

WILLOUGHBY POLICE DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT



2025

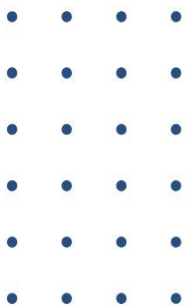
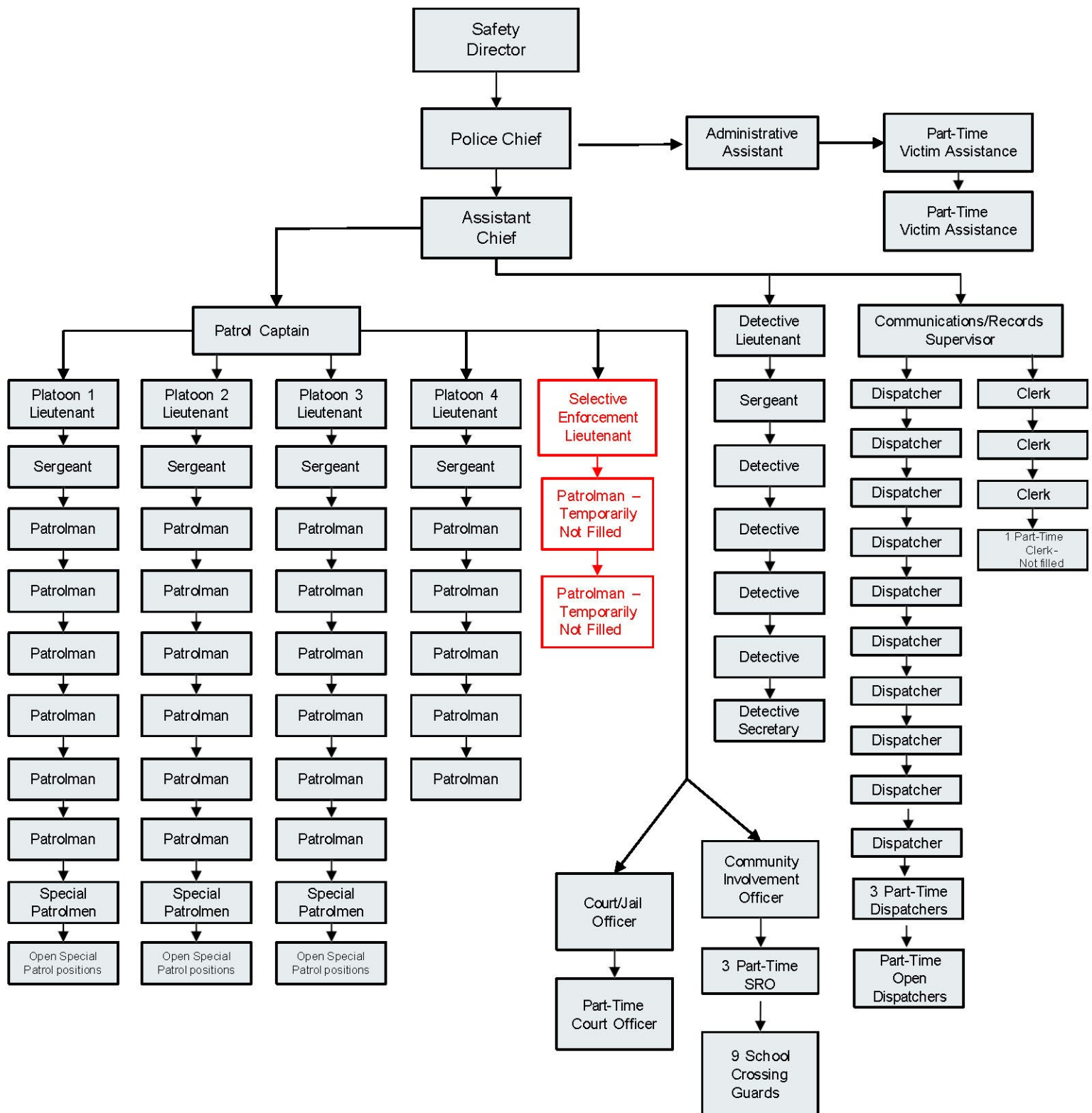


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Willoughby Police Department Organizational Chart



March 2023

Mission Statement

The mission of the Willoughby Police Department shall be to provide a safe environment in which residents and non-residents can live and work. This mission shall be accomplished by the prompt but fair enforcement of local and state laws.

The Willoughby Police Department recognizes that it derives its authority from and is accountable to the community it serves. The department will continually strive to provide effective and efficient police service consistent with the community's needs and concerns.

We believe that the basic concerns of the citizens of Willoughby include a desire for peace, tranquility, and freedom from crime and disorder. The Willoughby Police Department's primary functions are the prevention of crime, the enforcement of laws in a fair and impartial manner and the apprehension of those who violate the laws.

We further believe that only through a coordinated police-community effort can public order and safety be achieved and sustained; therefore, we will actively encourage community support in a cooperative effort to achieve this mission.

VALUES:

Values are the core of our moral beliefs and self-worth. They are convictions that bond us together to accomplish specific tasks and objectives. They are what we share and believe. We, the members of the Willoughby Police Department, value:

Constitutional Rights

We shall uphold this country's democratic values as embodied in the Constitution and dedicate ourselves to the presentation of life, individual freedoms and justice for everyone.

Integrity

Integrity is the absolute honest and ethical personal behavior and performance of duty that must be the hallmark of every member of the department.

Professional Excellence

Recognizing the changing and diverse needs of the community, the Willoughby Police Department pledges to establish and maintain high performance standards to ensure public confidence and trust. Professional excellence is a direct result of progressive training, a positive attitude and personal commitment.

Commitment to Employees

The department recognizes that its employees are the vital component to the successful delivery of police services. We believe we can achieve our highest potential by actively involving our employees in problem solving and improving police services. We support an organizational climate of mutual trust and respect.

Community Partnership

Recognizing the fact that police agencies were established as a result of society's voluntary limitation of personal freedoms, we encourage and expect the participation of the community in facilitating solutions to problems of mutual concern. We therefore solicit and support contributions from all members of this community.

EXECUTIVE COMMENTS

I am pleased to present the Willoughby Police Department's 2025 Annual Report. Our mission has always been to provide the best possible service to our community, our businesses, and our visitors and to keep our City safe and secure. This is our WHY.

In 2025, we hired two new police officers, Daniel Elliott and Thomas Stephens, due to the retirements of several veteran officers. Our new police officers came to us with prior experience with other northeast Ohio police departments. Their transition into our department was smooth, and they both are doing incredible work serving our community.

The police officers who retired from service in 2025 were Lieutenant John Begovic, Patrolman Travis Stevenson, and Special Patrolman Dennis Corbett. Lieutenant Begovic served our City for over 32 years with his last four years being responsible for our Detective Bureau. Patrolman Stevenson served our City for over 25 years in our Patrol Division. Special Patrolman Corbett retired twice from our department. Special Patrolman Corbett served our City for over 30 years with his last assignment being a Patrol Lieutenant. Dennis returned to active duty on a part-time basis until his retirement last year. All three police officers were valuable members of our department and community. They will be tremendously missed.

In 2025, we updated our Range Program extensively. Our Range Officers received additional training in the use of firearms and in program development for our pistol, shotgun, and rifle trainings. With the continued training of our Range Officers, they developed new and innovative training tactics, drills, and approaches to give our officers the skills, tools, and training they need to be successful out in the field. One element that has been stressed above and beyond the need for accuracy and confidence was the need to develop the decision-making process. It is incredibly important that our officers have the strongest decision-making skills when it comes to the possibility of using deadly force. These skills cannot be underestimated, and it is our mission to lead the way in proactive police training so that our officers can make the best decisions in the most difficult situations.

Each year, my support staff looks for all grant opportunities available to help our department, and in 2025, they were extremely successful. Federal, State, and Local grant opportunities provide tremendous support to programs that wouldn't exist without this additional funding. My Administrative Assistants and Community Involvement Officer secured grant opportunities for Downtown Willoughby foot patrol, drunk driving patrols, high risk activity patrols, holiday special enforcement patrols, US Marshals Violent Fugitive Task Force involvement, bulletproof vests, training, and cruiser video camera investments. We also received financial support for new facility office and fitness room improvements by the Willoughby Fraternal Order of Eagles #2300 and the Willoughby Veterans of Foreign Wars #1500. Their continued support has been greatly appreciated, and we've built a strong partnership with these two outstanding community organizations.

At the end of 2024 and throughout 2025, we worked with our architect, Bowen & Associates, to develop the most beautiful and effective police facility throughout the land. We are extremely grateful for the opportunity our community has given to us to create a new police facility, and we're doing everything we can to repay that debt to our great City.





EXECUTIVE COMMENTS

Our people worked tirelessly designing the new facility so that it provided our officers, dispatchers, and support staff with the most efficient and effective ways to keep our community safe and secure. New features will include a K9 office to support our K9s and their handlers, a community training room where our department can host new educational opportunities and civic leaders can present meetings, expanded Detective Bureau operations, Patrol Office, Community Involvement Office, Victim Advocates Office, and an expanded Evidence Room where narcotics, firearms, and other unusual items can be properly stored for investigations. The new facility will have a state-of-the-art Dispatch Center for superior emergency communications for Willoughby and Kirtland. Expansion is available for training opportunities and new communities. The new facility will have an expanded Records Division where current and archived records can be stored. There will be new interview rooms, lobby meeting rooms, an expanded Roll Call room, supervisory offices, and state-of-the-art information technology rooms. It will be the most technologically advanced building in northeast Ohio.

We broke ground on the new facility in August of 2025. Our general contractor, Infinity Construction, demoed the inside of the building and began creating new rooms all throughout the facility. The shell of the firearms range was built, and the walls of the new jail were constructed. And today, the building has been transformed into something beautiful and for that, we thank you Willoughby!

Our mission is to make our great City safe and secure. Our officers, dispatchers, and support staff have invested themselves to go above and beyond our mission. Our officer of the year, Patrolman Fred Brown led by example in 2025. Patrolman Brown responded to over 2,300 calls for service, conducted over 1,200 self-initiated activities, completed over 600 arrests and traffic citations, and initiated foot patrols in Downtown Willoughby, our city parks, the hotels, and at commercial establishments. Patrolman Brown made a commitment to building strong relationships with business owners and employees, hotel employees, and residents to build trust and cooperation with the community.

These statistics along with so many other strong examples from our police officers demonstrate the utmost commitment, sacrifice, and determination our members have at making our City safe. It is our promise to our residents, businesses, and visitors. When you need us, we are here for you. This is why we are The Finest.

It is an absolute honor and pleasure to serve this community and demonstrate my commitment, dedication, and investment to all of you. #willoughbystrong

Thank you.

Chief Jim Schultz

Administration

The administrative offices of the police department are responsible for developing, coordinating, and administering the law enforcement programs of the Willoughby Police Department. Police administration plans, organizes, and directs the activities of the police division.

Analysis of operation costs, budget estimates, employee discipline, and training are also this section's responsibility.

