

Section 3:
**Protection of Persons
& Property**



REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF ANIMAL CONTROL AND INSPECTIONS

The Office of Animal Control and Inspections is under the supervision of the Chief of Police and is located at the Weston Police Department. The Animal Control Officer and Animal Health Inspector are staffed by a single individual who works on a full-time basis for 37.5 hours per week. However, the Animal Control Officer (ACO) is on call seven days a week. The Officer is assigned office space at the Police Station and complaints or concerns, in general, are received by dispatch and then directed to the ACO for a response. Although the ACO and Animal Health Inspector responsibilities are performed by the same individual, the statutory authority for each, for enforcement purposes, in particular, are separate and distinct. The ACO function has also become very involved with the Conservation Commission and Weston Forest and Trail Association in the monitoring of dogs and other related issues on Weston's 2,000 acres of conservation land.

Coronavirus

After a very short pause in work during the stay-at-home advisory, the need for the ACO became quite evident as people were finding outdoor exercise with their dogs a needed respite from quarantine guidelines and the lack of socialization. It was unknown early in the pandemic if animals contributed to the spread of the coronavirus; however, it became very clear that many dogs are not under adequate voice control, so a temporary leash mandate was put in place to restrict in-person contact. The ACO was instrumental in interacting with all concerned persons alike including dog walkers and joggers

Staff Transition

In 2020, Weston's first full-time Animal Control Officer, Rachel Hoffman, left her post due to a move out of state. The Department and Town are grateful to ACO Hoffman for all of her hard work, especially in the areas of commercial dog licensing, inspections, and new programs such as the Bark Rangers, which she helped establish. Her outgoing personality, dedication, public education, and many adventurous animal rescues and stories will be missed.



ACO Hoffman freed a red-tailed hawk that was entangled in netting a residence. The bird was taken to a wildlife rehabilitator.

Stray Domestic Animal Protocol

Stray or abandoned domestic animals, found in Weston, are kept in temporary kennels, located both outside and inside the Police Station. Animals anticipated to require shelter for more than 24-hours, are taken to the Natick Animal Clinic for safekeeping. Unless claimed by the owner beforehand, the animal will remain at the clinic for a mandatory seven-day period while attempts are made to identify the owner. If the owner of the animal is not identified, the animal will be placed with a rescue facility, such as Buddy Dog Humane Society in Sudbury, to be put up for adoption or placed in a foster home. Injured wildlife, such as geese, birds of prey, reptiles, etc., when practical, is taken to the Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine for treatment. The ACO works closely and cooperatively with the Massachusetts Environmental Police and the State Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, in this regard.

Animal Complaints

This year, the Weston Police Department recorded a total of 239 animal complaints, 71 of which were dog-related. There were 15 reported dog bites. Of this year's calls, approximately half of them required an additional follow-up investigation by the ACO and subsequent written reports. Further, the ACO



The red-tailed hawk was released back into the woods once it had recovered from its injuries.

routinely received, resolved, and/ or advised the public on animal-related matters while out in the field. Within these numbers were numerous reports of stray dogs running loose in the neighborhoods or along our public ways. A number of these animals were taken under the control of the ACO and returned directly to the owner or taken to the police department kennel where the owners picked them up later in the day. Additional complaints received this year involved wildlife activity such as sick and/ or injured animals in need of assistance.

A total of 15 dogs and cats were placed under quarantine this year, having either bitten a person, bitten another dog, or had received a wound themselves from an unidentified dog, wild animal, or an unknown origin.

Eyes and Ears

The ACO also assists in patrolling or being another set of eyes and ears on the Town's conservation lands, as well as property belonging to Weston Forest and Trail Association, the Recreation Department, and the School Department. All of these areas are popular places to walk or jog and are also popular for dog walkers, both individual and commercial. On occasion, conflicts arise in these areas due to the differences in use and interest and the ACO plays a role in resolving these conflicts. The ACO ensures that all persons walking dogs are complying with the town's Dog By-law.

