To the Residents of Aquinnah,

Continuing as I have started off this Town Report for number of years, I will let you know who the Officers were who worked for the department during 2021. Full Time Officers were Sgt. Paul Manning, Officer Steven Mathias, and Officer David Murphy. Special/Reserve Officers were Bradley Fielder, Cory Medeiros, and Christopher Manning. Special Officers Medeiros and Manning were new additions to the department. Special Officer Medeiros previously worked as a Traffic Officer for the Tisbury and Edgartown Police Departments. Special Officer Manning is employed full time by the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) as a Tribal Ranger and was able to work shifts for our department on his days off. It should be noted that Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) Natural Resources Director Bret Stearns is also a Special/Reserve Officer of our department. Special Officers Stearns and Manning are both certified Massachusetts Emergency Medical Technicians – Basic Level (E.M.T.’s) and they assist our department with medical emergency calls. We appreciate their assistance on these medical emergency calls.

During 2021 the Country unfortunately had to continue to deal with the Covid 19 pandemic. Locally, restrictions continued and due to these restrictions the department was able to remain safe using our Personal Protective Equipment (P.P.E.) and following the recommended guidelines. Officers wore face coverings while dealing with the public and the public was required to wear face coverings while visiting the Gay Head Cliff area and shops. The public was receptive to this restriction and the department was fortunate that we did not have to respond to any calls regarding the public not wearing face coverings. Speaking of the Aquinnah Circle area, the summer of 2021 saw in increase of visitors in this area compared to the previous year even though the Town decided not to open the Gay Head Lighthouse for tours. The beaches in Town were very busy which required the department to strictly enforce the parking laws. Due to the pandemic, the Town faced issues of hiring parking attendants, so the department spent a lot of time patrolling and issuing parking tickets at the Philbin Beach parking lot and the other Resident Permit Parking areas in Town. As you will see below in our statistics, there was an increase in the number of parking tickets issued compared to the previous year.

Although most in person trainings were suspended due to the pandemic, the Officers of the department were able to complete their required yearly In-Service training using the online training that was assigned to them by the Municipal Police Training Committee, who oversees Police Training for all Officers of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. One of the in person trainings the Officers, as well as all Officers on the island attended, was Implicit Bias training. This training was provided by Hillard Heintze Company who was hired by the Martha’s Vineyard Law Enforcement Council, Inc. The island Police Chiefs participated in this training also; however our training was separate from the Patrol Officers’ training. As part of the Chiefs training, we invited leaders from several island organizations, such as the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), N.A.A.C.P. – Martha’s Vineyard Chapter, and the Martha’s Vineyard Diversity Coalition to name a few, for a discussion regarding implicit and racial bias on Martha’s Vineyard. The discussion went very well and the Chiefs left the training with a better understanding of how these organizations view policing on Martha’s Vineyard.

During the year the department continued to learn more about the Police Reform Law that was enacted on December 31, 2020. As part of this legislation the Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission (POSTC) was created and subsequently appointed by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Part of the Commission’s responsibilities is to review each Police Department’s internal affairs/disciplinary records to ensure Officers are able to remain as a certified Police Officer. In the fall of 2021 the Commission requested each department’s disciplinary records for active Officers and for Officers who were previously employed by the department. I’m pleased to report that I didn’t have to supply any of the required disciplinary records due to the fact that there were no required disciplinary records to be sent. Also as part of this legislation, in order for a department to employ Officers who are Special/Reserve Police Officers, these Special/Reserve Officers are required to complete an additional 200 hours of Police training. 120 hours of this training are to be completed online on various topics assigned by the Municipal Police Training Committee and the remaining 80 hours of training are “hands on/practical” training, which consists of Firearms, Defensive Tactics, and Emergency Vehicle driving. The island Police Chiefs will work with the Municipal Police Training Committee to ensure our Special/Reserve Officers receive this required training.

