



WATERBURY POLICE HISTORY

Timeline from 1674 to Present

1674

Settlers from Farmington received permission to start the village of Mattatuck (renamed Waterbury in 1686). A constable was elected annually to execute all lawful commands or warrants from any magistrate or court; Colonial law required that all white male persons from the age of sixteen to sixty years (with certain occupational exceptions) should serve in the militia, including a town guard service; no less than eight soldiers were to be on duty on the Sabbath and other days of public worship.

1760

Waterbury had three constables elected annually.

1825

The Borough of Waterbury was incorporated in May, encompassing the more densely populated center inside the Town of Waterbury. A Bailiff was elected annually to enforce laws in the Borough, while constables continued to serve the Town of Waterbury. The first Bailiff was Daniel Steele.

1853

The City of Waterbury was incorporated in May, replacing the Borough; the new Charter specified that the Court of Common Council should appoint no more than 25 special constables each year and that they “shall have the same power and authority, within said city, to preserve the peace, arrest and secure offenders, and present for crimes, as constables have in their respective towns.”

The first special constables were appointed on July 28, 1853 and an old wood building on Brook Street was rented by the City to use as the city prison. Although there was no formal Chief of Police position, there was an informal “captain of the police,” sometimes referred to as the “foreman of the police.” The first “chief” was Samuel Warren, who was also the jailer.

The word police was used informally in reference to the special constables.

1854

David Norton was elected as chief of police on July 8; William H. Adams was the jailer. Waterbury’s special constables were issued an official badge on September 18.

1855

David Norton was appointed as “foreman” of the special constables on June 25.

1856

A Code of Rules for the special constables was adopted on January 14. Charles F. Jones was appointed as foreman on July 7.

1857

Eli B. Gibbud was appointed foreman on January 12 following the resignation of Charles F. Jones. Seventeen men served under him: Richard Welton, Horace B. Peck, Orrin Smith, Alfred Forrest, Nelson Parsons, Frederick A. Warner, Eli B. Gibbud, Levi B. Bolster, Horace Frost, Henry Todd, Dennis Blakeslee, Chauncey W. Judd, Amos H. Hotchkiss, Alonzo M. Robe, Daniel Ladd, George A. Bidwell, and John F. Woodruff.

1859

A committee was formed on April 18 to find a new location for the jail; a property was purchased on west side of Phoenix Alley, behind the Methodist Church, for \$1100 and a new two-story brick structure was built with jail cells on the first floor and headquarters on the second floor.

1861

The first police headquarters, a room rented for the “city watch,” was opened on the second floor of a building on the corner of Bank and West Main Streets.

1866

A revised City Charter established a Police Court overseen by the City Court Judge; the court had authority over crimes and misdemeanors, punishment not to exceed a fine of \$200 and/or six months imprisonment in a common jail, county or town workhouse. Convictions could be appealed to the New Haven County Superior Court except in cases of drunkenness, profane cursing and swearing, and Sabbath-breaking.

1867

Edward Garvey was the first Irish immigrant to join Waterbury’s police force. Scottish immigrant William Laird joined at the same time.

1868

An amendment to the City Charter stated that the Court of Common Council should elect annually in June a captain of police, no more than four active policemen, and no more than twenty additional policemen.

1869

Daniel S. Morris was appointed Captain of Police. William Laird, George Barnes, and Edward Garvey were appointed as active policemen. There were also twenty supernumerary policemen, five from each ward.

A new badge was adopted on September 6.

1870

William Laird was appointed Captain of Police on June 20.
Police headquarters was moved to a room in City Hall.

1871

A revised City Charter established a formal Police Department with a Chief of Police and a Board of Police Commissioners. The charter allowed for as many ordinary policemen as designated by the Common Council, and sixteen supernumerary constables serving under the Board of Police Commissioners. All members of the force served for two-year terms.

1872

The new police department, led by Chief William Laird, began operation on January 10. William J. Darling, Edward Garvey, Patrick H. Keegan, and George W. Root were appointed as patrolmen. Noah B. Tuttle and Owen Thompson were added as patrolmen in May, increasing the regular force, including the chief, to seven men. On August 13, the Board of Police Commissioners recommended building a two-story city prison and police headquarters.