Bark Rangers

In the fall of 2018, the Conservation Commission applied for a grant through Sudbury Valley Trustees to create a "Volunteer Bark Ranger Program." The Bark Ranger Program launched in Weston in early 2019. Volunteers were trained by the ACO on how to approach trail users while out hiking the trails to educate them about their dog walking habits and also to spread awareness of the Town's rules and regulations for dogs and dog owners. This program continued in 2020 but a smaller role due to the pandemic.

Animal Control Corner

The ACO continued monthly postings to an online blog called "Animal Control Corner," which provides domestic animal and wildlife educational content. Interested readers can subscribe to receive email notifications of when new posts are made. Past posts can be found at Westonma.gov/ACOBlog. The ACO has also added useful information to the town's website to educate residents on animal-related issues.

Dog Licensing

A total of 900 dogs were licensed this year, generating a total of \$13,930 in general revenue for the Town. This total includes the fines for late licensing.

Of the licensed dogs, 857 were spayed or neutered and the remaining 43 were not. The top four breeds for 2020 were the Labrador Retriever, Golden Retriever, Golden Doodle, and Labradoodle.

The ACO also licensed a total of 22 commercial dog walking companies this year, resulting in a total of 26 commercial dog walkers being permitted to walk dogs in our community. The Commercial Dog Walking Permits produced a total of approximately \$20,650 in general revenue.

Animal Inspections

Massachusetts General Law requires that annual inspections be conducted by the Animal Inspector on any public or private property, where farm-type animals are housed or stabled, including but not limited to, horses, cattle, swine, sheep, goats, chickens, exotic animals, etc. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to protect the health of the Animal Inspectors and the animal owners, the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health suspended the Barn Inspections for the year 2020.



A fisher that was caught in a trap was released back into the woods by ACO Hoffman

Wildlife in Weston

Weston, like our neighboring towns, is experiencing an increase in the number of wildlife species that are living within our borders. Fishers, coyotes, turkey, and deer are a consistent source of complaints and sightings are not uncommon. Reported sightings this year included bobcats.

REPORT OF THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR

In 2020, there were numerous storms and weather events that required a great deal of planning and logistics for the removal of downed power lines, communication poles, and trees. Although many factors feed into these issues, intense storms are something that occurs several times a year. A large amount of planning and coordination goes into the recuperation from these events. I would like to thank Eversource for its continued support and efforts to minimize the damage to the power supply to the Town of Weston. I would also like to thank the Department of Public Works for their help in removing the trees to keep roads open.

The big story in 2020 was, and unfortunately continues to be, is the coronavirus pandemic. The Local Emergency Planning Committee has been meeting multiple times per week since March as the emergency evolved much and often quickly during the year. The team worked with local and state officials to keep Weston residents informed and as safe as possible. Countless hours were, and continue to be, spent on reviewing plans and protocols from local business and state agencies to ensure that the Town of Weston, the Weston Public Schools, and businesses could remain open and operated safely and responsibly.



The sheer volume of tasks handled by the team is too great to list out. I would like to thank all the members of this team as well as all the Town Departments, Schools, and citizens for their understanding and help during this pandemic.

REPORT OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

In 2020, the Weston Fire Department responded to 2,067 calls for service. There was no loss of life or serious injuries resulting from fires. There were, however, many small fires that were detected by home fire alarm systems. The importance of making a conscious effort to protect ourselves from the dangers of fire cannot be stressed enough. These efforts can be as simple as the installation and frequent testing of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and having and practicing a home escape plan.

Beginning as early as February, protocols surrounding COVID-19 changed the daily life at the Fire Department. Firefighters were tasked with extra cleaning and sanitation duties of the Fire Stations, Fire Apparatus, and Ambulances along with transporting residents and visitors of Weston who needed hospital attention resulting from exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual.

Our year-over-year calls for emergency service were lower due to a variety of factors stemming from the pandemic. These included dramatically reduced roadway traffic from stay at home orders, which resulted in fewer motor vehicle accidents (especially on the highways that bisect the town), and fewer medical emergency calls, as those who would normally seek medical attention chose to treat at home to reduce their risk of exposure to the coronavirus.