This division prepares all employee records, payroll and purchases.

Patrol Division

Our 2025 Patrol Division Roster

Captain Toby Davis

Lieutenant Chris Scozzie
Lieutenant Kevin Crowley

Lieutenant Jamie Greig
Lieutenant Bradley Lampela

Sergeant Mike Fitzgerald
Sergeant Brandon Zinner

Sergeant Matt Neath
Sergeant Daniel Lastoria

Officer Charles Krejsa
Officer Matt Jackson
Officer Jason Pitt
Officer Ross Shirey
Officer Kyle Dunphy
Officer Jackson Hyams/K-9 Zaro
Officer Bill Bernakis
Officer Taylor Zana/K-9 Eagle
Officer Fred Brown
Officer Jon Thompson
Officer Andrew D'Eusanio
Officer Aleashia Tapia
Officer Daniel Elliott

Officer Travis Stevenson
Officer Shane Rahz
Officer Laura Licursi
Officer Kyle Bucher
Officer Jeremy Blackstone
Officer Walter Cole
Officer Victoria Godfrey
Officer Dominic DiSanto
Officer Stacey Chenevey
Officer Ryan Pate
Officer Anthony Germano
Officer Nicholas Chiacchiero
Officer Thomas Stephens

Special Jerry Spradlin
Special Kurt Keeper
Special Jim Myers
Special Chuck Deutsch
Special Jack Beckwith
Special Joe Kulnane
Special Matt Zarbock

Special Steve Jevnikar
Special Chuck Popik
Special Rick Myers
Special Mike Nogalo
Special Derrick Stewart
Special George Lessick
Special Tom Rovniak

Service

The Patrol Division of the Willoughby Police Department continues its commitment to providing service and protection to citizens. The Patrol Division has many wide ranging and varied responsibilities which include the following: protecting our citizens and visitors from harm and danger, the enforcement of criminal and traffic laws set forth by the City of Willoughby and the State of Ohio, investigation of criminal and suspicious activity, the prevention of crime, traffic crash investigation, providing first aid in medical situations until the Fire Department arrives, and the education of our citizens in crime prevention or the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Promotions and Retirements

Det. Lt. John Begovic, Ptl Travis Stevenson, and Special Patrolman Dennis Corbett retired after long fulfilling careers with the Willoughby Police Department. Detective Lt. John Begovic after retirement began working for the Lake County Prosecutor's Office as an Investigator, continuing his career in Law Enforcement.

As a result of the retirements, Sgt. Bradley Lampela was promoted to Lieutenant. Patrolman Daniel Lastoria was promoted to Sergeant. In addition, Daniel Elliott and Thomas Stephens were sworn in as full-time police Officers. We wish all of these Officers the best of luck in their new positions.

Training and Equipment

Chief James Schultz continues to stress the importance of regular training and education for our officers as a way to provide better service to our residents and to lessen the chance of critical mistakes.

In 2025, all officers completed 24 hours of State mandated CPT training that covered a wide variety of topics such as school threat and safety training, legal updates, and arrest, search and seizure. All officers also completed in-service training which included weapons qualification, self-defense, Taser certification, various online refreshers, less lethal training, and RAIDER training. In addition, our officers attended numerous outside schools for a wide range of training totaling over 4,000 hours.

Activity

As has been mentioned in the past, Assistant Chief Tartaglia was instrumental in the deployment of 10 Flock cameras throughout the city of Willoughby in 2021. Flock cameras are license plate readers that are tied into the National Crime Information center (NCIC), which is a law enforcement database that tracks warrants, stolen vehicles, missing persons, sex offenders, and many other categories. As Flock cameras read license plates, a photo is taken of the vehicle and plate. If the vehicle or owner is entered into NCIC in one of the categories described previously, officers are immediately alerted via MDT's, dispatch and even their cell phones. They are provided with the license plate, a vehicle description, the last known location of the vehicle, and a photograph of the vehicle.

Our Department continues to reach out to local businesses and apartment complexes regarding the potential use of privately owned Flock cameras to deter criminal activity and solve crimes on their property. As a result, Willoughby Eastlake Schools has placed three cameras on their school grounds in the driveways. These cameras are tied into our system, allowing our officers and dispatchers full access to them. Additionally, more flock camera's were added by Lost Nation North Condominiums and UH Lake West Medical Center.

The safety of our schools is always paramount with the Willoughby Police Department. There are 3 SRO's assigned to the schools and Patrol Officers are also encouraged to do regular walk throughs of all the schools. Officer Chuck Popik is the SRO in charge of our schools, South High School SRO is Matt Zarbock, and Willoughby Middle School SRO is Mike Nogalo.

Downtown Willoughby continues to be a popular destination to our residents and visitors. The City held a variety of events throughout the year such as the Rib Burn Off, the Art Show, the Car Cruise In, Last Stop Willoughby, the tree lighting ceremony, and many others. While the vast amount of people coming to the Downtown area are law-abiding citizens just looking to enjoy themselves, there are always random occurrences of disorderly conduct or criminal activity. In order to counter this, our department deployed random officer foot patrols and bike patrols several times each week for the majority of the year. In addition, we have officers who meet with the Downtown Bar Association members regularly throughout the year in order to discuss various problems and come up with workable solutions to continue to make Downtown Willoughby a safe destination of choice.

2025 AWARDS COMMITTEE

The Awards Committee is comprised of several members from the Department. The Chairman is Captain Toby Davis with members Detective Sergeant Rastall, Sergeant Brandon Zinner, Detective Gabriel Sleigh, Patrolman Matthew Jackson and Administrative Assistant Kim Pintar. Any officer may submit a nomination for any award. The Committee reviews the nomination and its supporting evidence and may issue an award or refer the nomination to the Lake County Chiefs of Police Association.

The Lake County Chiefs of Police Association has determined all criteria. Their organization makes the decision of the following awards.

- ♦ **INJURY ON DUTY:** For injury sustained while in direct performance of their duty that results in serious physical harm to the nominee
- ♦ **COMBAT CROSS:** For an individual act of heroism at imminent personal hazard of life in combat with an armed adversary.
- ♦ **MEDAL OF HONOR:** For an outstanding act in the line of duty at imminent personal hazard of life with full knowledge of the risk involved.
- ♦ **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE:** For an outstanding act of Heroism in the line of duty at imminent personal hazard to life that does not meet the criteria of the Medal of Honor.
- ♦ **LIFE-SAVING:** For an act performed in the line of duty that through disregard of personal safety or prompt and alert action results in saving a life or valiant effort to that end.

The Committee can determine the recipients of the following awards:

- ♦ **EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE:** For any act or series of acts or programs that has long-term impact on furthering the interest, goals, and esteem of the department.
- ♦ **DEPARTMENTAL EXCELLENCE:** An investigation, arrest, or series of arrests that by its nature brings credit to the department and the law enforcement profession.
- ♦ **OFFICER OF THE YEAR:** For the person of the year in each department defined by that department.
- ♦ **EDUCATIONAL:** For achievement of a degree in law enforcement or related field. The ribbon is for an Associate Degree. Bachelor's Degree would include one star. Graduate Degree would include two stars.

The Committee met in March 2026, in order to issue awards for the year 2025. Employees will have a letter placed in their personnel files for being nominated as employees of the year in their respective categories

Departmental Excellence Award: Patrolman Shane Rahz

Patrolman Rahz was nominated by Lt. Crowley for a call he handled involving a psychiatric situation involving a large male who was reported to have been shouting and pounding on walls for the last few days. He was suffering from delusions and was causing a family member to be in fear for their safety. Patrolman Rahz spoke with the male who was clearly delusional and aggressive. The male advised Officer's that were on scene that they were going to have to physically force him to go to seek medical treatment. Patrolman Rahz was able to talk the male into cooperating and getting in the police car on his own, having to use no force, and no one getting injured. He displayed a high level of professionalism and represented the Willoughby Police Department well.

Departmental Excellence Awards: Patrolman Nick Chiacchiero and Patrolman Taylor Zana and K-9 Eagle

Patrolman Nick Chiacchiero, Patrolman Taylor Zana, and K-9 Eagle were nominated by Detective Mehm. On May 17, 2025, Patrolman Chiacchiero observed a vehicle leaving the Skylight Inn with a minor equipment violation and initiated a traffic stop, during which he observed suspicious behavior and indicators of criminal activity. Through a thorough roadside investigation, he determined that the passenger had provided false identifying information and was wanted on multiple active warrants. Additionally, Patrolman Chiacchiero's actions, along with Patrolman Zana, led to the discovery and seizure of two loaded handguns that were illegally possessed and not disclosed. Patrolman Chiacchiero's commitment to proactive police work and strong work ethic resulted in the removal of two illegally possessed firearms from the street by two well-documented criminals.

Departmental Excellence Awards: Detective Lieutenant Michael Sevel, Detective David Burrington, and Detective Gabriel Sleigh

Detective Lt. Michael Sevel, Detective David Burrington, and Detective Gabriel Sleigh were nominated by Detective Mehm. On September 15, 2025, the Willoughby Police Department investigated a homicide at the Fox Run Apartments. During the course of the investigation, it was learned that the weapon used to shoot and kill the victim may have been traded for narcotics to a drug dealer in the City of Cleveland. On September 20, 2025, Det. Lt. Sevel, Det. Burrington, and Det. Sleigh traveled to the City of Cleveland and made contact with the suspected drug dealer. After speaking with the individual, Det. Lt. Sevel, Det. Burrington, and Det. Sleigh were informed that the homicide weapon was located in an alley near the residence. The firearm was subsequently recovered and, through further investigation, confirmed to be the weapon used to shoot and kill the victim. Det. Lt. Sevel, Det. Burrington, and Det. Sleigh's efforts in recovering this firearm were a critical component of the overall homicide investigation, and each should be commended for their actions on this date.

Departmental Excellence Awards: Patrolman Dominic DiSanto and Patrolman Laura Licursi

Patrolman Dominic DiSanto and Patrolman Laura Licursi were nominated by Detective Ryan Gregorin. They were nominated for their joint effort involving a series of thefts from vehicles. Several businesses had reported that an unknown suspect had entered numerous vehicles on their property. With only a brief description to go on, Patrolman DiSanto was able to locate the suspect vehicle and Patrolman Licursi stopped it. Through their coordinated efforts, they recovered most of the stolen property and it was returned to the owners. The suspect was convicted of multiple felony offenses.

Patrolman DiSanto and Patrolman Licursi demonstrated exceptional teamwork, investigative aptitude, and dedication in bringing justice to the victims. Their efforts resulted in a successful resolution to multiple cases and left the victims and affected businesses thoroughly impressed with the outcome of the investigation.

Departmental Excellence Award: Dispatcher Michelle Spehar and Dispatcher Bryan Griffith

Dispatcher's Michelle Spehar and Bryan Griffith were nominated by Patrolman Fred Brown. They were nominated for their outstanding performance during a call where Patrolman Brown was attempting to arrest a female who was assaulting another female. A large group surrounded him and the situation quickly escalated. Dispatcher's Spehar and Griffith observed the situation unfolding utilizing the downtown camera's and were monitoring the situation. Other units were on another high priority call and they called for additional units to his location, relaying the situation that was unfolding and the need for immediate assistance for Patrolman Brown. Their awareness and quick actions were critical in preventing further escalation and insuring Officer and public safety.