1873

On March 18, three beats for patrol duty were laid out, from East Main Street to Cherry Street, Bank Street to the train depot, and South Main Street to Union Street.

1874

William C. Bannon was appointed as Chief of Police. New police headquarters on Phoenix Avenue opened during the summer.

1875

A Charter Amendment eliminated the temporary terms of service (requiring a new appointment every year) and established an unlimited term of service dependent on “good behavior.”

1876

Oliver Austin was reappointed as Chief. Edward Garvey, John W. Dayton, George M. Egan, William Duncan, Charles B. Dean, and George W. Root were appointed as patrolmen. On August 8, Garvey was fired and replaced by William Laird.

1880

William Laird was appointed as Chief of Police on June 9.

1881

Patrols were expanded to include the Brooklyn district from 7 to 11 p.m. every night.

1882

Terms of service were limited to two years. The size of the force was increased two twelve patrolmen. John Byrnes, John Fagan, Thomas Dodds, Maurice Noonan, Stephen F. Kenney, and John Williams were appointed as patrolmen in addition to the six already serving.

1883

Patrolman William Duncan became Waterbury’s first detective on April 3.

A system of signal stations communicating with the District Telegraph and messenger office was installed in October with a three-year contract, but was abandoned within a few months when it proved unsatisfactory.

1884

George M. Egan was appointed as Chief of Police on February 19. Patrolmen were William Duncan, George W. Root, Walter C. Williams, John Byrnes, John Fagan, Thomas Dodds, Maurice Noonan, John Williams, Henry Fischer, Miles McNiff, Bernard Cahey, and William Laird. Charles B. Dean joined the force following Williams’ retirement on April 1. Laird was appointed Acting Lieutenant on April 29. Records for the year show 1519 arrests, of which 1478 were found guilty and 141 not guilty.

1885

Terms of service were again extended to be unlimited during good behavior; a Charter Amendment established the positions of Lieutenant and Sergeant

1886

The new organizational structure began on October 6, with a Chief, Lieutenant, Sergeant, patrolmen, and supernumeraries. George M. Egan was appointed as the Chief, George W. Root as the Lieutenant, and Charles R. Bannon as the Sergeant. Patrolmen were Thomas Dodds, John Fagan, William H. Brickel, Miles McNiff, Charles B. Dean, James Healey, Michael McAuliffe, James Douglass, William Tobin, Thomas F. O’Hearn, John Sullivan, and Dennis Carroll.

1888

A committee of the Court of Common Council reported that the police station on Phoenix Avenue was unfit for use, and a committee was then appointed to secure a site for construction of a new building. Renowned Waterbury architect Robert W. Hill was hired to design the new facility.

1889

A new code of rules and regulations was adopted.

1890

Construction of a new police station and prison behind City Hall, on Harrison Avenue, was completed on February 1. Records for the year show 1383 arrests, of which 1366 were found guilty and 17 not guilty (there were 686 arrests for drunkenness, and 288 arrests for assault and breach of the peace).

1891

In February, the Police Commissioners voted that the Chief of Police must dress in full uniform whenever appearing in public. In March, the department rules were amended to divide the patrolmen into three grades. Lt. George W. Root died on June 30; Sgt. Charles R. Bannon was promoted to the vacancy, and Patrolman Thomas Dodds was promoted to Sergeant. The force was increased to 23 patrolmen.

1893

The Mutual Aid Society was established on January 31 for sick and death benefits. Records for the year show 1619 arrests, of which 1556 were found guilty and 63 not guilty.

1894

The Police Department consisted of Chief George M. Egan, Lt. Charles R. Bannon, Sgt. Thomas Dodds, Det. Charles E. Egan, Doorman John A. Kennaugh, 23 Patrolmen, and 16 Supernumeraries. Police Commissioners were Edward B. Reiley, Augustus I. Goodrich, John J. McDonald, and Frederick E. Cross.