In the fall of 2020 when the stay-at-home advisory was modified to a precaution, more vehicles began traveling the roads. The Department experienced an unexpected increase in motor vehicle accidents on the highways as vehicles were traveling at much higher speeds during daylight hours as a result of the decrease in traffic. These traffic accident increases stressed the importance of vehicle safety including wearing seatbelts and obeying road speed limits specifically on the highways.

As in past years, Fire Prevention remains a core component of the Department's mission, as it is easier to prevent a fire than to extinguish one; however, the pandemic halted any public education this year as our Firefighters were unable to conduct in-person school visits. Firefighters were able to conduct required fire safety inspections for oil-burning equipment, liquefied propane installations, home fire and carbon monoxide alarms, fuel tank removals, and blasting operations, as well as plan review for all new construction and remodeling. In August of 2020 our well-known and beloved Fire Prevention Officer, Captain Dwight "Bucky" Robertson passed away from occupational cancer. His love for Fire Prevention will be carried on with our future generation.

The Emergency Ambulance Service remained a high priority for our firefighters during the public health emergency. The Fire Department and the Town of Weston are fortunate to have Emerson Hospital / Pro EMS provide our Advanced Life Support (ALS). The Fire Department continues to support our Central Middlesex Emergency Response Area with collaboration from Emerson Hospital and Pro EMS to provide a high level of care to our community in a timely and cost-effective manner. The Department maintains a high level of service through continuing education, training, and strategic planning. In recognition of this, the Department was gifted \$100,000 from the Robins Family for the purchase of a new ambulance. This was a tremendously generous gift, of which we are truly appreciative.

2020 FIRE DEPARTMENT STATISTICS

In 2020 the Weston Fire Department responded to 2,067 incidents as follows:

- 982 fire
- 1,007 ambulance
- 78 other emergency services

The Emergency Ambulance Service responded to 1,007 incidents, of which there were:

- 784 medical emergencies
- 186 motor vehicle accidents
- 37 medical assist and other rescues

Comparison of Alarms Answered – 10 Year Period

<i>Year</i>	<i>Alarm</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Alarm</i>	<i>Year Average</i>	<i>Incidents Annually</i>
2011	2,272	2016	2,325	10	2,315
2012	2,166	2017	2,230	5	2,347
2013	2,183	2018	2,491	3	2,364
2014	2,395	2019	2,524		
2015	2,397	2020	2,076		

Permits Issued Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws:

Ansul Fire Suppression	0
Burning Permits	224
Blasting Permits	4
Carpet Installation	0
Cutting/Welding Permits	13
Environmental Report	52
Explosives Storage Permits	0
Fire Alarm Systems – New Construction	94
Fire Alarm Systems – Residential Sales	197
Flammable Liquid Storage Permits	9
Liquid Petroleum Gas Storage Permits	22
Oil Burner Installations/Alterations	16
Solar Panel Review	22
Sprinkler	12
Tank Truck Inspections	6
Underground Tank removal Permits	19

Fiscal Year 2020 Revenue Turned Over to the Town Treasurer:

Ambulance Services Rendered Fees	411,459
Permit Fees	20,769
Master Box Fees	20,400
Mass Turnpike	50,200
Other Revenues Received	5,050
<i>Total Revenue</i>	507,878

REPORT OF THE PARKING CLERK

Vehicles violating town and/or state parking regulations may be ticketed by the Police Department. If a ticket remains unpaid and no request for a hearing has been made to the Parking Clerk within 21 days, an additional fine of \$5.00 for each unpaid violation may be imposed and, after notice to the vehicle's owner, the ticket is marked at the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Once a vehicle has been marked at the Registry, the owner may not renew his or her driver's license or vehicle registration until all fines and late fees plus a \$20.00 penalty have been paid and a release has been issued by the Parking Clerk.

Safety issues and traffic circulation are of primary concern in establishing and enforcing parking restrictions. Town regulations include a two-hour time limit for parking in the Town Center; a prohibition on parking on any Town road unless there is a 10-foot wide lane for traffic flowing in each direction; restrictions on where parking is permitted at the Weston Public Schools, the Kendal Green train station, and other Town facilities; and restrictions on parking on various streets due to safety considerations.

