios.

All officers completed in-service training that includes Firearms, Use of Force, Legal Updates, CPR and First Responder, Taser, Duty to Intervene, Preventing Officer Crisis, Frontline Digital Evidence, Hate Crimes, Trauma-Informed Policing.

Grants

Grants continue to be scarce within law enforcement with the vast majority going to large cities with exceptionally high crime data statistics.

The Department of Mental Health grant covers the Co-Response program that we share with Greenfield and Montague. The grant covers a CIT trained officer to ride with the Co-Responder to respond to mental health related called in Deerfield, Greenfield, and Montague. The grant also covers training expenses to send officers to the 40-hour CIT training, as well as other relevant mental health response training for police.

School Safety

We are in constant partnership to make sure the schools are as safe. As most are aware this is challenging since Deerfield has five schools: Deerfield Elementary, Frontier Regional High School, Bement, Eaglebrook, and Deerfield Academy. In total there are over 2,500 students in Deerfield. The schools, including students and staff, bring in a daily influx of over 4,000 people.

As part of school safety, we have an active partnership and leadership role in the four-town safety committee which is comprised of EMS, Police, Fire, and School Officials from all Union 38 schools and towns. This includes quarterly meetings, active shooter training, lockdown drills, and shelter in place drills, as well as annual review of school safety documents and plans.

Focused Areas

On January 1, 2018, I started as the President of the Franklin County Chiefs of Police Association. I am also the Franklin County appointed representative to the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Executive Board (since 2014). In addition, I serve as the police representative to the Western Mass. Homeland Security Council, which has been a Governor's appointment (since 2015). I continue to serve as the Statewide Law Enforcement Liaison on the State Child Fatality Review Team. There are eleven regional teams across the State that report their findings to the State Team.

As always, the Deerfield Police Department is dedicated to serving the community, residents, and visitors to the Town of Deerfield. As the days, months, and years continue to pass, please do not ever hesitate to contact us if you have a question or concern, we are available 24/7 365 days a year.

Sincerely,

John P. Paciorek, Jr.
Chief of Police
Emergency Management Director

“PROTECTING AND SERVING OUR COMMUNITY”

The Law Enforcement Path of Honor

On my honor, I will never betray my badge, my integrity,
my character, or the public trust. I will always have the courage
to hold myself and others accountable for our actions.

I will always uphold the Constitution, my
community and the agency I serve.