1895

Mrs. Mary A. Clark was elected on April 30 as Waterbury's first Police Matron. The Waterbury Police Court was abolished and replaced with a new City Court

1896

A Board of Public Safety was established to supervise the Police and Fire Departments.

1899

The Police Pension Fund was established by the Board of Public Safety on October 17. The retirement age for police officers was set at forty years old.

1901

The Gamewell Police Signal System was installed on August 17 with twenty-two boxes.

1902

The Detective Bureau was formed on April 22 with Lt. Thomas Dodds in command. The Reserve Fund of the Police Department was established on August 2, overseen by a Board of Trustees. The first pension awarded from the fund was given the following year to the widow of Officer Paul Mendelssohn. The Waterbury Police Department Baseball Team was formed, competing against other Connecticut police departments. The Reserve Fund of the Police Department, overseen by a Board of Trustees, was created on August 5.

1903

Officer Paul Mendelssohn was shot and killed on March 8 while riding on the North Main Street trolley car to protect passengers during the Trolley Strike. He was the first Waterbury police officer to be killed in the line of duty. The crime remains unsolved.

1904

A new code of rules and regulations was adopted. The Bertillon system of identification using fingerprints was installed. The Board of Public Safety voted to eliminate the position of Chief of Police, replacing it with a Superintendent of Police, as part of a political effort to oust Chief George M. Egan in response to the Trolley Strike of the previous year.

1905

Waterbury's first horse-drawn patrol wagon was put into service on March 1. George M. Beach was appointed Superintendent of Police on May 9, taking office on October 28.

1906

Using the Bertillon system, the Police Department began fingerprinting all arrested persons and maintaining fingerprint cards on January 1.

1910

Waterbury's first patrol automobile, a Pope motorcar made in Hartford, was purchased.

1911

City Hall renovations included the creation of a police drill hall. Police officers were assigned to traffic duty for the first time; downtown parking was restricted to fifteen minutes.

1912

City Hall was destroyed by fire on April 22; the militia was called out to help the police watch over the downtown area. Some police records were lost, but the police station was not severely damaged. The police department was able to return to their old quarters less than a month after the fire.

1913

Waterbury's first regular patrol automobile was purchased on April 4. It was wrecked on August 3 by off-duty Patrolman Robert P. Kiersted in Seymour. Kiersted was killed in the accident. The Patrol Division implemented the three-platoon system on May 5, reducing the patrol shift from 12 hours to 8 hours. Patrolman Daniel J. Lane was killed while on duty on August 7 while attempting to repair a broken lamppost which electrocuted him. A Ford touring car was purchased on August 20 for exclusive use of Superintendent Beach.

1914

The Waterbury Automobile Club gave the Police Department its first motorcycle on June 1. Patrolman John Mates was the first motorcycle officer.

1915

Scovill Manufacturing establishes a uniformed constabulary force to patrol its factories; the force is funded by Scovill but under the direct supervision of Police Superintendent George M. Beach. The force of ten men were members of the city supernumerary department and worked in 12-hour shifts; a shortage of regular policemen led to an ordinance allowing the Board of Aldermen to appoint special constables; by 1917, there were 47 men serving in the industrial constabulary force. Chase hired 15 special policemen; American Brass hired 16; smaller companies had between one and three. On December 8, the Police Department acquired a Stewart patrol motorcar.

1916

The new police quarters in City Hall were occupied on January 13. Located in the west wing of City Hall, the space included a large drill hall in the basement, locker rooms, sergeants' room, smoking room, storage rooms, toilets and shower bath, and a homeless shelter. The first floor held the offices for police department officials, a men's jail with thirty cells, detention rooms, and a police garage. The second floor housed the detective bureau, a Bertillon room, dark room, detention room for women, the women's jail with ten cells, matron's office, bed room, living room, and kitchen.

1917

The Police Department consisted of 79 members. Forty call boxes were located throughout the City. Superintendent Beach hired a physical fitness instructor to improve the overall physical fitness of the police department. Sergeants received training in leading physical fitness classes for officers.