Departmental Excellence: Patrolman Charles Krejsa

Patrolman Krejsa was nominated by Detective Michael Sevel. He was nominated for his efforts in responding to an aggravated robbery call. Patrolman Krejsa was advised that a vehicle was taken by force by a male with a tire iron from an address in Willoughby. It should be noted that just prior to this, Willowick had been pursuing a vehicle in our city that was last seen in that area. Kirtland PD Officer's found the vehicle that was just stolen traveling s/b on SR 306 in their city and began to pursue the stolen vehicle. Patrolman Krejsa was in the area and able to eventually catch up to the Kirtland PD Officer's. Patrolman Krejsa eventually became the lead vehicle in the pursuit and was giving accurate and detailed updates as to the pursuit. During this time Patrolman Krejsa was calm and in control. Due to the suspects driving behavior, the pursuit was terminated. Moments after he stopped pursuing, the vehicle pulled into a private lot which was relayed by Patrolman Krejsa. He was advised to continue to pursue the vehicle and eventually apprehended the suspect. Due to his training, experience, and overall desire to be exceptional at his job, Patrolman Krejsa was able to maintain emotional and operation control in a very chaotic environment.

Exceptional Service: Patrolman Dominic DiSanto

Patrolman DiSanto was nominated by Detective Sergeant Rastall for his assistance with a Geauga County Sheriff's Office case. This case involved a home invasion during which a child was threatened to be kidnapped and his father was brutally beaten by the suspects. A description of the vehicle was placed out through various platforms of the vehicle asking for assistance. Patrolman DiSanto while off duty and at home, saw the request for assistance and was ultimately able to find the registration for the truck described. This information was provided to Geauga County and they were able to apprehend the suspects within 96 hours. They credit Patrolman DiSanto for his quick gathering of the information on the truck with the reason they were able to apprehend the suspects. This instance shows Patrolman DiSanto's willingness and dedication to his profession and exemplifies the true character of a Willoughby Police Officer.

Exceptional Service: Detective Lieutenant Michael Sevel and Sgt. Matthew Neath

Detective Lieutenant Michael Sevel and Sgt. Matthew Neath were nominated by Dispatcher Frances Zukoski. She nominated them for their leadership and compassion in regards to a critical incident that occurred involving a juvenile. Frances advised that they recognized the needs of their people and made a call to action. They had other members of the Department come in and relieve the employees who were affected by this critical incident. Peer support members came into the station to allow the employees on scene to speak about and debrief the incident. They displayed true leadership, awareness, and compassion for their colleagues.

Exceptional Service: Jonathan Mehm

Detective Mehm was nominated by Detective Gabe Sleigh. Detective Mehm was nominated for going above and beyond with his case investigations. Several examples of his exemplary work were noted. One of these cases was a scam in which an elderly resident was tricked into giving over \$90,000 in cash to a suspect. Detective Mehm worked with the FBI and the victim to apprehend the suspects when they attempted to get more money. As a result of his efforts, 4 Illegal aliens were arrested when they attempted to get more money from the victim. After these arrests were made, Detective Mehm continued to follow up the case and as a result a 5th suspect was also arrested and charged. It should be noted that most cases of this nature go unsolved and do not result in arrests.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Awards Committee,

Captain Toby Davis



2025 Officer of the Year Patrolman Fred Brown

Patrolman Fred Brown was nominated by Lt. Crowley, Sgt. Lastoria, and Detective Jonathan Mehm. It was noted that Patrolman Brown demonstrated exceptional productivity and initiative by effecting over 25 warrant arrests, more than 25 narcotics-related arrests, and five OVI arrests, while also seizing over three illegally possessed firearms and making five arrests for failure to comply. In addition to his impressive proactive criminal enforcement, Patrolman Brown is highly aggressive in traffic enforcement, using proactive stops to deter criminal activity. He handled 2,352 calls for service and more than 1,200 of them were self-initiated. His efforts resulted in 618 arrests or citations. Patrolman Brown has built strong relationships with citizens and local business owners, building trust and cooperation within the community. Patrolman Brown is the definition of proactive policing and is truly dedicated to public safety, making him well deserving of Officer of the Year.

2025 Jason Gresko Memorial Award Patrolman Thomas Rovniak



Patrolman Rovniak was nominated by Lt. Scozzie. He noted that Patrolman Rovniak has been a consistent, committed Officer for the Willoughby Police Department. Patrolman Rovniak is always willing to come out and assist the patrol division and does so with professionalism and a vast amount of experience. Several instances were noted in which Patrolman Rovniak performed at a high level. Some of these instances included when he quickly apprehended a robbery suspect, solved a hit skip by completing a thorough investigation, and when he was able to diffuse a situation between a teenager with psychological issues and her parents. Another example of Patrolman Rovniak's commitment to the Department and City of Willoughby was when his full-time job as a teacher had a calamity day due to the weather conditions. Recognizing that the severe weather conditions would generate a higher call volume for patrol, he contacted Lt. Scozzie and asked if they needed assistance handling calls since he was off of work. As there was a need, he came in and assisted with calls. Lt. Scozzie and the other Officers who have worked with him are very thankful for his consistent and continuous performance.



2025 Civilian Employee of the Year Dispatcher Kiersten Mastrocola

Kiersten Mastrocola was nominated by dispatcher Brian Griffith. It was noted that over the past year Kiersten has been both the heart and the brain of the dispatch room. She is everything you need in a teammate and partner. Brian stated Kiersten is consistently 5 steps ahead on all calls and all the work that needs to be done in dispatch. Whenever he would struggle to find some information for officers, or was trying to piece together everything that was happening in the room, he could rely on Kiersten to have already figured all of it out five minutes before he even started looking. She is exceptionally resourceful, proficient, and reliable.

Detective Bureau

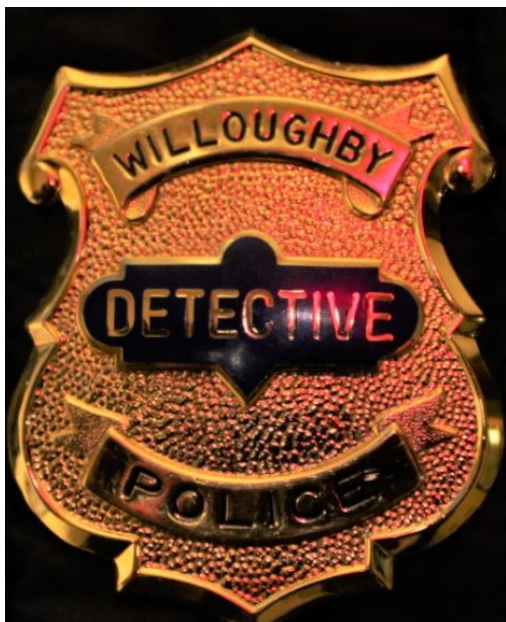
2025 Detective Bureau Staffing

The Detective Bureau positions are appointed within the Department. Officers that are selected to work in the Detective Bureau, whether as supervisors, detectives, or administrative assistant, are based on the person's investigative skills, personal strengths, job knowledge, and training. The supervisors and detectives work as a team on investigations, case management, and training.

The Detective Bureau staff for 2025 was comprised of 1 Detective Lieutenant, 1 Detective Sergeant, 4 Detectives, 1 Detective Bureau Secretary and 3 retired Part-Time Officers. The year 2025 brought a lot of movement within our area due to promotions and re-assignments. The Detective Bureau was also assisted by a few officers who were assigned to light duty due to injuries and pregnancy. During the year 2025, the following personnel were assigned to the Detective Bureau:

Detective Lieutenant John Begovic (Retired 7/31/2025)
Detective Lieutenant Michael Sevel
Detective Sergeant Kevin Rastall
Detective David Burrington
Detective Gabriel Sleigh
Detective John Mehm
Detective Dan Lastoria (promoted to Sergeant)
Detective Ryan Gregorin
Detective Secretary Michelle Butchcock

Special Officer Charles Deutsch
Special Officer Derrick Stewart
Special Officer George Lessick



SECONDARY ASSIGNMENTS

Detective Lieutenant John Begovic
Evidence/Property Room Management
Evidence Technician

Detective Lieutenant Michael Sevel
Evidence/Property Room Management
Western Lake County Emergency Response
Evidence Technician

Detective Sergeant Kevin Rastall
Evidence/Property Room Management
Western Lake County Emergency Response
Evidence Technician
Accident Investigator (within the department and part of the Lake County Team)

Detective David Burrington
Burglary/B&E Investigator
Evidence Technician
VICE/Narcotics Investigator
Computerized Voice Stress Analyzer

Detective Gabriel Sleigh
Juvenile and Sex Crimes Investigator
Burglary/B&E Investigator
VICE/Narcotics Investigator
Evidence Technician
Computerized Voice Stress Analyzer

Detective Daniel Lastoria
Juvenile and Sex Crimes Investigator
Burglary/B&E Investigator
VICE/Narcotics Investigator
Financial Crimes Investigator
Evidence Technician
U.S Marshal's Task Force
Western Lake County Emergency Response

Detective Jon Mehm
Juvenile and Sex Crimes Investigator
Burglary/B&E Investigator
VICE/Narcotics Investigator
Financial Crimes Investigator
Evidence Technician
Drone Technician

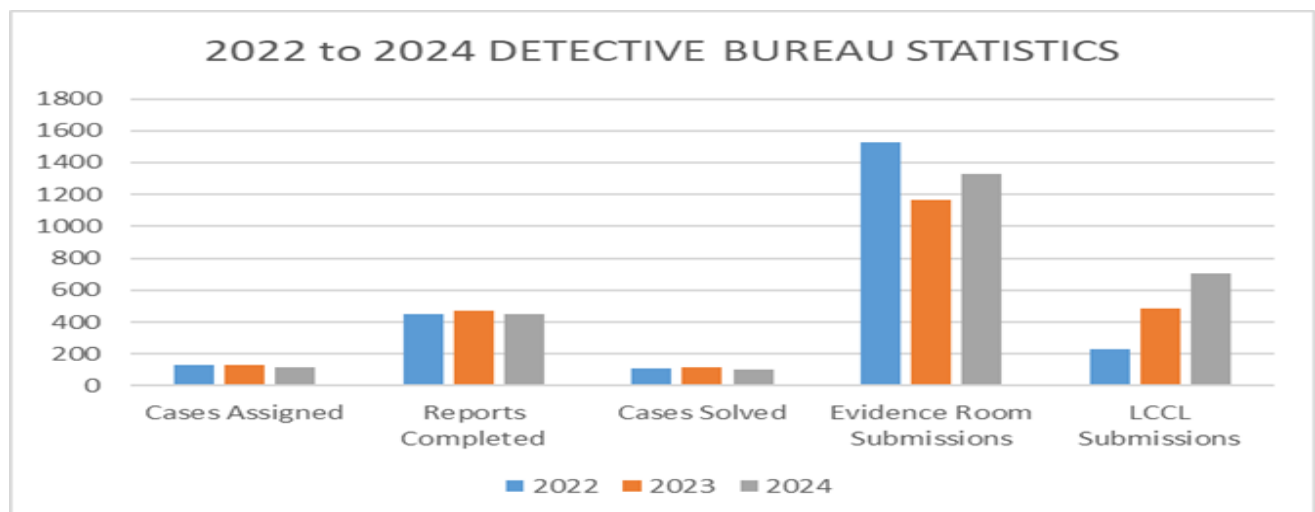
Detective Ryan Gregorin
Juvenile and Sex Crimes Investigator
Burglary/B&E Investigator
VICE/Narcotics Investigator
Financial Crimes Investigator
Evidence Technician
Drone Technician

Pre-Employment Investigations//Computerized Voice Stress Analyzer Testing

The Detective Bureau has been responsible for conducting pre-employment investigations on all candidates for hire within the Willoughby Police Department. Background information is developed on each new candidate. Background investigations consist of contacting previous employers concerning the candidate's work history, financial history and credit checks of the candidate, criminal history checks, high school and secondary education, reference and neighborhood interviews, and personal interviews. Detectives also conduct a computerized voice stress analyzer test on each candidate to ensure the authenticity of their application.