The Parking Clerk can check ticket status online and tickets may be paid in the office at Town Hall. Questions may be addressed to the Parking Clerk or the Police Department

Parking activity for the year ended December 31, 2020

Tickets issued	155	Fines levied	\$4,580.00
Tickets paid	112	Total fines collected	\$3,320.00
Tickets dismissed	7	Fines dismissed	\$210.00
Tickets adjusted	0	Fines Adjusted	\$0

REPORT OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

As what will be a current theme through this Annual Report, the year 2020 was like no other with the global COVID 19 pandemic.

The Novel Coronavirus

The women and men of the Weston Police Department continued to work as the Commonwealth of Massachusetts advised all but essential workers to remain in their homes unless retrieving necessities such as food and medicine.

Initially, to protect our personnel, protective measures were put into place. Fortunately, our police cruisers were already stocked with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including N95 masks due to the ongoing fentanyl crisis. However, supplies of PPE quickly became unavailable due to the high, worldwide demand. To stay safe and conserve PPE, we needed to temporarily change the ways we interacted with the community and each other.

- Roll call briefings were reduced in duration and moved to open areas, such as outside.
- Restrictions were enacted in common areas such as the workout and break rooms, workspaces were spread out and shifts were adjusted to reduce the number of officers in common offices such as the detective's office area.
- Dispatch entry was restricted to just the dispatchers.
- Protective plastic was added in some areas.

- Police cruisers ran around the clock with multiple officers operating them, so precautions such as disinfecting wipe downs and disinfecting “fogging” became the norm between shifts.
- Hand sanitizing gels were in deep demand and some were donated from distilleries who changed their operations to assist in reducing the demand.
- Anyone who needed service either at the police station or at their home was met outside unless of course, we needed to enter for a medical issue. In that case, PPE would be donned.



The Department was honored to take part in a student-led peaceful Black Lives Matter march in early June.

The Weston Police Department met weekly, if not more, as a member of the Emergency Management Team, focusing on the response to the pandemic. The Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), and many epidemiologists and doctors implemented many restrictions and best practices, as the pandemic surged, waned in the summer, and resurged again in the fall and winter. Vaccines were developed in less than a year and first responders were among the first to be vaccinated.

As in-person meetings and trainings became sparse or non-existent, Zoom became the norm. This online platform allowed groups to meet virtually so that essential meetings and training could be conducted. It became evident after a period that people missed the opportunities for in-person contact. Internally, its use was the norm. The protocols enacted proved necessary and successful, as no Weston Police employee contracted the virus through either work-related activity or internal spread. This was important as we never ceased to operate.

Mental Health Response

As reported in the past, our partnership with the Metro Boston Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training and Technical Assistance Center, run by the Somerville Police Department, continued to provide CIT training for officers responding to calls involving mentally ill individuals. Part of this collaboration included a grant to fund the 40-hour training, but also to receive assistance and support from the National Alliance on Mental Illness to expand to a community-based approach on this topic. In 2020, we were only able to train two more officers in CIT, due to the lack of availability of training, but it increased certification to 66 percent.

The in-person, Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT) meetings were stopped, but the calls for service increased. Kate O'Donnell, our social worker, and Law Enforcement Support Clinician continued to support the community through her co-response to mental health-related calls. Her presence and participation proved invaluable to the department as interventions increased during such a stressful period. Communication continued however by all of the stakeholders.

Accreditation

During 2020, some significant progress was made in updating old policies and creating new ones. There will be significant mandated changes/updates to procedures due to the Police Reform Bill signed by

Governor Baker on December 31st. It is unknown whether the new Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission will follow the standards of the existing Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission.

Use of Force Reporting

To promote trust and transparency in community police departments, the Weston Police Department is continuing its participation in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Use of Force Data Collection Program. The program will include incident information, subject information, and officer information. Three types of use-of-force events and information related to each event are collected, including:

- When a fatality to a person occurs connected to the use of force by a law enforcement officer
- When there is serious bodily injury to a person connected to the use of force by a law enforcement officer
- In the absence of either death or serious bodily injury, when a firearm is discharged by law enforcement at or in the direction of a person

Additional information is available on the FBI's website.