1918

The Chief Inspector position was created on September 18 to supervise the Detective Bureau, Bureau of Identification, and photography room. William Keegan served as the first Chief Inspector. The police wagon was commandeered for use as an ambulance during the Spanish Influenza epidemic; police were asked to assist in grave digging for at least one influenza victim. In October, the Board of Public Health banned all public gatherings to prevent further spread of influenza; the ban was enforced by the police department.

1919

Waterbury police raided a March 9 meeting of I.W.W. labor organizers suspected of promoting communism and arrested nearly 200 people at the meeting during the First Red Scare of 1917-1920.

1920

With the start of Prohibition, the Waterbury police began to focus on arresting bootleggers and speakeasy operators; Superintendent Beach reported an overall decrease in crime, from an average of more than 6,500 arrests per year to about 4,000.

\Labor and social tensions led to factory strikes which sometimes turned violent. In May, a stick of dynamite damaged the home of John H. Goss, part of the senior management and brother of the president of Scovill. On June 21, a striker at Scovill was killed during an exchange of fire with John Bergin, head of the Scovill Plant Protection Bureau, and Lt. Richard Leroy.

While taking a statement from a woman involved in a domestic dispute with her husband, Inspector John F. Donahue was shot in the chest by the husband, and the bullet lodged next to his spine. He died on August 2 after six weeks in the hospital.

1922

A vice squad led by Lt. James Murphy was established in September, tasked with raids on gambling dens, speakeasies, and brothels.

1925

Patrolman Walter J. Stokes was shot and killed while responding to a domestic disturbance at a third floor apartment of 827 Bank Street.

1930

Patrolman Matthew McNally died on November 20 from injuries sustained a few hours earlier when he was struck by a car while investigating a motor vehicle accident on East Main Street.

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1931

The Board of Public Safety was replaced by the Board of Police Commissioners and the Board of Fire Commissioners.

1934

Patrolman James J. Girch fatally shot himself with his service revolver in Library Park on October 27.

1935

The vice squad (renamed the emergency squad) began monitoring burlesque shows at Jacques' following complaints from ministers and the Knights of Columbus.

1936

City Sheriff William J. Roach was appointed as Superintendent of Police in March after Superintendent Joseph McLean was pressured into retirement by Mayor Frank T. Hayes.

1940

The Waterbury Police Federal Credit Union received its federal charter.

1941

Patrolman John Palmatier died on July 20 from injuries sustained when he was struck by a car while directing traffic at the intersection of West Main and Judd Streets.

1943

Cicero B. Booker, Sr. was appointed to the supernumerary force in October.

1944

The position of Policewoman was created; candidates were required to be either registered nurses or certified schoolteachers. On March 16, Mrs. Mary E. (Norgren) Jones became Waterbury's first Policewoman.

1946

Cicero B. Booker, Sr. became Waterbury's first African American police officer in January.

1952

Superintendent Roach spent three months in West Germany, advising German police forces on organization and administration, working with the office of the U.S. High Commissioner.

1955

Waterbury police assisted with rescue efforts during the catastrophic August flood; after the flood, law enforcement efforts focused on stopping looting and profiteering.

1958

Patrolman Frank D. Romano suffered a fatal heart attack on November 22 while walking his beat in Fulton Park.

1959

Superintendent Roach retired on December 30 and was replaced by Superintendent James Magner.

1960

Joseph Guilfoile was promoted to Superintendent on June 16 following the death of Superintendent James Magner on May 17.

1961

Patrolman Leonard LaManna suffered a fatal heart attack on November 18 while directing traffic during a fire at the Dora Drazen Dress Shop on Leavenworth Street.

1962

Waterbury police assisted in emergency efforts following the tornado disaster in May. The Civil Service system was implemented by the City on November 2.

1964

Waterbury Police Union Local 1237 was formed on April 13, receiving its charter from the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. Officer Donald McKay served as the first president.

1965

The Youth Squad was created with detectives assigned to the investigation of juvenile matters.

Social upheaval created tension and hostility between the police department and the city's black and Puerto Rican communities; Superintendent Joseph Guilfoile met with Boswell Trowers of the Inter Urban League and Thelma Sims of the local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality in March as part of an effort to de-escalate the situation.