Detectives were assigned sixteen (16) pre-employment investigations for full-time Police Officer candidates, five (5) Dispatcher candidates and five (5) Clerical Candidates. The Department eventually hired three (3) new officers in 2025, three (3) part-time dispatchers and one full-time clerk.

There are many useful resources to assist a detective in determining the truthfulness of a suspect, victim, or candidate for hire. One of those tools available to our detectives is the Computerized Voice Stress Analyzer (CVSA). Though the results cannot be used as evidence in the prosecution of a crime, the CVSA test can assist a detective in determining if a subject is being truthful about his/her statements or it can assist in determining if the subject is being deceitful.



Social Media

The Willoughby Police Department established its own Facebook and Twitter accounts in 2011. The Department's goal with social media was to provide the residence with daily information on what is occurring in the City of Willoughby and surrounding areas along with helping to provide a safe environment in which residents and non-residents can live and work. The Department's social media accounts have been beneficial in helping solve crimes as well as continuing to provide effective and efficient police service consistent with the community's needs and concerns.

The belief of the Willoughby Police Department is that through a coordinated police-community effort public order and safety can be achieved and sustained; therefore, we will actively encourage community support in a cooperative effort to achieve our mission.

Detective Bureau Cases 2025

Major Investigations

Throughout 2025, the Detective Bureau investigated a variety of serious incidents, including fatal overdoses, swatting incidents, homicides, and other major crimes. These cases involved extensive follow-up, coordination with regional task forces, forensic analysis, and collaboration with the Lake County Prosecutor's Office.

25-19404 – Death investigation

On Saturday, June 6, 2025, Willoughby Police and Willoughby Fire responded to an address on Strawberry Lane for a report of an infant stuck in a window and unresponsive. Upon arrival a citizen who stopped to assist was performing CPR on the 3-year-old female. It was determined through the investigation that the mother was cutting the grass when she saw her daughter in the backseat and thought she was just playing in the car. The child eventually became trapped in the window.

After arriving at UH Lake West the 3-year-old was transported by helicopter to UH Rainbows Babies and Children's Hospital. The 3-year-old later passed away from her injuries.

Once the investigation was completed, it was forwarded to the Lake County Prosecutor's Office for review of possible criminal charges.

25-27131 – Fatal Drug Overdose

On August 5, 2025, Willoughby Police and Fire were called to a residence related to an unresponsive female. The caller advised his girlfriend was not breathing.

Willoughby officers arrived on scene and began rendering aid until the Fire department arrived. The female victim was transported to UH Lake West where it was learned she was deceased.

The residence had a history of the male and his girlfriend using drugs and this was believed to have been a fatal drug overdose. The victim was found to have a pill bottle on her. Inside the pill bottle was a whiteish colored rock that was believed to be crack cocaine, methamphetamine or some type of fentanyl mixture.

The boyfriend was questioned about potential drug abuse with regards to his girlfriend. He advised she was a drug addict, but she was on suboxone.

Eventually, an agreement was made with a confidential informant (CI) to make a purchase from the dealer that provided the deceased female drugs earlier in that day. An operation to arrest the dealer was conducted the day after the fatal OD. Lake County Narcotics assisted with the operation.

The case is at the Lake County Prosecutors Office for charges on the male.

25-30552 – Swatting incident

On September 4, 2025, Willoughby Dispatch received a call from a male stating he had just shot his girlfriend in the head at Willo Park Apartments, 35400 Euclid Avenue. Dispatch advised they still had the male on the line and he provided more information; A perimeter was set up around the complex and the Western Lake County Emergency Response Team (ERT) was called out to assist. After four hours of a systematic search of the property, there was no evidence located that the homicide occurred, and it was believed this had been a "swatting" call.

An investigation into the swatting call was initiated by the Willoughby detective bureau. A suspect was quickly developed. After identification of the suspect in this incident, it was learned that the suspect was on both State of Ohio Post Release Control (parole) and U.S. Federal Probation.

The suspect was charged with Making a False Report (F4), Disrupting Public Service (F4), Inducing a Panic (M1), Tampering with Evidence (F3), Possession of Cocaine (F4) and Cocaine-Sell (F4).

The suspect pled guilty to Making False Alarms and Possession of Cocaine and was sentenced to 30 months jail time to be served at the Lorain Correctional Institution in Grafton, Ohio. He was ordered to pay the Willoughby Police, Willoughby Fire, Willoughby Hills Police and Willowick Police departments for their economic loss totaling \$9,184.47.

25-32011 – Homicide

On September 15, 2025, Willoughby Dispatch received multiple 911 calls in the area of 1337 Fox Run Drive, with little information. Dispatch finally advised they had a male shot by an unknown person, and they were unsure per the callers if the shooter was still on scene or if they had fled. Upon arriving on scene a silver Chevy SUV was stopped in the middle of the roadway facing eastbound in front of 1337 Fox Run Drive.

The male victim in this case had obvious serious head injuries and was transported from the scene. The male victim later died. A 15-year-old male became a person of interest.

Later in the evening, the 15-year-old was taken into custody and transported to the Lake County Juvenile Detention Center where he was charged with Aggravated Robbery and Aggravated Murder.

Through the investigation four adults and two juveniles were charged. All cases are currently still in the Lake County Court of Common Pleas.

25-26148 – Aggravated robbery

On July 29, 2025, the Willoughby Police Department received a call from a victim reporting an aggravated robbery. The victim stated he had just been robbed at gunpoint at the Willo Park Apartments on Euclid Avenue in the City of Willoughby.

The victim provided a description of the suspect vehicle to responding officers. Using that information, officers utilized Flock Safety License Plate Reader (LPR) technology to identify a registration associated with the suspect vehicle. The vehicle information and description were immediately broadcast to surrounding law enforcement agencies.

Shortly thereafter, the Bedford Police Department located the suspect vehicle and attempted a traffic stop. The vehicle failed to comply, and a pursuit ensued. The pursuit ended after Bedford Police conducted a PIT maneuver. Four occupants fled from the vehicle following the stop. Two suspects were apprehended by Bedford Police at the scene.

The Willoughby Police Department Detective Bureau continued the investigation and later identified two additional suspects who had been inside the vehicle. During the investigation, detectives obtained and executed a search warrant at a residence on Morning Star Avenue in the City of Maple Heights. Just prior to service of the search warrant, a vehicle leaving the residence was stopped, and an arrest warrant was served on a third suspect.

During execution of the search warrant, several firearms were seized. One of the firearms, a Smith & Wesson M&P-15 rifle, was determined to be stolen out of East Cleveland. With assistance from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), investigators later determined that the rifle had been linked to five separate incidents throughout the greater Cleveland area.

The three charged suspects were sentenced to a combined total of over 25 year in prison.

25-24176- Gross sexual imposition, Pandering Sexually Oriented Matter

On July 13, 2025, a female entered the lobby of the Willoughby Police Department to report a sex offense involving her 12-year-old son. She informed the responding officer that her son had been inappropriately touched by an adult two days prior, on July 11, 2025.

Willoughby Police Detectives immediately began an investigation. On July 14, 2025, a 22-year-old male was arrested by the Willoughby Police Department and charged with Gross Sexual Imposition (ORC 2907.05), a felony of the third degree. At the time of his arrest, his cellphone was seized, and a search warrant was obtained for forensic analysis.

During the examination of the device, investigators located several prohibited images of juveniles. The male was subsequently charged with additional offenses, including Pandering Sexually Oriented Matter Involving a Minor (ORC 2907.322) – Felony of the third degree and Illegal Use of a Minor in Nudity-Oriented Material (ORC 2907.323) – Felony of the fourth degree.

On November 13, 2025, The male was sentenced him to ten (10) years in prison, along with a mandatory five-year period of post-release control.

ICAC Investigations

The Detective Bureau handled multiple Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) investigations during 2025 after receiving cyber tips from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). These cases involved search warrants, digital evidence seizure, forensic analysis through the ICAC Task Force, and prosecutorial review. All cases were handled in accordance with established protocols and in coordination with state and federal partners.

Community Engagement and Social Media

The Department continued to utilize social media platforms to share timely information with the community, assist in investigations, release case information to the media and promote public safety. These platforms remain an effective tool for community engagement and crime-solving assistance, as well as supporting our goal of being transparent with the community we serve.

Conclusion

Despite staffing transitions and an increased workload involving complex investigations, the Detective Bureau remained effective, adaptable, and professional throughout 2025. The Bureau's efforts supported the Department's mission of public safety, accountability, and community trust through thorough investigations and strong interagency cooperation.

Selective Enforcement Division

Currently not funded.

Special Police Division

2025

The Specials Division supports the road Patrol Division providing additional manpower for patrol of the city streets, traffic control and security for parades and the many downtown community events Willoughby is known for throughout the year. This Division started 2025 with 18 active officers and ended the year with 17. They are assigned to 4 Squads of fulltime patrol officers. Each Squad is assigned a Lieutenant and a Sergeant and all are under the command of the Patrol Captain

Programs supported by this Division are the House Check Program and the Vehicle Inspection Programs, which are ongoing and weekly throughout the year. The Willoughby community events and programs typically supported are the YMCA Sk Run, Easter Egg Hunt, Opening Day Baseball, Rib Burn Off, Memorial Day Parade, Classic Car Cruise, Fourth of July Fireworks, Arts Fest, Last Stop Willoughby Parade and event, Halloween Trick or Treat, and the Holiday Tree Lighting with Santa to close off the year.

The Specials Division: provides School Resource Officer support to two schools in the city, Willoughby South High, and Willoughby Middle School, and also assist with other Schools in the Willoughby/Eastlake system. Officers provide high visibility, security and an approachable presence that opens to better communication between the students, teachers, and staff. These positions have become increasingly important to ensure the safety of students, staff and visitors.

