

Annual Report of the Police Department 2015

Tilden Kaufman, Chief of Police

I would like to start by thanking Chief Joseph Bernstein (Retired) for his 23 years of dedicated service to the Town of Sharon. I learned a great deal while serving below him and his contributions to the department were many. We all hope he is enjoying his retirement.

Sadly, during 2015 we lost two of our retired officers. In January, Lieutenant Harold "Hap" Donovan passed away. Lieutenant Donovan began his career with the Sharon PD in 1959. He was promoted to Sergeant in 1961 and Detective Sergeant in 1985. He served in that capacity until he was promoted to Lieutenant in 1993, and eventually retired after 36 years of dedicated service to the Sharon community. During his 36 years he received numerous commendations and touched many people's lives.

In April we lost Detective James J. Testa. Detective Testa began his career with the Boston Police Department before starting in Sharon in 1962. Detective Testa spent 23 years in our department serving in various roles, including Firearms Instructor and Department Armorer. He retired as a Detective in 1985. He received a number of awards and commendations while serving with great pride and dignity.

Statistics are posted yearly within the Sharon Police Department concerning formal outside complaints. We have not had any formal outside complaints for the past three years. On a rare occasion we may have someone comment about an interaction with an officer. After further discussion they usually have a better understanding and are sufficiently satisfied that the officer be made aware of how they felt.

Sharon has not been immune to the heroin epidemic. We have experienced our share of deaths and overdoses. Narcan has helped and will continue to be a factor in saving lives. The Sharon Police Department has been actively working with the Sharon Substance Prevention and Resource Coalition (SSPARC) to help combat this issue. This group meets monthly and has directly helped a number of individuals who reside in Sharon. SSPARCS is innovative and will prove to be a tremendous asset as we move forward. We have been and will continue to aggressively attack this issue from many angles. I also would like to note that Officers Brian Mannello, Phil McEnany and Steven Kraus were presented the department's "Life Saving" Awards for their efforts in saving the lives of two residents who overdosed on heroin. Without their efforts these individuals would likely no longer be with us.

The School Department and Police Department continue to combine funds to support the School Resource Officer position. School Resource Officer Hocking has made a huge impact over the years and is now a part of the very fabric that makes Sharon's schools what they are. He has impacted many students in ways that cannot be easily measured. Many students have returned to let him know how much he meant to them. I hope to have a second School Resource Officer in the future. We currently have a variety of means where we "reach out" to the school community, and will continue these efforts. Some of these include our annual "Junior Police Academy", school fairs, and lunch with students.

We were involved in the security and planning for many of the Town's 250th Anniversary events. This involved intricate planning and behind the scenes efforts by a number of our personnel along with outside resources. Our job is not the kind where we can visibly see success, but the mere fact the public "safely" enjoyed the events made it a success.

The new Public Safety Complex is progressing well and we are hoping to be in our new police station by the end of 2016. There are many people working diligently on a daily basis to make this possible.

It is our goal to provide a high level of innovative, proactive and responsive services to the town. However, as we see continued development of properties throughout the town and anticipated projects, we will need to look at our personnel needs to continue services at current levels. It takes approximately one year to hire and train each police officer; but, due to the economic climate both the development and hiring has been deferred. As our mission becomes more complex we must strive to meet proper staffing levels. We have and will continue to provide services/programs that are crucial for your public safety. Our personnel are committed and recognize the challenges we face on a daily basis.

In 2015 we aggressively located and obtained outside funding to augment town Resources for equipment purchases and additional officers in the field. We were successful in receiving the same grant monies as the previous year which assisted in:

- Training personnel in the use of the enhanced 911 Emergency System (\$10,000)
- Supplementing town funds for E-911 Dispatchers' personnel costs (\$34,559)
- Traffic Safety Grant (\$12,500)
- Purchasing Bulletproof Vests (As needed/replacement)

Social media is a key component to communicating with as many people as possible in a short period of time. We actively use Facebook and Twitter. In addition, we have and will continue to use Reverse 911 and other telephonic related means to keep you abreast of things you need to know. Some other avenues we use to communicate include local 1630 AM radio through Civil Defense and Sharon Cable TV. We will continue to utilize these avenues and further expand upon as opportunities and technology change. You are urged to sign on so you don't miss any important information.

- Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/SharonMAPoliceDepartment>)
- Twitter Page (<https://twitter.com/SharonMAPolice>)
- Sharon PD Webpage (<http://www.townofsharon.net/police-department>)
- <https://www.facebook.com/sharoncoalition>

The Sharon Police Department was involved in OVER 19,000 incidents in 2015 including:

- 17 Assault related calls
- 132 Disturbance related (family/noise/general) calls
- 16 reported house or business burglaries
- 3 Criminal Harassment related calls
- 53 reported Larcenies (Including from Motor Vehicles)

31 Identity Thefts
20 reports of Vandalism
5 reports of Stolen Motor Vehicles
894 Burglar Alarms (almost all were false, weather related, malfunctions or operator error)
66 Motor Vehicle Lockouts
220 Hangup/False E911 related calls
614 Assist Citizen related calls (various reasons)
172 Assist Motorist calls
674 Assist Ambulance calls
0 Sexual Assaults/Armed Robberies, Homicides

Motor vehicle related accidents and infractions are a large part of our day to day activity. Officers responded to 385 motor vehicle accidents of which 24 involved Personal Injury. A number of factors contributed to these accidents ranging from driver error to weather conditions. We did have a fatal motor vehicle accident in July on Mansfield Street in which speed was determined to be a factor. Officer Matthew Rovaldi responded to one accident and received the department's "Life Saving" Award for taking immediate medical action on a victim who had his leg amputated. Without his actions this victim would likely not have survived.

Officers issued 2,117 written warnings and 195 civil violations. This number would be greatly lowered if drivers were to pay more attention to their surroundings and heed the rules of the road. Officers also issued 97 motor vehicle related criminal complaints, and made 12 Operating under the Influence of Alcohol arrests.

As always we would ask the public to help by reporting any suspicious activity to us at 784-1587 or dial 911 for an emergency. Keep in mind we would be looking for any descriptions (age, height/weight/clothing/license plate number/car description/etc.) you can provide. You really are an extension of us and we could not do our job without you.

I am proud to be Chief of the Sharon Police Department. The men and women of this department are professional and hard working. They are a huge reason why Sharon has been repeatedly rated as one of the best and safest places to live. The role of Law Enforcement changes on a regular basis. It is more dangerous and challenging than I can ever remember during my thirty years of service. You can rest assured that this department is ready for whatever comes our way. As I enter my first full year as Chief of Police I can assure you that you will continue to have a police department you can be proud to call your own.