1967

Police used tear gas and warning shots to disperse a large crowd hurling rocks and bottles in the North Square on July 28.

Police quickly restored order at a peace rally in December after a self-described "white racist" disrupted the rally by telling a Vietnam veteran that black soldiers were inferior to white.

1968

Frederick T. Sullivan was appointed as Superintendent of Police.

A "hippie colony" of 16 youths were arrested and charged with loitering on the Green in July; one was charged with possession of narcotics and another with possession of a knife; the group had been repeatedly chased away from the Green over the summer following complaints of damage and bad language.

1969

Drug-related arrests began to climb during this period, with more than 80 narcotics arrests in Waterbury during the winter of 1968-69.

A report of the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities in May found that Waterbury was "bursting at the seams with tension, fear, extremist groups and the potential for riot." The report also cited the Police Department for having an "unhealthy relationship" with the Rat Pack Motorcycle Club, which at the time had a reputation for open hostility towards African Americans.

A grand jury report in June charged that three Waterbury police officers, Deputy Superintendent of Police Paul Moynahan and his son, Alderman and Attorney Timothy Moynahan, the Watertown Chief of Police, and an Assistant Circuit Court Prosecutor, and others, were involved in a mafia-related crime ring. While some of the accused were quickly acquitted, Paul Moynahan was one of 19 people found guilty.

1970

In response to police corruption unveiled the previous year, a report by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) recommended organizational changes to the Waterbury police department, including reorganizing the department into three bureaus: Uniformed, Criminal Investigation, and Administrative Services. The report also recommended that Waterbury's Board of Police Commissioners continue to serve as an advisory board, and that the Chief of Police should report directly to the Mayor.

1971

Capt. William Lamb became commander of the Records Room and began the process of centralizing all recordkeeping and upgrading to the latest technological advances.

The Police-Community Relations Office was opened at 32 Harris Circle, Apartment 13, on November 17.

Connecticut's Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities investigated the Police Department in response to complaints about a confrontation between the police and Puerto Ricans in the South End.

1972

The Meter Aide position was created in May to issue parking tickets.

1973

The Research and Development Division (later called the Planning and Research Division) was created on June 11 following the recommendations of the 1970 IACP report. Similarly, it was decided that the positions of Deputy Superintendent and Deputy Chief Inspector would be eliminated through attrition.

1974

The Extra-Duty and Permits Office was established on May 27.

Waterbury's police force consisted of 278 police officers, of whom 265 were white, 9 were black, and 4 were Puerto Rican.

A new police communications center was opened in December "on the roof" of City Hall, furnished with the most up-to-date equipment in New England, including a 20-track recorder for all incoming and outgoing police communications, an electronic screen displaying the position of all police units, and capability of handling civil emergencies as a command center.

1977

Architectural firm Stein, Sapack & Ames unveiled their design for a new police station on East Main Street. The Modernist design of the building was similar to others designed by Waterbury architect Joseph Stein, senior partner of the firm, particularly the Waterbury Club on Center Street and the North End Rec Center on North Main Street. Other local buildings designed by Stein include the Silas Bronson Library and the Bunker Hill Branch Library, the Buckingham Ramp Garage, Mount Olive AME Zion Church, Plaza on the Green, Prospect Towers, Savings Towers Apartments, St. John's Lutheran Church on Chase Parkway, MacDermid Corporate Headquarters, Gilmartin and Regan Schools, and the Mattatuck Animal Hospital. In collaboration with Louis Fucito, Stein also designed the Waterbury Superior Court and three of the city's middle school complexes.

The \$3.3 million police building was constructed by Ray Adler, Inc., which also built the federal prison in Danbury and the maximum security wing at CT Valley Hospital in Middletown. The groundbreaking ceremony was held on April 29.

1978

Kathleen Wilson became Waterbury's first female police officer, joining the force of 249 policemen on January 16. The previous position of Policewoman was eliminated through attrition, and the gender-neutral title of Police Officer was adopted.

Identification numbers replaced badge numbers on police reports, summons, infractions, and parking tickets beginning on April 9.

The Waterbury Police Department was the first in Connecticut to file an automated uniform crime report to state officials, thanks to the grant-funded purchase of a Law Enforcement Automated Data System.