The Willoughby Cadet program is also supported by the Specials Division. Several of our officers help supervise the post. The post has boys and girls in its program which is oriented towards future law enforcement careers. The Cadets typically participate in supervised offsite events and competitions, patrol ride-alongs, camping, assisting with community events, and training seminars. Many past Cadets have gone on to careers with Willoughby Police Department, the Lake County Sheriff's Office, the Ohio Highway patrol, and numerous other police agencies.

The Special Division also supports the Willoughby Police jail facility, with a court officer who works between the jail and Willoughby Municipal Court providing security in court, transporting prisoners, booking, fingerprinting and other jail needs.

During 2025 Willoughby Police Special Officers worked a total of 7110.50 hours for the City, and several hundred hours providing private security for outside jobs, plus additional hours donated for civic events.

Squad 1

Patrolman Jerry Spradlin
Patrolman Chuck Popik
Patrolman Derrick Stewart*

Squad 2

Patrolman Tom Sherwood
Patrolman Phil Smith*
Patrolman Tom Rovniak
Patrolman Jack Beckwith*
Patrolman Matt Zarbock

Squad 3

Patrolman Kurt Keeper
Patrolman James Myers
Patrolman Chuck Deutsch*
Patrolman Michael Nogalo

Squad 4

Patrolman Rick Myers
Patrolman Steve Jevnikar
Patrolman Tom Dearden
Patrolman Joe Kulnane
Patrolman George Lessick*

*Retired Full-Time WPD Officers

2025 K-9 Patrol Zaro

Zaro was born on January 23rd, 2021. He is a German Shepherd from Slovakia. Zaro and his handler, Patrolman Jackson Hyams, trained together at Shallow Creek Kennels in the summer of 2022, and started serving the city of Willoughby on August 1st, 2022.



Training

K-9 Zaro and Patrolman Hyams work to provide the highest level of service by training frequently. The two train on a biweekly basis with K-9 teams from Eastlake, Mentor, Perry Village, Wickliffe, Willowick, and the Lake County Sheriff's Office. In addition to this biweekly training, K-9 Zaro and Ptl. Hyams find time to train every day during their shift and while off duty to continue to grow as a team. In September of 2025, K-9 Zaro and Patrolman Hyams attended the National Association of Professional Canine Handler's (NAPCH) seminar in Alpena, Michigan. This seminar was attended by 360 canine teams from across the United States and Canada, and allowed for exposure to new ideas and different approaches to training.



Service

K-9 Zaro is a dual-purpose patrol dog, and assists officers with narcotics detection, area searches, article searches, building searches, tracking, and criminal apprehension. Zaro had multiple deployments throughout the year, and assisted with arrests in Willoughby, as well as surrounding cities

In addition to these responsibilities at work, K-9 Zaro and Patrolman Hyams enjoy engaging with the community. The team has been present at city events, and has conducted K-9 demonstrations for the public. K-9 Zaro and Patrolman Hyams also conduct demonstrations for the Willoughby-Eastlake School district D.A.R.E. classes.



Special Thanks

K-9 Zaro and Patrolman Hyams would like to thank the Willoughby Fraternal Order of Eagles, the Willoughby Elks Lodge, Jeffrey Mitchell, and all of those who have generously assisted with the funding to make Zaro a possibility. Thank you to Dr. Joseph Doles and the staff at the Pet Hospital of Willoughby for their care of Zaro. Thank you to Candice Zinner, Seamus Coyne, Dr. Joseph Doles, and David Bartulovic of the Willoughby Police K-9 Foundation for their support. Thank you to Brady's K9 Fund for providing Zaro with a ballistic vest. Lastly, thank you to Eric Stanbro of the VanEss K9 Academy and Travis Lloyd of American K9 Dynamics for donating their time and resources to assist with training.



2025 K-9 Bory/Eagle

Overview

K-9 Eagle, a German Shepherd imported from Slovakia, was born on January 7, 2023. He was paired with his handler, Patrolman Taylor Zana, in the winter of 2024. The team successfully completed their initial training at Shallow Creek Kennels and officially began service with the City of Willoughby Police Department on January 24, 2025.



Training and Professional Development

K-9 Eagle and Patrolman Zana remain committed to maintaining a high standard of operational readiness through continuous training. The team participates in biweekly joint training sessions alongside K-9 units from neighboring agencies, including Eastlake, Mentor, Perry Village, Wickliffe, Willowick, and the Lake County Sheriff's Office.

In addition to scheduled training, daily reinforcement exercises are conducted during on-duty shifts as well as during off-duty hours. To further enhance operational capabilities, the team has attended specialized private training sessions at Ridgeside K9 in Ashtabula. These sessions provide exposure to diverse and evolving deployment scenarios, ensuring K-9 Eagle remains adaptable and effective in the field.

Operational Service



K-9 Eagle serves as a dual-purpose patrol canine, supporting law enforcement operations in the following areas:

- Narcotics detection
- Area and article searches
- Building searches
- Tracking
- Criminal apprehension

Throughout the reporting period, K-9 Eagle was deployed on multiple narcotics-related calls for service. These deployments contributed to several arrests within the City of Willoughby as well as in surrounding jurisdictions, demonstrating the team's regional value and effectiveness.

Community Engagement

Beyond enforcement duties, K-9 Eagle and Patrolman Zana actively engage with the community. The team participates in local events and provides educational demonstrations for the Willoughby-Eastlake School District's D.A.R.E. program. These efforts strengthen community relations and promote public awareness of the K-9 unit's role in public safety.

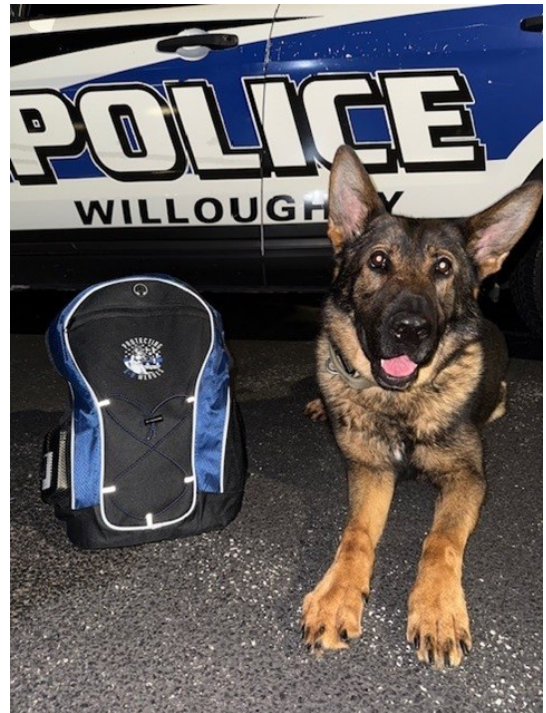
Acknowledgments

The continued success of the K-9 program is made possible through the support of community organizations and dedicated individuals. Special recognition is extended to:

- The Willoughby Fraternal Order of Eagles for their generous financial contributions.

Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Joseph Doles and the staff of the Pet Hospital of Willoughby for their ongoing veterinary care and support.

The Willoughby Police K-9 Foundation, including Candice Zinner, Seamus Coyne, Dr. Joseph Doles, and David Bartulovic, is gratefully acknowledged for its continued advocacy and assistance.



Additional thanks are extended to Brady's K9 Fund for providing K-9 Eagle with a ballistic vest, Protecting K-9 Heros for his med kit, and to Eric Stanbro of VanEss K9 Academy and Travis Lloyd of Ridgeside K9 Ashtabula for their contributions of time, expertise, and training resources.

Motorcycle Patrol

In 2025, the Willoughby Police Department Motorcycle Unit consisted of two Motor Officers and two Police Motorcycles. Sergeant Brad Lampela and Officer Andrew D'Eusanio rode city owned, specially equipped, Harley Davidson Police Edition Road King Motorcycles. Officer D'Eusanio worked 1 to 2 days per week throughout the riding season and also became a Motor Officer Instructor, which will allow him to instruct and certify future Willoughby Police Motor Officers. Sergeant Lampela worked when time allowed on shift. The motorcycles are either taken home or stored at the Willoughby Police Department after each shift is completed, and the Motor Officers are required to perform routine



called in through the communications center. Additionally, complaints were noted through the city website address and the E-Gov function. In addition to the traffic complaints, the Motor Officers also handled many TTA's (Target Traffic Area). Numerous citations were issued while handling these complaints.

As always, the Motor Officers escorted numerous parades and funerals throughout Northeast Ohio. The events the Motor Officers attended in 2025 included the Louie Run – Eastlake, the Willoughby Memorial Day Parade, the Willoughby Touch a Truck Event, the Lake County Yacht Club Children's Parade, National Night Out - Willoughby, and the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association Event at the Willoughby VFW. Willoughby Motor Officers also assisted with four funeral escorts which included that of Bratenahl PD Officer Nagy, Berea PD Sgt. Esposito, Cleveland PD Recruit Smith, and Lorain PD Ofc. Wagner.



care and maintenance.

Although Motor Officers can be assigned a zone and handle routine calls for service, the Motor Officers are primarily used in handling traffic complaints in residential neighborhoods throughout the city. These traffic complaints were identified mostly via residents, passing motorists, or were



Bicycle Patrol

The Willoughby Police Bicycle Patrol consists of many of our full-time and several part-time officers of varying ranks within the Department. Each of the bike patrol officers successfully completes 32-40 hours of specialized training in urban mountain bike patrol prior to joining the unit. The officer in charge of the Bike Patrol Unit is Captain Toby Davis.

Our new police bicycle was put into service at the beginning of the 2025 bike season. Our fleet of 6 bikes is maintained by Patrolman Victoria Godfrey. Patrolman Victoria Godfrey will be attending the instructor level bicycle course. She is replacing Patrolman Fedor who retired and will be tasked with the training of all our bike officers.

Our police bicycle patrol is an extremely useful and effective form of law enforcement. Bikes are economical and practical regardless of our size or type of terrain that we patrol. An officer who rides a bicycle has unique abilities to see crime, stop crime, and/or arrest offenders in ways that are often more difficult in a patrol car.

Mobility is a primary benefit of bike patrol. A patrolling officer can travel through crowds, yards, parks, over sidewalks, pathways, into narrow passageways and easily jump curbs. During festivals and special events, a bicycle patrol is an excellent way to enforce crowd control. The officer can quickly be mobilized from anywhere in the crowd, and is then able to cover much more distance than if he or she were on foot. Additionally, in crowded situations, there is less danger or injury to pedestrians or other motorists from a bicycle if contact should occur.



Maneuverability gives an officer the capability to ride up to individuals in a personal, non-threatening manner. The size and appearance of a patrol car are not as 'friendly' as a police bike. A bike-riding officer can become a powerful influence in developing positive relationships with people who live and work in the community he patrols. The bicycle can be especially effective in building trust with children who may be interested in it, and its equipment. This trust and accessibility can encourage citizens to be less apprehensive about approaching law enforcement officers in times of need, or with information and tips.