New Police Cruisers

Ford Motor Company changed the body style of the Explorer police cruisers in 2020. They also added a hybrid version to the fleet. The Department purchased one hybrid and it has received great reviews by the officers, with the performance being better than expected. e will continue to replace the current fleet with energy-efficient hybrid vehicles going forward.

A Gift to the Weston Police Department

The Robbins Family of Weston was looking for opportunities to give back to the Weston community and asked if the Department had any needs. After conversations of what they had in mind, the family graciously replaced our aging K-9 vehicle with a 2020 Chevrolet Tahoe, capable of safely transporting Knox and his handler Officer Michael Rizzitello. The vehicle size allows for the storage of more equipment and the ability to be used as a command vehicle during a deployment.

Dash Camera

The Weston Police applied and was approved to receive a grant through the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA). This grant of approximately \$6,000 covered the cost and installation of an in-car camera video system. This technology is impressive and we are looking to expand the program to other marked cruisers as well as body cameras. Of course, we will always endeavor to look for creative grants and funding to accomplish these goals.

Animal Control

Happy for her, but sad for us, our Animal Control Officer (ACO), Rachel Hoffman moved out of state. ACO Hoffman contributed significantly, not only to the Police Department, but to the Board of Health in her role as the animal inspector, to the Town Clerk by administering the Commercial Dog Walking



The Department was treated well this year from the generosity of many members of the community Rabbi Moshe Bleich of the Wellesley-Weston Chabad, the Weston American Chinese Community, the Robins Family, and many more.

permits, and to Conservation staff with her work on Weston trails and town-owned land regarding dog and other animal issues.

Karen O'Reilly who worked previously as an ACO with Watertown was hired late in the year and will begin in January.

Josephine A. Gazzola Advancing and Supporting Women in Law Enforcement Conference

In 2017, the Gazzola Family of Weston donated to the Weston Police Department at the request of the late Josephine Gazzola, a longtime Weston resident. The donation was put towards advancing and supporting women in law enforcement. Due to the success of the first conference held in the Weston Police training room, the annual conference was relocated to Regis College. The conference was at the capacity of 130 female officers.

Once again in January, pre-pandemic restrictions, Weston Detective Kellie Connarton, Natick Lieutenant Cara Rossi, and Framingham Lieutenant Patricia Grigas were instrumental in planning and coordinating the day. The Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan, Salem Police Chief Mary Butler, and the Honorable Jennifer Stark of the Massachusetts Trial Courts, Chief were some of the event speakers. The event was at capacity and received rave reviews.

Community Events

Even though COVID-19 dampened many activities, the Weston Police Department hosted several community events throughout the year including the Kraft Family/Dana Farber Blood Drives, two Shredding Days, our annual Cradles to Crayons Martin Luther Day clothing drive, No Shave November to support Home Base, and the annual Toys for Tots drive.

Also, with COVID-19 restrictions in place, the Department participated in and safely escorted many events including a student-led Black Lives Matter peach march, the 2020 Weston High School Graduation, Rivers School Graduation, the High School student organized drive-through Halloween celebration, and many "drive-by birthday celebrations" so that children could continue to celebrate their special days in a fun and unique way under the circumstances. These events were a pleasure for the officers to be involved in and served as a much-needed pick-me-up in difficult times.

Weston Police Activity in 2020

Total Calls for Service	14,812
911 Calls Received	5,051
Crimes Reported	288
Arrests (Including Summons Issued)	113
Traffic Stops	1,173
RADAR Assignments/Requests	305
Traffic Citations Issued	761
Crash Investigations	153
Operating Under the Influence Cases	14
School/Library/COA "Walk Throughs"	98

Our Commitment to the Community

The Weston Police Department remains committed to the sanctity of life, the value of each person, the protection of rights for all, and being a positive part of the Weston Community.