1979

The new Police Station on East Main Street was dedicated on December 7.

1980

The Federal Office of Revenue Sharing required that one black, Hispanic, or female officer be hired for every one white male hired by the Waterbury Police Department. Shotguns were deployed on a regular basis in the patrol division starting on February 20.

1981

Carol Ritucci, Beth Martell, Louise Whidbee, and Deborah Scott joined the force in November, increasing the number of female officers to five.

1982

Shotguns were issued to all marked patrol vehicles starting on February 1.

Officer Bruce Hanley ruptured a lung wall during a foot pursuit on November 19. He was found unconscious on Dikeman Street at 10:50 p.m. and rushed to St. Mary's Hospital, where he slipped into a coma, never to regain consciousness. The Police Department continued to list Officer Hanley on the active duty roster until his death on December 13, 1997.

1984

Six black and Hispanic officers filed a federal discrimination suit against the department in April, charging the department with failing to promote non-white officers. Until the suit was filed, there were no blacks or Hispanics above the rank of patrol officer; within a year, three minority officers were promoted to sergeant. The case was settled in November 1985, when the department agreed to open more jobs, promotions, and training opportunities to minorities. At the time, the 253-person department included 28 blacks and Hispanics. The Inspectional Services Unit (Internal Affairs) was created on December 24.

1986

Joseph A. Rosa became Acting Superintendent on January 2. William F. Lamb was promoted to Superintendent on December 15. The Scuba Diving Unit was formed on June 25. The position of Deputy Superintendent was reinstated, replacing the administrative Chief Inspector position, on December 17.

1987

Waterbury's first police motorcycle corps was created with the purchase of Kawasaki Police 1000 motorcycles.

1988

Kathleen Wilson became the City's first female police sergeant in April.

1989

The last Policewoman retired on September 29. The first narcotics canine, a German Shepherd named Lenny, was deployed in November. The Tactical Narcotics Team was formed in December.

1990

A desktop computer network was installed.

1992

The rank of Detective was established as a promotional position, rather than an assignment, in February. Kathleen Wilson became the City's first female police lieutenant in March. Edward F. Bergin was promoted to Superintendent on December 4. Officer Walter T. Williams, III was shot and killed on December 18 while on patrol.

1993

The Gang Task Force was created on May 26 in response to gang warfare fueled primarily by a feud between the Latin Kings and Los Solidos. The Police Pipes and Drums of Waterbury was formed in November.

1995

Edward Flaherty was promoted to Superintendent in August.

1996

The Bicycle Unit was created on August 1.

1997

Four precincts were opened, at 172 Willow Street, 890 Bank Street, 803 North Main Street, and at a mobile office originally stationed on Oakville Avenue. Kathleen Wilson became the City's first female police captain and the first woman in Connecticut to be promoted to police captain through civil service testing.

1998

Capt. Kathleen Wilson became the first woman to head the Detective Bureau in January. Jacqueline Ortiz became the police department's first female Hispanic detective. She joined the force in October 1989.

2000

The four precincts were closed due to budgetary constraints on December 1.

2003

The Police Department added office and parking space for the Community Relations, Training, and Meter & Tag Divisions at the Buckingham Ramp Garage in January. The title of Superintendent was changed to Chief following an efficiency study published in May. Superintendent Flaherty retired in June and was replaced by Acting Chief Neil O'Leary. The Police Department assumed full control of the enforcement operations of the Waterbury Parking Authority on July 1. The Waterbury Police Department celebrated its 150th Anniversary in September.

2004

Neil O'Leary was sworn in as Chief of Police on November 4. A second Deputy Chief position was created in December; Captains James Nardoizzi and Philip Rinaldi were promoted to the two Deputy Chief positions.

2009

Michael J. Gugliotti was sworn in as Chief of Police on October 30.

2013

Vernon Riddick, Jr. was sworn in as Waterbury's first African American Chief of Police on October 4.

2017

A Mounted Unit was established in April with three horses.

2018

Fernando Spagnolo was sworn in as Chief of Police on December 13.

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