2025

The Bicycle Patrol Unit provided services for the following City events :

- ◆ Neighborhood Patrol
- ◆ Downtown Willoughby Patrol
- ◆ Downtown 5K Run
- ◆ Classic Car Cruise-In
- ◆ Fourth of July Fireworks
- ◆ ArtsFest
- ◆ Oktoberfest
- ◆ Parks Patrol
- ◆ Halloween Patrol

Accident Investigations

2025

The Willoughby Police Department's Traffic Crash Investigation Unit (CIU) is responsible for investigating traffic crashes when it involves a fatality, potential life-threatening injuries, unusual circumstances, and any other time the Officer in Charge of the shift determines a crash may need expert investigation. The CIU often assists patrol officers with crash investigations throughout the year.

Officers assigned to the Traffic Crash Investigation Unit are Crash Reconstructionist, Patrolman Dominic DiSanto. The team's technical crash investigator is Detective Sergeant Kevin Rastall.

In 2025, the Willoughby Police Department responded to 911 traffic crashes resulting in over 664 hours of investigation time. The number of crashes were a slight decrease from 928 crashes in 2024. Of the 911 traffic crashes, 130 resulted in injuries which is a 12% decrease from the previous year. The Department had one fatal crash. The Willoughby Police Department also investigated eight crashes involving bicycles and eight crashes involving pedestrians. Of the 911 crashes, 27 were alcohol or drug related which was an increase from the previous year, while 20 involved distracted driving which was a decrease.

The Willoughby Police Department's Traffic Crash Investigation Unit (CIU) had one investigation in 2025. The following is a summary of the Crash Investigation Unit's 2025 investigation:

25-25943 – Fatal Crash – 4137 Erie St.

On July 28, 2025, Willoughby Police Officers responded to the area of 4137 Erie Street for a report of an unconscious male lying in the roadway, possibly after being struck by a vehicle.

Upon arrival, officers determined that a white Ryder box truck had struck a red Dodge boom truck parked on the east side of the roadway. The impact pushed the Dodge boom truck forward into a blue Kia hatchback that was parked in front of it. The injured male was found lying unconscious in the street against a Subaru parked on the west side of the roadway, directly across from the two trucks.

The male was transported to a local hospital, where he later succumbed to his injuries. The Lake County Crash Reconstruction Unit responded to assist with the investigation.

The investigation, which included witness statements and review of multiple video surveillance systems, revealed that the Dodge boom truck was parked along the east curb with the boom knuckle protruding into the roadway. A male worker was positioned inside the basket at the end of the boom arm, elevated over the sidewalk area on the east side of the street, performing signage work for a nearby business.

2025 Crash Investigation Unit

Crash Reconstructionist

Det. Sgt. Kevin Rastall

Technical Crash Investigators

Patrolman Dominic Disanto

As the Ryder box truck traveled northbound, it struck the protruding boom knuckle with the upper passenger-side corner of its cargo box. The collision caused the boom to rotate violently, ejecting the male worker from the basket. He was thrown across the roadway and struck the parked Subaru.

Investigators determined there was no signage in place to warn motorists that the boom extended into the roadway, and one of the two warning strobe lights on the boom knuckle appeared to be nonfunctional. Additionally, the worker's safety equipment was not properly secured at the time of the incident. The Ryder box truck was traveling within the posted speed limit and remained within its lane prior to the collision.

Following the investigation, no charges were filed.

Lake Regional Crash Reconstruction Unit

The Willoughby Police Department has partnered with the Lake Regional Crash Reconstruction Unit to assist in crash scene documentation and imaging of event data recorders. In turn, a Reconstructionist and a Technical Crash Investigator have been assigned to the Unit to assist other agencies in their investigation.

The two investigators assisted the Lake Regional Crash Reconstruction Unit with 8 crash investigation callouts in 2025.

CARFAX

Since 2020, the Willoughby Police Department partnered with CARFAX for Police. Carfax allows Officers, Dispatchers and Clerks unlimited investigative access to CARFAX Vehicle History Reports, Partial License Plate Search and VIN Alert to assist in investigations.

Lake County Public Safety UAS

The Willoughby Police Department has begun to utilize the Lake County Public Safety UAS team to assist in crash scenes. This allows investigators an additional tool to more accurately and efficiently investigate crash scenes.

Western Lake County Emergency Response Team 2025



The Western Lake County Emergency Response Team is a multi-jurisdictional volunteer team comprised of specially trained full-time police officers from the cities of Eastlake, Kirtland, Waite Hill, Wickliffe, Willoughby, Willoughby Hills, and Willowick. Officers appointed to the tactical team must annually complete a rigorous physical agility test, firearms proficiency test, as well as a scenario-based test. Tactical team members/Crisis Negotiation team members are on call and are required to respond to a critical incident 24 hours a day. They must be prepared to respond immediately to a call for team activation. The team is called upon by the seven member cities to respond to critical incidents such as hostage situations, barricaded subjects, searching for at large suspects, tactical assists with neighboring agencies, high risk arrest and search warrant service. The combined population of the member municipalities is approximately 85,000 residents within a 67 square mile area of operation.

TACTICAL TEAM

There are five members of the Willoughby Police Department currently assigned to the Western Lake County ERT team. Capt. Toby Davis, Det. Lt. Mike Sevel, Lt. Kevin Crowley, Sgt. Daniel Lastoria, and Det. Kevin Rastall.

The ERT team conducted a total of 8 operations in 2025. In addition, the ERT team conducted 8 hours of training per month and the sniper element of the team, which includes Detective Lieutenant Sevel and Detective Sergeant Rastall, completed an additional 8 hours of training per month. Training days comprised of all facets of ERT operations. The ERT team training consists of: room clearing procedures, rapid deployment drills, active shooter drills, pistol and rifle shooting drills and training, chemical munitions training, and numerous tactical procedures. Team members also attend numerous training sessions each year including hostage rescue, tactical procedures, as well as the Ohio Tactical Officers Association Conference in Sandusky, Ohio.

The entire ERT team took part in a 3- day training session taught by NORSE Tactical instructors at their training center in the Louisville, Kentucky area. Techniques learned during this training were room clearing techniques, hallway clearances, building searches, and door breaching. The team also completed a day of firearms training focusing on the rifle and pistol. NORSE Tactical also came to Western Lake County for five other training days to conduct training sessions as part of an ongoing sustainment and continuing education.

TEAM ACTIVATIONS



Eastlake PD- Barricaded Subject

On Monday, January 20, 2025, Eastlake PD requested assistance from the Western Lake County Response Team- SWAT and Negotiators with a barricaded, suicidal male at 1435 E 357th St. The male eventually exited the building without incident. Members of Willoughby Police Department present were Det. Sgt. Rastall

Eastlake PD- Search Warrant

On Wednesday, February 12, 2025, Eastlake PD requested assistance from the Western Lake County Response Team with the execution of a search warrant at 33605 Morris Ave. The search warrant was in relation to an Internet Crimes Against Children case involving the resident. The residence and occupant were secured without incident and the residence was turned over to Eastlake PD. Members of Willoughby Police Department present were Captain Davis, Lt. Sevel, Lt. Crowley, Det. Lastoria and Det. Sgt. Rastall.

Eastlake PD- Search Warrant

On Thursday, March 6, 2025, members of the Western Lake County Emergency Response Team assisted the Eastlake Police Department in securing the residence at 34983 Stevens Blvd for a search warrant. The search warrant was in relation to a Child Sexual Abuse Material investigation. The residence was secured without incident and turned over to Eastlake PD. Willoughby Police Department present were Lt. Sevel and Lt. Crowley

Army Criminal Investigation Division- Search Warrant

On Wednesday, April 23rd, 2025, Army Criminal Investigation Division (CID)- Special Investigations Field Office requested the assistance of the Western Lake County Emergency Response Team in serving a search warrant at a residence in Willowick for an active investigation. The warrant was served without incident and the scene was turned over to the custody of Army CID officers. Willoughby ERT members present were Lt. Sevel and Lt. Crowley.

Willoughby PD- “Swatting” Incident

On Thursday, September 4, 2025, Willoughby Dispatch received a 911 transfer from Lake County Central Communications. The male stated he had just shot his girlfriend in the head at Willo Park Apartments (35400 Euclid Ave). The Western Lake County Emergency Response Team (WLCERT) was activated. Over nearly 4 hours, WLCERT searched all 9 buildings on Willo Park and Cedarwood Estates Property. Several apartments were also cleared. After it was determined the original claim made by the caller appeared to be fake, the WLCERT was released from the scene, and the investigation was turned over to the Willoughby Police Detective Bureau. Willoughby PD members present were Captain Davis, Det. Lt. Sevel, Lt. Crowley, Sgt. Lastoria and Det. Sgt. Rastall.

Willoughby PD- Arrest and Search Warrant

On Monday, September 9, 2025, the Western Lake County Emergency Response Team and Willoughby PD Detectives executed an arrest and search warrant at Willo Park Apartments 35400 Euclid Avenue, Apartment E204. After an investigation it was determined that Antonio Woods, the resident of E204, was the person responsible for making the “swatting” call the previous week. Members of the Willoughby Police Department who were present consisted of Capt. Davis, Det. Lt. Sevel, Sgt. Lastoria, and Det. Sgt. Rastall. Woods was charged with multiple felonies and later sentenced to 30 months in prison.

Willoughby PD- Search Warrant

On Wednesday, September 17, 2025, the Western Lake County Emergency Response Team assisted Willoughby Police Department with serving a search warrant at 1207 Lost Nation Rd. Apt 105 in connection to a murder investigation that occurred two days prior. The residence was secured without an issue. Members of the Willoughby Police Department who were present consisted of Capt. Davis, Det. Lt. Sevel, Lt. Crowley, Sgt. Lastoria and Det. Sgt. Rastall.

Willoughby PD- Hostage Barricade

On 11/24/2025 at approximately 1230hrs, Willoughby dispatch received an emergency radio broadcast from Lake County Central Communications. They advised there was a Lake County Sheriff's Deputy at 2884 Lost Nation Rd who needed assistance. The Deputy was conducting a welfare check on a party suspected of committing domestic violence earlier that day who made suicidal comments. While inside the residence he encountered the suspect hiding in a closet with a gun to her head. Members of the Willoughby Police Department responded to assist the Deputy. The Western Lake County Emergency Response Team SWAT and negotiators were eventually activated. The suspect refused to enter the closet and ultimately committed suicide. Members of the Willoughby Police Department who were present consisted of Capt. Davis, Det. Lt. Sevel, Lt. Crowley, and Det. Sgt. Rastall.

Fingerprint Lab

EVIDENCE TECHNICIANS

Willoughby Patrol Officers and Detectives are trained in the processing and collection of forensic evidence. Officers receive either local training or by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy. Depending on the case, officers first obtain digital images of the scene prior to any processing. The most common form is the processing of latent prints using fingerprint powder and a brush. Most recently, a great emphasis has been placed on the collection of possible Touch DNA. Officers are trained to use sterile water along with a sterile swab and swab areas that appeared to have been touched. Officers also collect DNA standards from victims/complainants for either elimination or identification. It should be noted that when a felony arrest is made, officers are required to obtain a DNA standard from the arrested party. These DNA standards are then forwarded to the Ohio BCI (Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation) Laboratory. The subjects DNA profile is then entered into the CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) Database.