As I’ve stated in previous Town Reports, the Police Station is in need of more space. During this year the Town created the Aquinnah Town Projects Committee, of which I was fortunate enough to become a member of, to further investigate additional space needs of not only the Police Station, but the Town Offices, and to upgrade the public restrooms at Aquinnah Circle. The Committee met weekly to discuss the additional space needs and the public restrooms. Once we discussed these issues, the next step was to contract with professionals to continue the process. The Town issued an RFP for an Owner’s Project Manager (OPM) (as is required by law) and later issued an RFP for an architect to assist us with furthering the process. I am proud to report that the Town contracted with Atlantic Construction Inc. as our Owner’s Project Manager and ICON Architecture Inc. as our architect. The Committee met with both companies on a regular basis to convey our needs to them. ICON Architecture Inc., subsequently met with all Town employees and owners of the Aquinnah Circle shops to discuss the current needs. From those discussions, ICON presented various ideas to the Committee and Atlantic Construction, Inc. These ideas will be presented to Town residents for comment and input. The Committee looks forward to continuing the process as the Town Offices, Police Station, and Town Hall not only need additional space, but need immediate structural or equipment related repairs. Additional funds will be needed to be approved by Town voters to complete the planning process and ultimately construction of the aforementioned buildings. We hope Town voters support these projects and approve the funding.

In closing I’d like to thank all members of the department for their continued professionalism and perseverance during this pandemic. As I’ve stated previously, I’m proud of the Officers of this department and the Town residents should feel fortunate to have these Officers protecting their Town. I’d also like to thank the following agencies for their continued assistance: Aquinnah Fire Department, Aquinnah Highway Department, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) Natural Resources Department, Tri-Town Ambulance, the island Police agencies, Dukes County Sheriff’s Department, the State agencies assigned to the island, U.S. Coast Guard – Station Menemsha, Town of Aquinnah Select Board, Board of Health, and Town employees.

Continue to be safe and best wishes for 2022!!

Listed below are the numbers and some of the types of calls for service the department responded to from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 compared with those responded to in 2020:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2021 AQUINNAH POLICE STATISTICS** | | | |
|  | 2020 | 2021 |  |
| Medical Emergencies | 25 | 42 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Alarms (Burglar) | 30 | 50 |  |
| Alarms (Fire) | 30 | 25 |  |
| Alarms (Other) | 18 | 14 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Assist Citizen (general) | 34 | 21 |  |
| Assist Outside Agency | 6 | 10 |  |
| Assist Aquinnah Fire Department | 2 | 1 |  |
| Assist Animal Control Officer | 7 | 7 |  |
| Public Utility / Hazardous Condition | 2 | 14 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Assault & Battery | 4 | 1 |  |
| B&E and Attempted B&E | 1 | 0 |  |
| Domestic Related Activity | 8 | 8 |  |
| Harassment Complaints | 1 | 2 |  |
| ID Theft/Fraud | 3 | 2 |  |
| Larceny | 4 | 1 |  |
| OUI | 1 | 0 |  |
| Other Alcohol Related Incidents | 0 | 1 |  |
| Sexual Assaults | 1 | 1 |  |
| Lewd Behavior | 0 | 0 |  |
| Shoplifting | 0 | 0 |  |
| Vandalism / Destruction of Property | 1 | 0 |  |
| Motor Vehicle Complaints | 3 | 1 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Covid-19 Related Complaints | 2 | 0 |  |
| Disputes / Disturbances | 3 | 4 |  |
| Animal Complaints | 7 | 0 |  |
| Fireworks / Gunshot Complaints | 3 | 0 |  |
| Hunting/Fishing Complaints | 3 | 2 |  |
| Noise Complaints | 4 | 2 |  |
| Parking Complaints | 5 | 7 |  |
| Trespass Complaints | 1 | 1 |  |
| Suspicious Vehicles, Persons, Activities | 29 | 23 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Marine Mammal Incidents | 1 | 0 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Welfare Checks | 6 | 5 |  |
| Missing Person | 0 | 1 |  |
| Child Welfare | 3 | 4 |  |
| Marine Watercraft Incidents | 0 | 0 |  |
| Bicycle Accidents | 0 | 1 |  |
| Moped Accidents | 0 | 1 |  |
| Motor Vehicle Accidents | 5 | 9 |  |
| Motor Vehicle vs. Deer / Other Animal | 7 | 3 |  |
| Deaths | 0 | 1 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| By-Law Violations | 1 | 0 |  |
| Arrests | 7 | 2 |  |
| Protective Custody | 0 | 0 |  |
| Criminal Complaint Applications | 7 | 10 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Incidents on Tribal Lands | 24 | 24 |  |
| **Total Incidents** | **275** | **277** |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Motor Vehicle Stops | 173 | 205 |  |
| Motor Vehicle Citations Issued | 28 | 45 |  |
| Parking Tickets Issued | 541 | 675 |  |
|  |  |  |  |

Respectfully submitted,

Randhi P. Belain

Chief of Police