Officers also process crime scenes for prymark impressions, blood stain collection and shoe impressions.

Officers carefully package all evidence. The evidence is then returned to the Willoughby Police Department and subsequently entered into evidence. The evidence will either be stored at the Willoughby Police Department evidence room and/or forwarded to the Lake County Crime Lab for analysis.

Willoughby Police Department patrol units contain both Fingerprint and Touch DNA kits. Officers are required to process any scene or item that may contain possible forensic evidence for suspect identification and prosecution.

Over the past few years, a growing number of cases are being cleared at the Willoughby Police Department due to the advancements of DNA and fingerprint databases.

Honor Guard



2025 Members

Assistant Chief Tartaglia
Lieutenant Mike Sevel
Lieutenant Brad Lampela
Sergeant Matthew Neath
Sergeant Brandon Zinner
Patrolman Matthew Jackson
Patrolman Daniel Lastoria
Patrolman William Bernakis
Patrolman Kyle Bucher

The Willoughby Police Department Honor guard was formed in 1994 and at its inception consisted of nine officers. Today we have 9 officers who donate their time to participate in parades, funerals and other civic events.

The Honor Guard provides customary full military-style ceremonial honors for Line-of-Duty deaths, retired officers, city officials and other employees. Since the inception of the Honor Guard, we have performed ceremonial honors for several police officers, retired officers and city officials.

The Honor Guard provided ceremonial honors for Memorial Day, September 11th services, and several funerals in 2025.

Jail Facilities

For the year 2025, the Willoughby Police Department City Jail housed 482 persons compared to 427 in 2024. 356 of those housed in the Willoughby City jail were males and 126 were females. Jail numbers have increased slightly over last year. Some of the 482 arrested may have been cited and quickly released or sent directly to Lake County Jail.

Inmates can be housed in the Willoughby City Jail for up to 12 days, but are generally released after posting bond or being arraigned in the Willoughby Municipal Court. Most prisoners arrested for misdemeanor offenses are released on a personal bond per the Willoughby Municipal Courts bond schedule. Many felony arrests are transported to the Lake County Jail after booking.

The day-to-day operations are handled by Patrolman Jason Pitt, who is the Willoughby Police Department's Court Officer. The following are only a few of Patrolman Pitt's responsibilities:

- Willoughby Municipal Court liaison;
- Daily prisoner transports;
- Obtaining probable cause warrants;
- Weekly jail inspections;
- Prisoner monitoring;
- Policy and Procedure review;
- Working with in-house clerical staff.

As noted above, Patrolman Pitt's duties do not only include the processing of approximately 10 prisoners per week; Patrolman Pitt has numerous other duties, which make the day-to-day operations run smoothly. Ptl Pitt will always assist with road duties when he is not busy in the jail. Ptl Pitt also conducts weekly jail inspections as well as assisting with the yearly jail inspection conducted by the state.

The Willoughby City Jail underwent a comprehensive annual inspection of the physical state of the jail and accompanying policies over the summer. An inspector from The Ohio Department of Corrections completed a thorough evaluation. Several minor changes were suggested.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sergeant Mike Fitzgerald
Jail Administrator

Weaponscraft

2025 Firearms Training Unit

Firearms training is a critical aspect of law enforcement. Police officers must be able to use handguns, rifles and shotguns under extraordinary stress and the only way to ensure superior performance is, excellent training. As in the past years, the Willoughby firearms training unit continues to seek ways to provide the best training possible to the members of the Willoughby Police Department.

In 2025, the unit consists of 11 in service instructors, 1 Lieutenant, 3 Sergeants, 6 Patrolman, and 1 Special Patrolman.

Our instructors continually look for new challenges for officers to better prepare them for deadly force encounters. We have also continued training in the area of less lethal. The Willoughby Police Department has a total of three (3) Pepper Ball Guns and equipped each patrol vehicle with a less lethal shotgun. Officers had extensive training with both less lethal weapons and put the training and weapons to use with the apprehension of several suspects.

In 2015 the Willoughby Police Department upgraded our Patrol Rifles and we were able to purchase new Smith & Wesson M&P 15's for all front-line patrol units. In 2024, these rifles were outfitted with new red dot sights to further enhance their accuracy and deployment. We are still able to use, with heavy restrictions, a small area for an outdoor range within the City limits. This area was created off of Pelton Rd at the old "Shredder" plant. This allows officers to qualify easily within the parameters of their regular shift. Officers also had opportunities to train in firearms at the Lake County Range.

The indoor range is continually used, and always proves to be an excellent tool for weapons training and qualifications.

The Firearms Training Unit conducted monthly range programs on the indoor pistol range. Each consisted of a new type of shooting program. The first range is customarily the State of Ohio requalification shoot on the indoor range. Officers create different shooting scenarios for each monthly range. This allows creative fresh ideas and new tactics to be introduced. Each squad and the specials division have the opportunity to participate in all ranges.

Each officer is required to attend the state qualification shoot. Along with handgun training, officers qualified with the AR-15, shotgun, less lethal shotgun, and pepper ball. Collectively, there were well over 200 individual courses of fire on the range and off site.

As always, we as firearm instructors know the importance of our position and we as a unit are always looking for ways to improve training, either by attending schools or learning from real life situations. The goal of the firearms training unit is to provide our officers with the most up to date information, equipment, and training possible, to create a clean and safe training facility, to foster confidence and ability in all officers. It is paramount that proper training is afforded to all officers of the Willoughby Police Department because the cost of falling short in this area is unacceptable. To this end the unit solicits suggestions from all units and members of the Willoughby Police Department.

Training

With the assistance of the entire Firearms Training Unit, The Willoughby Police Department initiated a new monthly training program. This program encompasses all forms of firearms training, less lethal training, and combat training. Officers will start the new year with an extensive training program. The scheduled training will give officers several training opportunities per month to accomplish the training goal.

This training program will continue to keep Willoughby Police Officers on the leading edge of firearms training.

Submitted By:
Sgt. Matt Neath
Firearms Training O.I.C.

Kenneth F. Stafford, Jr. Communications Center



2025

Willoughby Police and Fire Dispatchers play a vital role in police and fire operations. Typically “first on the scene” our dispatchers are trained in providing a wide range of pre-arrival instructions ensuring the safety of the caller as well as police and fire responders. Our communication staff works closely with police and fire responders to ensure the best outcome in every situation.

2025 Communications Personnel

Communications Supervisor
Marlene Matteo

Full-Time
Communications Operators
Susan Schilling
Michelle Spehar
Tom Seymour
Frances Rivas
Bryan Griffith
Asia Robinson
Kimberly Kaste
Kristin Kahley
Kiersten Jaggie
Lindsey Dieterich

Part-Time
Communications Operators
Alyssa Cheraso
Bart Eland
Carla Gabele
Emma Martich
Graceann Mitri

Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of our Dispatchers is to provide professional and responsive communications services to our public and our safety forces. In 2025, a total of 24 Temporary Protection Orders issued by the court were entered into LEADS (Law Enforcement Automated Data System). Stolen vehicles, license plates, guns, and serialized property are also entered into LEADS. In 2025, a total of 33 stolen entries were made to these files with 13 of these items being recovered. These entries are complex and accuracy is essential as they are audited every 3 years. Our dispatchers do an excellent job with all the entries in LEADS.

The Communications Center is operated by two dispatchers at all times. Our center consists of 10 full time and currently 5 part time dispatchers.

In 2025, Willoughby dispatchers processed **9,313** 911 calls, which were included in a total of **47,800** calls for service that generated a police or fire response. In addition to these calls for service, dispatchers handled a wide range of miscellaneous calls, providing assistance and direction to residents and businesses. The Communications staff also manages all after-hours and weekend non-emergency calls, as well as walk-in traffic to the department lobby.

The Communications staff is also responsible for monitoring the jail cells and booking area. Dispatchers have prevented suicide attempts, detected hidden contraband, and ensured the safety of police officers while prisoners are processed in and out of the cells. In addition, dispatchers monitor the exterior of the building, the department parking lot, and the FLOCK license plate reader camera system throughout the city.

Equipment

Our Communications Center uses a computer aided dispatch system (CAD) designed by TAC Computers. This system is used to process and record all calls for service. The date entered by the dispatchers into this system is communicated to field units via their Mobile Data Terminals (MDT). In addition to tracking the times and calls for service, CAD also provides immediate call history at a location. Alerts and special attentions on persons and locations are also entered. This feature is especially beneficial to responders as they prepare for arrival.

Training

Willoughby dispatchers prove their abilities on a daily basis. They possess an understanding of the current laws, rules and techniques, of both fire and police operations. The personal knowledge of residents and businesses as well as their awareness to crime trends in our area, proves beneficial in many ways. Our Dispatchers have a wide variety of specialized training and received an average of 24 hours of continuing education this year.

RECORDS DIVISION

2025 Records Division Staffing

Under the direction of the Clerical/Communication Supervisor, the Records Division is comprised of 3 full-time clerks and 1 part-time clerk.

Responsibilities

The Records Division is responsible for a myriad of duties to include maintaining accurate and efficient records, and the dissemination of police reports to the public and other criminal justice agencies. These include the City Prosecutor, Lake County Children Services and Willoughby Municipal Court. Further tasks include processing all traffic and criminal arrests with associated fingerprints. Along with the arrests, clerks must update reports pertaining to criminal investigations and complaints, ensuring that cases are cleared following Uniform Crime Reporting guidelines established by the FBI. Many of these tasks are completed by utilizing the Records portion of the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch System) police reports. Clerks are also responsible for fulfilling numerous public records requests. Our Clerks also serve as Deputy Clerks for Lake County Juvenile Court. Front desk operation is a vital part of this Department as clerks are often the first point of contact with our citizens.

The three basic types of reports that the clerical staff process include: **OFFENSE** reports, **INCIDENT** reports, and **TRAFFIC CRASH** (accident) reports. An offense report is defined as a violation of the criminal code. An incident report is used to record non-criminal calls for service. Traffic crash reports are accidents that are recorded on a prescribed form (OH-1) for the State of Ohio, Department of Public Safety. The Willoughby Police Department now uploads all OH-1 crash reports online. These crash reports are available at www.willoughbyohio.com/police.

A total of **45,174** calls for service were generated by the public in 2025.

2025 Records Division Personnel

Clerical/Communications Supervisor
Marlene Matteo

Full-Time
Cheryl Stephens
Kim Thompson
Melissa Worthington

Part-Time
Not currently staffed

Willoughby Police Department processed **2,913** arrests, resulting in **482** physical arrests and a total of **3,943** charges. Additionally, the Records Division processed **429** sets of fingerprints via Live Scan, which were transmitted to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the Lake County Crime Lab. The Records Division processed and receipted bond money as an agent of the Willoughby Municipal Court totaling **\$41,218** in 2025.

The Records Division received and processed **376** warrants issued through Willoughby Municipal Court.

The Willoughby Police Department issued **858** parking citations which were entered into the CAD system throughout 2025. Parking ticket receipts processed by the Records Department totaled **\$10,005**.

2025 Record Room Statistics

F.B.I Uniform Classification

Actual Offenses	2024	2025
Criminal Homicide	1	1
Forcible Rape	3	4
Robbery	5	10
Aggravated Assault	21	7
Burglary	32	7
Larceny/ Theft	284	225
Auto theft	27	16
Arson	3	9
Total Actual Offenses	376	280

Traffic Arrests-Adult & Juvenile

	2024	2025
Vehicular Homicide	0	0
Hit Skip	37	41
DUI/Physical Control	64	73
Reckless Operations	30	51
Lane Usage Violation	59	56
FTC	52	45
Left of center	3	4
Yield Right of Way	66	82
Stop Sign	38	57
Traffic Signals	127	129
Assured Clear Distance	97	98
Speed	803	527
Seat Belt	31	37
Equipment Violations	2	0
License Plate Violations	632	521
Unlicensed Junk Vehicles	0	1
Operator License Required	122	81
Other Traffic Violations	652	629
Total Traffic Arrests	2815	2432

Other Arrests-Adult and Juvenile

	2024	2025
Aggravated Murder	1	1
Robbery	4	14
Aggravated Assault	18	7
Simple Assault	44	42
Arson	5	8
Breaking and Entering	8	6
Larceny	101	105
Auto Theft	9	7
Forgery and Identity Theft	6	11
Fraud	8	16
Stolen Property	8	14
Criminal Damaging	25	17
Dangerous Drugs	92	149
Sex Offenses	9	4
Domestic Violence	48	42
Liquor Violations	68	76
Obstructing Police	33	48
Escape	0	0
Warrants/ Probation Violations	452	374
Weapon Violations	32	27
Disorderly Conduct	118	143
Intoxication	51	58
Other	362	327
Total Other Arrests	2815	1496
Total Traffic and Other Arrests	4317	3928

2025 Record Room Statistics

<u>Calls for Service</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
Other	73	58
Kirtland	14,755	13,693
Willoughby	31,327	30,575
Total Calls of Service	46,155	44,326
Emergency Calls Dispatched (Other, Kirtland, Willoughby)	3,525	3,914
Emergency Calls Investigated		
Deaths	35	34
Suicides	7	4
Attempted Suicides	4	9
Mental Illness	134	75
Total Emergency Calls Investigated	180	122
Animal Investigations		
Animal Bites	0	2
Other Animal Complaints	788	675
Total Animal Investigations	788	677
Lockouts	767	632
Missing Persons	45	37
Alarms	1701	1569
Alarms Test	258	282
Total Alarm	1959	1851

2025 Record Room Statistics

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
Money Escorts and Other Public Assists		1008
Mutual aid	600	585
Solicitor Complaints	11	82
Fireworks Complaints	105	61
Open Buildings	42	41
Disturbance General	839	935
Suspicion, General	1815	1674
Suspicion, Person	276	237
Suspicion, Vehicle	434	410
Juvenile- Runaway and Curfew Violations	0	6
Fingerprints (Court Order)	73	52
Receipts	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
Parking Ticket Receipts	\$8,940	\$10,005
Other Receipts	0	0
Other Services	\$105.00	\$145.00
Total Receipts and Services	\$105.00	\$145.00
Total Receipts	\$9,045.00	\$10,150.00

Community Involvement

Community Outreach, Crime Prevention & Training – Annual Summary (2025)

Throughout the year, I focused on proactive community engagement, youth education, senior safety, parent awareness, senior fraud prevention, and interagency training initiatives aimed at strengthening public trust, improving safety awareness, and supporting crime reduction efforts across Willoughby.

Community Engagement & Relationship Building

I participated in multiple community-facing events designed to increase positive police presence and strengthen relationships with residents in informal and accessible settings. These included two Coffee with a Cop events held at Fiona's Coffee Bar & Bakery.

I also participated in four Sports with the Force events hosted at the YMCA, which brought officers and youth together through organized sports and positive interaction. This program was highlighted in an article by the News-Herald.

In addition, I supported several City of Willoughby-sponsored community events including Touch a Truck, National Night Out, and Cram the Cruiser. I also participated in regional and community partnership events including the Torch Run, Miracle League, and Toys for Tots.

Holiday Heroes Fundraising & Community Support

I supported and participated in the Police vs. Fire basketball and softball charity games, which serve as a fundraiser for Holiday Heroes.

Holiday Heroes is a community-based program coordinated through partnerships with local elementary schools. Family liaisons provide names of students who would benefit from additional support during the holiday season. Selected students participate in a holiday experience that includes a trip to Target to shop for Christmas gifts, followed by a visit to Fiona's Coffee Bar & Bakery for hot cocoa and mini donuts.

Youth & School-Based Safety Programming

A major emphasis this year was youth education, early intervention, and relationship-building through school programming. I delivered DARE to 5th grade students at the School of Innovation and conducted outreach visits with youth at Little Scholars, Grant Elementary School, and Edison Elementary School.

I also provided a 3rd Grade Government Day program at the School of Innovation.

Community Involvement Page 2

In addition, I delivered Interacting with the Police to 10th grade students at Willoughby South High School. This was a state-mandated course for students who were preparing to drive or had recently begun driving. The course focused on expectations during traffic stops, safe decision-making, and practical guidance for lawful and safe interaction with law enforcement. *(Note: This class was not mandated for 2026.)*

I also conducted a 6th grade Internet Safety presentation in partnership with the Willoughby Municipal Court, reinforcing safe technology habits and addressing current online risks affecting youth.

Parent Education & Digital Safety Resources

To strengthen family-level prevention and awareness, I created and distributed eight Parent Alerts focused on apps and platforms accessible to children. These alerts included information on applications such as Snapchat, Discord, and Kik, and were intended to help parents better understand current digital risks, common safety concerns, and emerging trends.

Senior Safety & Fraud Prevention

To address increasing threats to older residents, I conducted senior-focused safety presentations including Senior Scams and an Artificial Intelligence (AI) safety talk at Maple Ridge Senior Living and Breckenridge Village. These presentations focused on modern scam tactics, technology-driven fraud, and practical prevention strategies.

Training, Preparedness & Staff Development

This year included extensive training and preparedness work both internally and with partner agencies.

I participated in department-wide wellness training provided by Cordico / Lexipol Wellness, supporting officer and staff resiliency and overall wellbeing.

I also provided First Aid/CPR/AED training to staff.

In addition, I served as an instructor for Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), a five-day course designed for police and dispatch personnel. On the final day of the course, I delivered Realistic De-Escalation

Community Involvement Page 3

Following a critical incident, I coordinated and facilitated a multi-agency debrief involving police, fire, and dispatch, supporting after-action learning and continued interagency coordination.

Grants, Projects & Department Support

I applied for and was awarded a Violent Crime Reduction Grant, supporting proactive enforcement and crime reduction initiatives including IDEP/STEP.

I also developed a 50th Anniversary Challenge Coin, contributing to department identity and commemorative efforts.

Additionally, I hosted and supported an intern as part of mentorship and workforce development.

Expanded Program Sections

Safety Town

I supported and participated in Safety Town, one of the department's most established youth prevention programs. Safety Town provides hands-on safety education for children through age-appropriate instruction and interactive learning. Program topics include traffic and pedestrian safety, stranger awareness, emergency response education, and other foundational safety concepts. Safety Town remains a key early-intervention program and a consistent opportunity for positive police interaction with children and families.

Citizens Academy

I supported and participated in the department's Citizens Academy, which provides residents with an inside look at police operations and public safety services. The academy promotes trust, transparency, and community understanding by allowing participants to learn about topics such as patrol operations, investigations, training standards, and how the department responds to calls for service. The program also creates direct communication between community members and department personnel, strengthening long-term partnerships.

School Crossing Guards

The crossing guards are stationed at busy intersections near our elementary schools, with the primary responsibility of ensuring the safe passage of students walking to school. Both Edison and Grant Elementary Schools experience high volumes of vehicular traffic during arrival and dismissal times. In these moments, crossing guards play a crucial role in maintaining the safety of students.

In addition to their direct role in protecting children, the crossing guards serve as a vital connection between the schools and the Police Department, offering valuable insights into daily traffic patterns and pedestrian activity.

As part of the Willoughby Police Department's Community Involvement Division, the crossing guards are coordinated by the Community Involvement Officer. They provide an essential service, helping students navigate their journey to and from school safely, regardless of the weather.

Over the years, crossing guards have become an integral part of the school communities. Their interactions with students contribute to the children's growth and character development. They often form lasting bonds with the student safety patrol teams, which extend well beyond elementary school years. Many adults still fondly remember the care, guidance, and friendship of their former crossing guards.

Before being hired, all crossing guards undergo a thorough pre-employment background screening to ensure they are well-suited for the role. Collectively, our crossing guards bring decades of service and experience, and their unwavering commitment and success are evident in their ongoing contributions to our community.

Willoughby Police Department Crossing Guards

Edison Elementary School

- Mary Baggot
- John Wozniak
-

Grant Elementary School

- Sue Carr
- Marietta Hrach

Substitutes

- Jackie Burk
- Crystal Pullen

The Crossing Guard Program remained stable throughout the year with consistent staffing and daily coverage at assigned posts. The only personnel change was the retirement of Darlene Smith. Remaining crossing guards continued to report as scheduled and provided reliable service for student pedestrian safety.

Victim Assistance

2025

The Victim Assistance program received funding from Victims of Crime Assistance (VOCA) and (SVAA). The program continues to advocate for the victims. The Willoughby Victim Assistance Program currently employs 2 part-time advocates: Director Kathy Fellows and Advocate Carla Gabele. The advocates assisted over 900 victims and witnesses through the court system, with immediate crisis counseling, and referrals to other agencies. In 2024, the advocates were also called to assist families for deaths with support and referrals as well as notifications. They also assisted those involved with domestic violence, violations of protection orders, stalking, assault, sexual assault, as well as elder abuse, financial crimes and theft. They also assisted victims of OVI, robbery, and burglary. Among those served were victims with disabilities, those who were homeless, had mental health issues as well as veterans. The program also supports equal access for all people, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or gender.

Organizations

Community Alliance Law Enforcement Mental Health Services (CALMHS): Captain Davis and Director Kathy Fellows are members of this committee. The committee works to provide collaboration between the mental health and the criminal justice systems. The CALMHS committee works to improve services available to individuals with mental health problems.

Northeast Ohio Victim Assistance Task Force: The Willoughby Victim Advocates belong to this organization with other advocates in the Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula counties, as well as state and federal advocates.

Ohio Domestic Violence Network: This organization is a coalition of domestic violence programs, supportive agencies, and concerned individuals working toward the elimination of domestic violence. Director Kathy Fellows is a member of this organization.

Ohio Victim Witness Association: Director Kathy Fellows is a member of this organization. This is a statewide advocacy organization that is committed to establishing equality of rights and fair treatment for all victims and witnesses.

Lake County SART: This is a committee of local agencies who assist victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. Director Kathy Fellows is a member of this organization.